

# THE AMERICAN WAR

Written by

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FADE IN:

INT. SELECTIVE SERVICE HEADQUARTERS - NIGHT

SUPER: December 1, 1969

SUPER: Selective Service Headquarters Washington, DC

A drab auditorium is abuzz with federal workers as they set the stage. Beside a small desk they erect a board titled: "RANDOM SELECTION SEQUENCE, 1970," with a grid numbered from 001 to 366. While they work a film crew sets up equipment.

A black box with a padlock is placed on top of the desk. At the front of the stage sits a stool with a clear container on top of it, and a short flagpole bearing the American flag is positioned in the back.

GENERAL HERSHEY, 76 with white hair and glasses, slowly walks up to a microphone at the front left of the stage. An OFFICIAL sits at the desk to his right, while others take seats at a long table behind him.

HERSHEY  
Deposit. The tickets.

Two men appear from offstage to open the box, but struggle with the lock.

OFFICIAL  
(laughs, muffled)  
Is this, uh, gonna work?

Finally, it opens and they unceremoniously DUMP hundreds of blue capsules into the container as Hershey watches. Camera bulbs flash. They re-lock the box and store it behind the desk; then awkwardly step over wires as they leave.

HERSHEY  
Pursuant to the executive order, the Director of Selective Service is going to establish tonight, a random, selection, uhm, sequence, for induction, for nineteen, seventy. I will ask Congressman Pirnie, to come forward...

INT. WALLACE HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: Kent, WA

A family huddles around a black and white TV in the living room of a quaint suburban home. A sparsely decorated Christmas tree sits in the corner.

MARIE, a fastidious woman in her 40s, sits on the couch nervously clutching the hand of her 17-year-old son, DANNY. Danny is tall and lanky with short, dark hair in jeans and a t-shirt. BOBBY, 8, sits on the floor playing with army men next to JEANIE, 6, who is clutching her baby doll.

SUPER (ON TV):  
LT. GEN. LEWIS B. HERSHEY  
DIRECTOR. SELECTIVE SERVICE SYSTEM

HERSHEY (ON TV)  
...Congressman Pirnie, is,  
representing, the United States of  
the Military Affairs committee of the  
House...

The family talks over the TV.

DANNY  
God, I hate this Hershey guy. How old  
is he?

MARIE  
We hated him, too. He's been around  
since your father's draft in forty  
two.

JEANIE  
Mooooom, I'm bored.

BOBBY  
Yeah, can we watch something else?

MARIE  
Shhhh, later. This is important,  
remember? We've gotta watch for your  
brother, Carl.

JEANIE  
Well why isn't Carl here, mommy?

MARIE  
He's off at school, sweetie. Watching  
with his friends. He'll call later  
and you can talk to him.

DANNY

Yeah, in fact, we could use your help. Do you guys remember Carl's birthday?

BOBBY

Ummm.

Jeanie giggles.

MARIE

It's August 2nd. Be real quiet and listen for when they call it out.

On TV young men take turns drawing capsules from the container. They hand each one to the official at the desk, who reads off the birthdays and then hands them to a SECOND OFFICIAL, who repeats the date and then announces its draft number while placing it on the board.

OFFICIAL (ON TV)

August, thirty first.

Marie is visibly shaken by hearing August read aloud.

Suddenly, the door bursts open. FRANK, a man in his 40s with a grease-stained shirt and jacket, stumbles into the room.

MARIE

Shhhhh.

Frank, ready to erupt, pauses when he notices the TV.

FRANK

Oh, who cares? What are you watching this shit for, anyways?

BOBBY

Danny says if Carl gets a high number he won't have to go away.

FRANK

Well what's he so worried about? Ain't he off at school? The snooty little shit.

DANNY

It doesn't matter. He graduates in the spring.

MARIE

Frank!

FRANK  
Well la-de-da. You didn't see me  
complaining when it was my turn.

Frank continues talking as he gets up and wanders into the  
next room. He returns with a beer.

FRANK (cont'd)  
No, we were men then. Not like you  
lot. Always whinin' about everything.

OFFICIAL (ON TV)  
August, sixteenth.

Marie softly starts to cry, holding her head in her hands.

FRANK  
Really, Marie?

SECOND OFFICIAL (ON TV)  
August, sixteenth. Is zero, four  
four.

DANNY  
Goddamn it, Frank. Not tonight.

FRANK  
What the Hell did you say?!

Frank is now standing over them. Danny stands up, too.

MARIE  
Stop it!

She stands between them and holds out her hands, pressing  
them against their chests. Frank grabs hold of her wrist.

OFFICIAL (ON TV)  
August, second.

Bobby yells out as he points at the screen.

BOBBY  
Carl!

They all stop to look.

SECOND OFFICIAL (ON TV)  
August, second. Zero, four, five.

MARIE  
No!

She pulls her hand free from Frank's grasp and starts to bawl.

FRANK

Well, good. Might finally make a man out of him.

Danny stares at the TV in disbelief. Then at his father. He storms out of the room.

EXT. PORT OF OAKLAND - DAY

SUPER: Oakland, CA

SUPER: Two Years Later

A line of young men weaves its way through rows and rows of shipping containers. Danny, who has grown out his hair, and MIKE, a bearded 19-year-old with shaggy, blonde hair, stand near the front of it. They lazily smoke cigarettes. Finally, they reach the front where a small desk is sitting by the edge of the dock. An overweight FOREMAN behind it wears an askew hard hat and an unbuttoned safety vest.

FOREMAN

Next! What's your name?

Mike gestures to Danny to go first.

DANNY

Daniel Wallace, sir.

FOREMAN

How old are you, kid?

DANNY

Nineteen, sir.

FOREMAN

Got any experience in shipping?  
Driving truck? Operating lifts?

DANNY

No, sir. But I've worked with all kinds of farming machinery. And can fix just about anything.

FOREMAN

Nineteen, huh? You gotten your draft number yet?

DANNY  
No, but I-

FOREMAN  
-Next!

DANNY  
I can-

FOREMAN  
-NEXT!

EXT. ADELINE STREET - DAY

Danny and Mike sit on the curb outside of the Port of Oakland and smoke. Endless stacks of shipping containers and massive cranes rise behind them. A dark blue Mustang pulls up. They get in.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY (MOVING)

CHARLIE, a well-kept 19-year-old with glasses, drives Danny and Mike along the port. Danny stares out the window from the back seat.

CHARLIE  
No luck today, boys?

MIKE  
Nah, same shit.

DANNY  
It's unbelievable! How the Hell did you find a job so quick?

CHARLIE  
Friends in high places!

Charlie laughs, but Mike and Danny aren't in the mood.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
You guys'll find somethin' soon.  
Until then...Beer's on me!

He grabs a beer from the glove box and hands it to Mike and tosses one into Danny's lap. They instantly cheer up.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
So, when's the last time anyone's even seen Jeremy?

DANNY  
Over a year ago.

MIKE  
I hope he's not too brainwashed.

DANNY  
Shit, he could use some brainwashing.

EXT. OAKLAND ARMY BASE - DAY

JEREMY, a slim 20-year-old with a crew cut and pressed shirt, waits on the side of the road. The Mustang pulls up and he gets in the back next to Danny.

INT. MUSTANG - DAY (MOVING)

DANNY  
Jer!

Mike passes Jeremy a beer from the front and rubs his head.

MIKE  
How's it going, man? Jesus, they really fucked up your hair, huh?

JEREMY  
Shut up. Heh, yeah. I guess they did, didn't they? Looks like you two can't afford haircuts at all.

The four of them laugh.

DANNY  
How's it going in there?

JEREMY  
It's good. I mean. It's not bad. It's a place to stay and some food to eat, at least. Where are you guys living?

CHARLIE  
We're actually set up pretty good. My Uncle's been lettin' us crash until his divorce is final and they sell the place.

JEREMY  
Is he staying there, too?

MIKE

Nah, he's got another place in The City.

JEREMY

Nice! It sounds perfect.

DANNY

I mean, hey, it's got a pool!

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

The four of them stand in a yard between a ranch-style home and a small guesthouse. An empty pool with a few inches of murky water in the deep end lays in front of them.

CHARLIE

He won't let us in the main house, but the guesthouse ain't bad.

MIKE

And, more importantly, it's free.

INT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

Charlie leads the way as they walk in. There's a small living room with a couch and recliner on one end and a kitchenette on the other. A hallway on the back wall leads to a bathroom and a bedroom. Danny brings up the rear carrying two cases of beer and heads straight to the refrigerator. Charlie shows Jeremy the lay of the land.

CHARLIE

This is a pullout, then there's a bedroom back there. You can either share or take the recliner.

MIKE

Just don't share with Danny, he snores.

DANNY

No I don't!

JEREMY

You're making me miss the barracks. At least in there I get my own bunk.

CHARLIE

You could always take a lawn chair outside.

Jeremy laughs.

JEREMY

Thanks for picking me up this weekend. Seriously, I had to get out of there. I'm goin' crazy.

They all take seats in the living room around a small coffee table.

MIKE

I would be, too. What's it like?

JEREMY

Ya know, training was Hell. But after a while you get used to all the yes sirs and standing in line. You even get used to the early mornings. But what I can't stand is not knowing.

DANNY

What do you mean?

JEREMY

We still don't have our assignment. It's been over a month stationed here and we've got no idea when we're going. Or where.

CHARLIE

Shit. They haven't told you anything?

JEREMY

We keep hearing to expect it soon and just to be ready. Rumor is they might be sending some troops to bases across Europe while they try to scale things back in Vietnam.

DANNY

That wouldn't be so bad.

MIKE

Hell yeah! My brother backpacked through France and Italy last summer. He said the ladies were...

Mike makes the chef kiss hand gesture.

JEREMY

Speaking of...There are like no women on base, and as much as I love seeing all your bright, shining faces...

CHARLIE  
Yeah, what are we doing tonight?

DANNY  
Well, I for one am pro-girls if any-

MIKE  
-No no no, not tonight, boys!

Mike gets up and disappears into the hallway.

JEREMY  
Come on, Mikey! I'm dying in there.

Mike returns with a bag of weed.

DANNY  
Decent!

He tosses it to Jeremy. Jeremy opens it and takes a whiff.

MIKE  
You still know how to roll one, Mr.  
Natural?

Mike throws him some papers printed with a Mr. Natural cartoon on the box.

JEREMY  
I believe I do!

CHARLIE  
Guys...come on, not in the house! My  
uncle will kill me.

Mike gets up to open the window.

MIKE  
Relax, we'll crack a window.

CHARLIE  
No, I mean it.

DANNY  
Come on. When's the last time your  
uncle's even been here?

CHARLIE  
I know, but I think he's planning on  
stopping by Sunday.

DANNY  
Oh, it'll air out by Sunday for sure.

MIKE

Don't worry so much. Shit, he might need that more than you do, Jeremy.

JEREMY

I think he does!

Jeremy pops the joint right in Charlie's mouth and lights it.

CHARLIE

I hate you guys.

Charlie gives up and inhales. He COUGHS and passes it toward Mike, but he waves it off.

MIKE

G.I. Jer, first.

Jeremy gladly accepts and takes a long drag. He lies back on the couch for a moment, holding it in. Then he bursts out COUGHING, too.

MIKE (cont'd)

Rookies. Well come on, don't Bogart it.

INT. GUESTHOUSE - NIGHT

The room has a subtle haze hanging in the air illuminated by a single dim light overhead. There are numerous empty beer cans on the coffee table. Each of the boys have a fresh one in hand and they laugh boisterously.

JEREMY

Damn, I forgot all about that. What were we in, like seventh grade? Did your folks ever find out?

DANNY

My mom did last year! She found what was left of it cleaning out my closet. I completely forgot about it.

They crack up again, except for Charlie, who's just staring off into space. Mike waves a hand in front of his face.

MIKE

Uh, oh! Somebody's feeling it.

CHARLIE

What?

They all laugh.

MIKE

Nothing, buddy. How ya doing?

CHARLIE

Good. I'm good, man. Thirsty. Say, we got anything to eat?

They all laugh again, but then stop when they come to the same realization.

DANNY

Wait, do we have anything to eat?

INT. GUESTHOUSE - KITCHENETTE - NIGHT

They open the refrigerator and find some expired milk and an empty egg carton. They continue to the cupboard. There's a half-full box of pop tarts, some bread, goldfish crackers, and the crown jewel; an unopened bag of Doritos. Danny's eyes light up at the discovery.

INT. GUESTHOUSE - NIGHT

The four of them sit around the coffee table again, eating snacks and passing them around.

JEREMY

Fuck. I'm gonna miss this, boys.

DANNY

What do you mean? We're not goin' anywhere, man. As long as you're stationed out here we'll keep picking you up on weekends, right Charlie?

CHARLIE

Yeah! Wait, what?

Mike hits Charlie's arm.

MIKE

We will. Promise Jer.

Jeremy doesn't look so reassured.

JEREMY

Thanks. I just. I don't know. I feel like whatever's gonna happen, it's gotta happen soon.

(MORE)

JEREMY (cont'd)  
 This shit's been hanging over my head  
 for over a year. You'll know what I  
 mean when you get your number.

DANNY  
 Fuck. Don't remind me. When is it,  
 even?

MIKE  
 I don't think they said yet, did  
 they? Didn't they fuck up on the  
 draft extension?

CHARLIE  
 Guys. I gotta tell you something.

DANNY  
 You okay?

MIKE  
 You gonna throw up?

CHARLIE  
 No! I...

The other three lean in to listen.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
 I'm not gonna go.

They just stare, not understanding.

CHARLIE (cont'd)  
 To Vietnam. I mean, I can't go. They  
 can't draft me.

MIKE  
 Bull shit. What are you talking  
 about?

CHARLIE  
 Well, I guess there's, there's this  
 rule...if your dad dies in the  
 service and-

Jeremy interrupts him.

JEREMY  
 -Four A. You're a Four A! He's the  
 Sole Surviving Son.

DANNY  
 The what?

CHARLIE  
The last male member of my family.

Charlie looks down, sadly.

JEREMY  
If someone in your family dies while serving and you're the only one left, you don't have to.

DANNY  
That's a thing?!

CHARLIE  
Swear to God. My mom even talked to a lawyer about it.

MIKE  
Damn. You always were the lucky one, Charlie. Well, here's to your old man.

DANNY  
Shit. You are lucky. I wish my old man never came back.

CHARLIE  
Don't say that.

DANNY  
I'm serious!

JEREMY  
It wouldn't have even mattered, don't you have a younger brother?

CHARLIE  
Don't! Just don't.

Danny stops, surprised by Charlie's tone.

DANNY  
Sorry...I'm sorry, man.

Charlie SIGHS.

CHARLIE  
It's fine. I'm sorry. I don't know why I didn't tell you guys. I can't imagine how you're all dealing with everything.

Mike raises his beer. Danny and Jeremy do, too.

MIKE  
That's what the beer's for! What's  
your excuse?

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

The next morning Danny joins Mike out on the lawn to smoke a  
cigarette.

DANNY  
Where's Charlie?

MIKE  
I think he's grabbing breakfast.

DANNY  
We don't deserve him.

MIKE  
I think he's been feeling guilty  
about what he told us.

DANNY  
Why? Good for him. Fuck the draft.

Charlie enters the yard through the side gate. He's got a  
brown paper bag in one hand and a newspaper tucked under his  
other arm. He looks a little nervous.

MIKE  
There he is! What'd ya get?

CHARLIE  
You want the good news first or the  
bad news?

MIKE  
What, did they run out of bagels?

DANNY  
Good news first, always.

CHARLIE  
Well, the good news is, they did have  
bagels.

INT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

Jeremy awakens in the recliner as they enter the guesthouse.

JEREMY

Huh? Uh. Good morning. Ooo,  
breakfast?

DANNY

Breakfast and bad news.

JEREMY

What?

The boys sit around the coffee table and Mike passes out the food. He then slaps the newspaper down.

MIKE

Well, what is it?

Danny reaches for it.

CHARLIE

Just read it.

Danny picks it up and does so aloud:

DANNY

Gophers cost BART seven hundred  
thousand dollars. The Bay Area Rapid  
Transit system's gopher problem-

CHARLIE

-No no no. The one next to it,  
genius.

DANNY

Which one...Oh...Ehm...Holdup of  
draft law won't stop new lottery.

Danny's voice trails off.

DANNY (cont'd)

(inaudibly to himself)

The selective service, which hasn't  
been able to induct draftees since  
the end of June will hold its...

He starts speaking clearly again.

DANNY (cont'd)

...third annual draft lottery August  
fifth...

He pauses and looks up at the rest of them.

MIKE  
 August fifth? August fifth?!  
 That's... that's next week!

Danny continues skimming the article and reading under his breath.

DANNY  
 (inaudibly to himself)  
 ...The responsibility to conduct the lottery continues under the draft law, draft officials said, even though Congress has permitted President Nixon's authority to order inductions to expire in a House-Senate deadlock over fixing a deadline for troop withdrawals from Indochina...

JEREMY  
 Damn.

CHARLIE  
 Sorry, guys.

Danny speaks out loud again.

DANNY  
 ...The drawing will begin at ten AM Eastern...Fuck.

Danny stops reading and he and Mike lean back into their seats.

JEREMY  
 Hey, at least now you'll know.

CHARLIE  
 Yeah, and no more getting skipped over for jobs, right?

MIKE  
 Yeah, that is unless we get fucking drafted. I just...I thought we had more time.

Danny gets up to leave.

DANNY  
 I need a smoke.

He slams the door behind him. Jeremy and Charlie look at Mike.

MIKE

What? Look man, I just got the same news he did!

JEREMY

Yeah, but we all know how he's gonna take it.

They can see Danny wildly pacing in the yard through the window.

CHARLIE

And you've known him the longest.

MIKE

Christ...Just, give me a second.

A lawn chair goes flying past the window of the guesthouse and lands with a THUD. They hear Danny SCREAM:

DANNY (O.S.)

Fuuuuuuuuuck!

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

Mike joins Danny outside. Danny's now lying on the ground with his feet dangling over the edge of the empty pool, smoking a cigarette. Mike lies down beside him.

MIKE

You got another one?

Danny hands him one.

MIKE (cont'd)

You know, they're right, man. It's a good thing. Just to get it over with. I'm sick of thinking about it.

Danny is a million miles away.

MIKE (cont'd)

Hey. If anything we've got, what, five days left of total freedom? Think about it. We can't do nothin' about anything 'til next Thursday, right?

Danny furrows his brow then turns his head to look at Mike.

INT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

Jeremy and Charlie nervously look up at Danny and Mike as they come back inside.

CHARLIE  
You guys okay?

Danny nods. Mike smiles a little too widely.

MIKE  
We're good. We've found clarity.

CHARLIE  
Christ, what the fuck does that mean?

An overly cheery Danny wraps his arm around Charlie's shoulders.

DANNY  
Come on Charlie, lighten up. You won't be this uptight at the party later, will you?

CHARLIE  
Who's party...? Oh come on. Not here, guys.

JEREMY  
Now we're talking!

MIKE  
Don't worry, don't worry. We'll handle everything.

DANNY  
Well, we'll need a little help paying for booze.

MIKE  
Aaaand a ride.

CHARLIE  
Guys. It's not happening. Uncle Richie's coming tomorrow, remember?

DANNY  
Charlie, look at me. I promise you we will clean everything up before he comes.

MIKE

And it's not even gonna get messy,  
it's not like we even know that many  
people.

JEREMY

Come on Charlie. I need this, too.  
Shit, you need this.

The three of them are giving Charlie the saddest looks they  
can muster.

CHARLIE

Fine! You're just gonna guilt me into  
it anyways. But I'm not lifting a  
goddamn finger. Okay? This place has  
to be spotless before noon tomorrow.  
And just, no more smoking inside,  
please?

DANNY

Well, we all know that's not gonna  
happen.

INT. GUESTHOUSE - LATER

The boys trade off making phone calls in the living room.  
Danny paces back and forth with the long phone cord  
bouncing up and down behind him. Mike lies on the couch with  
his feet hanging over the armrest while he talks. Jeremy  
stands against the wall with the phone tucked beside his  
chin and his shoulder.

Jeremy hands the phone over to Charlie. Charlie just looks  
at it for a moment then places it on the receiver.

CHARLIE

I think that's enough, right?

DANNY

Oh come on. You're not even gonna  
call Karen?

JEREMY

Who's Karen?

CHARLIE

I just, I think we've invited plenty  
of people, don't you?

MIKE

Wait...Did something happen with you two?

CHARLIE

No, I...I don't know.

Mike wraps his arm around an annoyed Charlie.

MIKE

Hoo hoo! Even better, time for Charlie to meet somebody new!

EXT. SWIMMING POOL - DAY

The four of them stand inside the shallow end of the pool around a beer keg as the sun starts to set, holding plastic cups full of beer.

MIKE

To Charlie!

Charlie holds out his hand to stop them.

CHARLIE

No. Come on. Here's to us. It's been a great summer. And to Jer. Hopefully your assignment comes soon and you get sent to...well, anywhere other than fucking Vietnam. Danny and Mike, you're gonna be okay. I know it. And if not, I hear Canada's nice this time of year!

They laugh.

DANNY

To Canada, eh!

They cheers and take a drink.

INT. UNCLE RICHIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Danny wakes up inside the master bedroom in the main house. He's still wearing his clothes from the night before. He stumbles his way through the mid-century home. There are people passed out on the couch and the floor in the living room. Empty plastic cups and beer cans are lying all over the hardwood floor and covering the counter tops and tables.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

The mess is worse outside. Jeremy is sleeping on a lawn chair. Charlie and a girl are sleeping with a blanket and pillows in the shallow end of the pool. There's another person passed out in the grass.

Danny takes a seat on the edge of the pool and smokes a cigarette. He smiles. Mike stumbles out of the guesthouse and joins him.

MIKE  
He's gonna freak.

The two of them look around, surveying the damage. They both laugh.

DANNY  
At least it looks like he's gotten over Karen.

MIKE  
True. And all thanks to us! Wait, where'd you end up?

Danny sheepishly looks over at the main house.

MIKE (cont'd)  
You didn't? Shit, he really is gonna freak. Were you with someone?

Danny shakes his head, no, and cringes.

DANNY  
It's trashed. Think we should we wake him?

Mike waves off the suggestion and puts out his cigarette.

MIKE  
Let him sleep.

INT. UNCLE RICHIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Danny and Mike fill black trash bags. They wake the people sleeping and enlist them to help clean. Danny meticulously makes the bed in Richie's room. They scrub the counters and floor. When they finish they proudly admire their handiwork. Danny looks over at Mike and shrugs.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

As they close the door to the main house behind them Charlie climbs out of the swimming pool. Some other party-goers are awake and helping Jeremy clean up the yard. He rubs his eyes and looks at his watch.

CHARLIE

What time is it? Ten? Wait, did you just come out of the house?

DANNY

Ehm. Yeah. Grabbing more bags.

Danny holds up a handful of empty garbage bags.

MIKE

Looks like you had a pretty good night?

Charlie laughs awkwardly and rubs his neck.

CHARLIE

Heh, yeah.

A girl walks out of the guesthouse and waves in their direction. Mike shyly waves back.

CHARLIE (cont'd)

Looks like you did, too.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - GATE - DAY

Danny and Mike hand full trash bags to people as they leave through the gate. The yard looks cleaner than it did before, with each lawn chair neatly placed around the pool.

INT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

Charlie sits happily on the couch with a beer in his hand and his feet up on the coffee table. Danny, Mike, and Jeremy enter the room looking a little worse for wear.

DANNY

Jesus, my head is killing me.

Charlie holds his beer up.

CHARLIE

Hair of the dog.

MIKE

Good idea.

Mike goes to grab one, too.

They hear a car door SLAM in the distance. Mike and Danny look at each other nervously.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

The four boys walk out to greet Charlie's Uncle, RICHIE, a tall man in his 30s. He wears bell-bottoms and a collared short-sleeve shirt unbuttoned just enough to reveal his chest and a gold chain.

RICHIE

Howdy, boys. You're looking a little rough. Late night?

They laugh nervously.

CHARLIE

Not too bad. How are you doing?

RICHIE

I'm good, I'm good. Just picking up a few things. How's the house been treatin' ya?

DANNY

It's been great, sir. Thank you so much for letting us stay.

RICHIE

My pleasure, my pleasure. Wouldn't do anyone any good sitting here empty. And how's the job search?

MIKE

Not so good. Well, except for Charlie.

RICHIE

You'll find somethin'.

Richie turns his attention toward Jeremy.

RICHIE (cont'd)

And what's your name, son?

JEREMY

Jeremy.

RICHIE

You army?

JEREMY

Yup. Stationed up in Oakland right now.

RICHIE

You heading over?

JEREMY

Not sure, yet.

Just then there's a tap on the side gate to the yard. Richie walks over to open it.

RICHIE

You boys expecting anyone?

They exchange confused looks.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - GATE - DAY

Richie opens the gate to find a POLICEMAN and a POLICEWOMAN. The policewoman is carrying an open garbage bag full of plastic cups and other trash. He gestures for them to enter.

RICHIE

How are you doing, officers? What can I help you with?

POLICEWOMAN

Is this your home, sir?

RICHIE

Yes it is, ma'am. For now. Getting it ready to sell soon.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

The four boys watch as Richie talks with the police offers.

CHARLIE

Fuck fuck fuck. What are they doing here?

MIKE

Is she holding a trash bag?

Danny rubs his forehead and kicks at the dirt.

DANNY  
Goddamn it. Those idiots.

Richie motions for them to come over.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - GATE - DAY

The boys slowly approach the conversation, with Charlie leading the way.

RICHIE  
My nephew and his friends are staying  
in the guesthouse. Know anything  
about this, boys?

The policeman steps forward holding a dirty envelope.

POLICEMAN  
We found some garbage bags dumped  
down the road. This was in one of  
'em.

He holds out a piece of direct mail with an illustration of a housewife and "VALUABLE MONEY-SAVING COUPONS INSIDE!" printed on it. It's addressed to Richie. Richie holds his hands on his hips and glares down at them.

RICHIE  
You got anything to say?

They hide behind Charlie, who stares at the ground.

CHARLIE  
I'm sorry. We didn't, uh...

DANNY  
Somebody else dumped the trash.

RICHIE  
Somebody else, huh? You boys have  
yourselves a little party here last  
night?

Richie pauses then starts to pace.

RICHIE (cont'd)  
Now, I've been pretty generous with  
you all. You know I don't mind you  
having some people over.  
(MORE)

RICHIE (cont'd)

But what I don't understand, is how a garbage bag with my junk mail wound up out on the street, too. Unless you've been using the main house?

Charlie shoots a look at Danny and Mike.

POLICEWOMAN

Look, we're not here to charge anyone, but somebody's gonna have to go pick up the garbage and dispose of it. Properly.

POLICEMAN

Now.

Richie nods for them to follow the officers.

EXT. ROADSIDE - DAY

The police officers look on as the boys pick up the trash bags and stuff them into Charlie's mustang. A garbage bag Mike is holding breaks, spilling its contents. He bursts out laughing. Danny and Jeremy do, too. Charlie cracks a smile and shakes his head. They help him rebag the mess.

CHARLIE

You know what he's gonna do, right?

DANNY

Be understanding and give us another chance?

They laugh.

JEREMY

Hey Charlie, I'm sorry to ask you this right now, but do you mind dropping me off after this? I'd really like to skip your uncle's wrath if at all possible.

CHARLIE

Yeah, okay.

MIKE

Lucky.

JEREMY

Hey, if you wanna trade places...

INT. RICHIE'S HOUSE - DAY

Richie holds his hand up to his mouth, lost in thought, while Danny, Mike, and Charlie sit on the couch staring up at him.

RICHIE  
What the fuck, boys?

He pauses while he thinks.

RICHIE (cont'd)  
Okay, here's what's gonna happen.  
You're gonna pack up your things.  
Today. All of you.

DANNY  
Richie. Ehm, sir. It wasn't Charlie's  
fault. We made him do it.

MIKE  
Yeah, really. You've gotta let  
Charlie stay. He didn't do anything.

Richie mulls it over and looks at his nephew.

RICHIE  
Fine. But you two have gotta go.

DANNY  
Yes sir.

MIKE  
Yes sir.

RICHIE  
And stop with all of the sir shit.  
Jesus. I'm not that old.

EXT. GUESTHOUSE - DAY

The three of them sit outside and smoke cigarettes. Danny and Mike have their packed duffle bags beside them.

CHARLIE  
Where are you gonna go?

DANNY  
I don't know. Maybe some boarding  
house. We've got like no money left  
though. What about that girl from  
last night?

MIKE

Nah, she's living at her folks' place.

DANNY

Shit. Well I don't think I know anyone we can crash with. At least not around here. My cousins' are up in Redding.

MIKE

Jesus. I'd rather enlist.

DANNY

Doesn't your brother know some people in The City?

MIKE

SF? He did, yeah. I don't know if they're still there, though. I'll call him.

Mike hurries into the guesthouse. They wait awkwardly while Mike makes the call. Danny paces around and smokes. Finally, Mike comes running back out holding a slip of paper.

MIKE (cont'd)

I got it! He gave me an address. Said they've got room if we don't mind helping out a bit.

DANNY

Hell yeah! When?

MIKE

He said anytime.

Danny and Mike pick up their bags.

CHARLIE

Want a ride over there?

DANNY

Nah, we'll manage. Thanks for everything.

MIKE

Yeah buddy.

They each give him a half hug and leave through the gate.

EXT. BAY BRIDGE - DAY

An AC Transit bus drives toward San Francisco across the Bay Bridge.

INT. BUS - DAY (MOVING)

Danny and Mike sit with their bags in their laps on the crowded bus and look out the window.

EXT. HAIGHT STREET - DAY

Danny and Mike walk down Haight Street with their bags over their shoulders. Vibrant storefronts and colorful apartment buildings are interspersed with broken windows and boarded up buildings. Some exteriors are charred from recent fires.

There are hordes of young people walking around, some quite a few years younger than them. Many look like tourists, while others have clearly been living there on the street. A STREET WOMAN with long brown hair and dark eye makeup approaches them.

STREET WOMAN

You boys looking for something?

Mike stops for a moment, but Danny nudges him along. They keep walking and see a group of army veterans wearing fatigues, some of them holding signs. Danny pauses to read one. Suddenly, a HOMELESS MAN screams right in his face.

HOMELESS MAN

SHUT UP! JUST SHUT UP!

This time Mike grabs Danny and whisks him away.

DANNY

Jesus Christ. How much further?

EXT. COLE STREET - DAY

They turn onto a side street and things start to get more residential, but it's just as bustling. Some homes are in various forms of disrepair, while others look freshly painted.

EXT. COMMUNE HOUSE - DAY

Danny and Mike stop outside of a large, Victorian home and look up the staircase at the front door. Music pours out of the house from open windows on the second story. There's an open garage to the left of the stairs with people working on a car inside.

MIKE

This is it.

DANNY

This is it?

MIKE

Well, one of them. My brother said they've got a few houses around here.

DANNY

Who's they?

MIKE

I guess it's...it's like a co-op?

Mike leads the way as they walk up the steps. He knocks on the door. No one comes. Danny peaks through one of the windows on the porch.

DANNY

Do they know we're coming?

A curtain behind the window in the door gets pulled back and a set of young eyes looks out. Numerous locks UNLATCH and the door swings open. ALICE, a petite 17-year-old with hair down to her waist, smiles up at them. She's pregnant and pretty far along.

ALICE

Hi there.

She looks them up and down and pauses for a moment.

ALICE (cont'd)

Looking for a place to stay?

MIKE

Uh, yeah. Yeah! That would be great. My brother told us to come by and ask for, um, Sierra.

ALICE

He's not home, but you're welcome to come in.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - DAY

Alice leads them through the entryway and down a long hallway. There's junk everywhere, but just enough space to move around it.

ALICE  
My name's Alice.

MIKE  
I'm Mike. This is Danny.

ALICE  
Welcome to The Home.

They glance into the doorways of each room as they pass. One is an office with a desk and stacks of papers. Another looks like a library. The next is a kitchen where two people are washing a mountain of dishes. Further down is a make-shift classroom where a group of children are being instructed by a young woman. The last is a living room with people sitting on the floor passing around a joint. They arrive at a grand staircase that spirals past their line of sight.

ALICE (cont'd)  
You can set your bags in the third room on the right up those stairs. There should be some open beds. Are you hungry?

DANNY  
We're okay, thanks.

Mike slaps Danny's arm.

MIKE  
We're starving.

ALICE  
Come on down to the dining room at the end of the hall. I'll have Sierra come find you. Oh, and don't go up to the third floor.

Danny flashes a concerned look at Mike.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - DAY

They walk through the second floor hallway and pass two other rooms. The first has its door closed, but MUSIC can be heard spilling through it.

The second has the curtains drawn and is too dark to see inside. Before going into the third room Danny peaks around the staircase up to the third floor.

MIKE  
(whispering)  
Danny!

He ignores Mike and strains his eyes to see up the dark staircase. There's a black sheet covering the entryway at the top of the stairs. Mike grabs him and pulls him into their room.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

The room is crowded with three bunk beds. Four of the beds look claimed with bags and ruffled sheets, but the two on the end are unoccupied. Mike plops himself down on the bottom bunk and Danny throws his bag on the top.

MIKE  
Not so bad, huh? Better than sharing  
a pullout.

DANNY  
Yeah...It's alright...Doesn't  
something feel a little strange to  
you, though?

MIKE  
Like what?

DANNY  
Like what are all these people living  
here for? And all the kids. I mean,  
that girl who let us in is  
practically still a kid.

MIKE  
It's The Haight, man. The Summer of  
Love!

Danny pokes his head out the window and looks down at the street.

DANNY  
If you say so. And what's up with the  
third floor?

MIKE

I think maybe, just maybe, this time we should try not to break the one rule we're given.

DANNY

You're right, you're right. This is a good spot. Thanks for finding it, man.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - DAY

Alice has a couple of sandwiches made for them when they walk in. The room is nearly filled by a large wooden table with hodgepodge seats all around it. Tommy, a shirtless ten-year-old, sits on one end eating by himself.

ALICE

Find everything okay?

DANNY

Yeah, thank you so much.

ALICE

Sierra should be by any minute.

Alice leaves and they sit down across from Tommy. He eyes them up before speaking.

TOMMY

Are you runaways, too?

Mike and Danny look at each other and laugh.

DANNY

No, we're not. Well, kind of. But I think we're too old to be runaways. How old are you?

TOMMY

Ten.

DANNY

My little brother's ten! His name's Bobby. What's yours?

The boy doesn't respond, but instead just stares at them as he takes another bite of his sandwich. He suddenly gets up and darts out of the room. They watch him go and are startled by a mature voice behind them.

SIERRA

How are you liking it?

They turn to look. SIERRA, a tall and husky man in his 30s with hair past his shoulders and a full beard, smiles down at them. Mike jumps up to shake his hand.

MIKE

It's good, sir. Hi, I'm Mike. This is Danny.

Danny stands up, too.

DANNY

Hi.

SIERRA

You're Marty's little brother?

MIKE

Yeah. Ehm, we're both down from Washington, too.

SIERRA

Washington feels like a lifetime ago, huh? Well, Alice got you set up with rooms and everything? Why don't you finish up there and meet me outside.

MIKE

Of course, yeah, whatever you need.

EXT. COMMUNE HOUSE - DAY

Danny and Mike stand in front of the garage where Sierra introduces them to GREG, a wiry man in his late 20s.

SIERRA

This is Greg. He's in charge of the painting business. Part of our efforts to clean up the neighborhood.

GREG

Yup. We did most of the fresh houses you see out there. You two painted before?

They both nod.

GREG (cont'd)

Well, okay. Good, good. Let's get to work.

EXT. DILAPIDATED PORCH - DAY

Danny and Mike follow Greg's lead as they strip off faded blue paint from a derelict home. The front door is boarded up and the windows are covered.

GREG

So, what brings you boys to The Home?

DANNY

Just looking for a place to stay, really. Till we can figure out a job.

MIKE

We haven't had much luck with the draft hanging over our heads.

GREG

The draft, huh? That's a bitch. You know, I served. Couple of other housemates, too. Take a look at this.

Greg pulls up his shirt, revealing two scars on his side. His left arm is also full of needle tracks.

GREG (cont'd)

I got shot, twice. Took me six hours to crawl to a spot where my guys could get me out.

Danny is dumbstruck.

MIKE

Heavy. I'm sorry, man.

GREG

Don't be. They were through-and-throughs. These two little holes got me sent home. It was the coming back I almost didn't survive. If it wasn't for Sierra and The Home I'd still be out there on the street. Holding one of them signs.

Danny and Mike search for something to say, but instead start chipping away at the old paint again.

GREG (cont'd)

You boys good for a bit? I'm gonna go have a smoke.

DANNY

Yeah, of course.

Greg walks down the porch steps and onto the sidewalk.

DANNY (cont'd)  
 Jesus Christ. If I get drafted I'm  
 fucking dead. No way I'm crawling  
 through the mud for six hours, with  
 or without getting shot.

Mike laughs.

MIKE  
 Me neither.

DANNY  
 These seem like good people though,  
 Mikey. Taking folks in.

MIKE  
 Nice to be working again, too.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Over 30 people of all ages and ethnicities are gathered for dinner, boisterously conversing. Danny and Mike are squeezed in the corner of the dining table, looking a bit lost in it all. Sierra stands up at the front and quiets the group.

SIERRA  
 Alright alright. Quiet down  
 everybody. We've got some new faces  
 here tonight. Has everyone met them?

The group's attention turns to Danny and Mike. It's SILENT.

SIERRA (cont'd)  
 Mike and Danny. They've already  
 started pulling their weight, too.  
 They're gonna be helping out with  
 Greg's painting business. Now, we  
 here at The Home have a little  
 tradition whenever we welcome new  
 members.

From the next room the POUNDING of drums begins. The group starts to CLAP and CHANT along as the percussion gets louder and louder, until finally the drummers enter the room. They play faster and faster until they stop. Sierra pulls out an unlabeled bottle of dark liquid and pours two shots.

SIERRA (cont'd)  
 Drink, and tell us who you are.

The DRUMS start up again as the glasses are passed to Danny and Mike. Danny is white with anxiety and looks over at Mike, who seems to be enjoying the spectacle. Mike holds his drink up to Danny, who cautiously looks inside, smells it, and then clinks his against Mike's. The drumming stops. They toss the drinks back and SLAM the glasses down. They both let out a small GASP at the strength of the liquor.

MIKE

Hi. I'm Mike.

DANNY

And I'm Danny.

SIERRA

Don't tell us your names! We already know them. Tell us who you are.

The DRUMS begin a third time. Danny and Mike look at each other, confused. When it stops Sierra gestures toward Mike. One of the little girls at the table GIGGLES.

MIKE

I'm. I'm...

Mike looks around for a hint at what to say. Sierra SIGHS and pours two more shots.

SIERRA

Alright, let's try this again. This time, drink, and tell us your biggest fear.

The DRUMS start a fourth time as the shots are passed down the table. When the drums stop they drink. Danny COUGHS.

SIERRA (cont'd)

Danny. Why don't you go first?

DANNY

My...my biggest fear. Is...

SIERRA

Don't hesitate. Open up. Tell us your truth!

Sierra pours two more shots and the PERCUSSION picks back up again, but this time even louder and faster. The groups' voices follow along to where they're almost SHOUTING. The children present are jumping up and down and CLAPPING their hands. The drinks make their way to Danny and Mike who don't wait for the playing to stop this time.

When they SLAM them down on the table it's silent. They both shout out at the same time, making it hard to understand.

DANNY  
I'm afraid of snakes!

MIKE  
My biggest fear is never  
really knowing myself!

The group breaks out in APPLAUSE and LAUGHTER. Danny and Mike look at each other quizzically, then they start to laugh, too.

SIERRA  
Wonderful, wonderful. Let's eat,  
shall we?

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - NIGHT

The gathering has become a full-blown party. An influx of more young people drink and smoke and dance in full view of children playing throughout the house.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danny and Mike stumble into the living room where a woman is playing guitar and singing in the corner. The room is filled with people dancing and singing along. A small group smoke a joint on a couch and chair on the other side of the room. Others sit on the floor.

MIKE  
Not bad, ay Danny?

DANNY  
Not bad at all, Mikey. Say, what was  
in those shots?

MIKE  
I think it was some kinda moonshine,  
wasn't it? Tasted a bit like whiskey.

DANNY  
Yeah, maybe. I'm drunk, man.

MIKE  
What?

DANNY  
I said I'm fucking drunk, man!

MIKE  
Let's level you off a bit.

Mike pulls him over to the group sitting on the couch. AMBER and DONNA, two women around their age, and JOHNNY, who's a few years older with dark, bushy hair and a beard, pass a joint back and forth. They hand it to Mike, who gives it right to Danny.

MIKE (cont'd)

Say, what's everybody celebrating tonight? Or is it always like this?

AMBER

Life, man! You don't need a reason to enjoy being alive.

Danny finishes taking a hit and passes it over to Mike.

DONNA

Just good people and good music.

JOHNNY

Actually, if you want to celebrate something, it's my birthday in a couple of hours. I'll be twenty six!

AMBER

Jesus Johnny, twenty six? When did you get so old?

DANNY

Wait, your birthday's tomorrow? August second? That's my brother's birthday.

Mike finishes his hit and passes it to Amber.

MIKE

Happy birthday!

JOHNNY

Thank you! And happy birthday to your brother!

Danny has taken on a more serious tone.

DANNY

Say, can I ask you something?

JOHNNY

Go right ahead, sir!

DANNY

How come you're here?...I mean, weren't you drafted?

Mike nudges Danny at the question, but Johnny laughs.

JOHNNY  
It's okay. Yeah, sure I did. Number-

DANNY  
-Number forty five.

JOHNNY  
That's right.

DANNY  
Well, what happened?

DONNA  
I'm bored. Come on, Amber.

The girls get up join the rest of the party.

MIKE  
Nice going, Danny.

DANNY  
Sorry...I just. I gotta know.

JOHNNY  
It's fine, really. Look, just because you get drafted doesn't mean you have to go.

MIKE  
What do you mean? Won't they throw you in jail?

Johnny laughs.

JOHNNY  
No no no. You see, there's ways out other than jail and Canada, ya know? So yeah, I got drafted.

BEGIN FLASHBACK MONTAGE:

JOHNNY'S HOME - A skinnier, clean-shaven Johnny with long hair opens a piece of mail. He looks dejected.

JOHNNY (V.O.)  
And I got my notice to report for a physical examination, too.

VARIOUS - Johnny goes about his day-to-day life looking sweatier and dirtier. He goes for a run outside.

He does work around the house. He does construction work, where the other crew members stand as far away from him as they can.

JOHNNY (V.O.) (cont'd)

But for two weeks before I completely stopped bathing. At the time I worked a construction job and had hair down to here, so you can imagine.

JOHNNY'S HOME - He and five other friends, three girls and two boys, drink and smoke weed. Throughout the night they dance and play drinking games. As it goes on people start to leave. Eventually, Johnny is sitting on a couch all by himself with a beer in one hand and a cigarette in the other. The sun starts to rise through the window. He drinks a cup of coffee as he watches it come up in the kitchen.

JOHNNY (V.O.) (cont'd)

When it got to be the day before I had another idea. I decided to stay up drinking all night. I didn't sleep a wink. The next morning I was running on fumes and as much coffee as I get down.

BUS - Johnny sits on a bus filled with other young men. He digs some acid out of his pocket and takes it. Then another. Then another.

JOHNNY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Then, juuuuust for good measure, on the bus ride over to get my physical I dropped enough acid to get this whole room tripping.

EXAM ROOM - Johnny wanders through rows of desks until he finds an open one. He writes furiously on the test.

JOHNNY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Now, the first thing they make you do is take this test. It was all pretty straightforward, but I wasn't liking the multiple choice answers they gave me. So instead I wrote out my answers in essay-form. They didn't seem to like that much, but they kept bringing me around to these other stations anyway.

LARGE HALL - Johnny stands in line with rows and rows of other young men. Most of them are clean-cut and in their underwear. Johnny surveys the room and shrugs.

He pulls down his pants and the people around him either recoil, cover their eyes, or laugh at his nudity.

JOHNNY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Next, they brought us to this big room and made us strip down to our underwear. Which in my state didn't actually sound so bad. The only thing was, I wasn't wearing any. So you've got hundreds of straights all lined up in their skivvies following orders and then me, buck naked with hair down to my waist smelling like death, struggling just to stand up.

MEDICAL ROOM - A doctor and their assistant attempt to inspect Johnny, but are deterred by his smell. They lean as far back as they can while checking his ears and eyes. Danny leans in to get closer, causing them to back up and knock over trays of medical equipment.

JOHNNY (V.O.) (cont'd)

By the time I got to the physical examination I was sure there was no way they'd pass me. No one even wanted to get close enough to inspect me. And to me they felt like they were a million miles away, so I kept trying to get closer and closer to the doctors as they kept backing away, knocking over all their equipment.

VARIOUS OFFICES - Johnny wears large headphones as he gets his hearing checked. He winces and throws them off his head. The doctor makes a note on a form and nods approvingly. Next, Johnny puts his face up to an eye exam and starts to fall asleep. He startles himself awake and tries to get up, but is restrained by two officers who make him sit back down.

JOHNNY (V.O.) (cont'd)

Even so, they still kept making me go through all these little tests. I must have been in there for over eight hours.

END FLASHBACK.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danny and Mike are enthralled with Johnny's story.

DANNY  
Eight hours! In that state?!

MIKE  
So...what happened?

JOHNNY  
Well, eventually they brought me in to see this shrink. After allll that some little man in his little white coat got to make the final decision about my fate.

Johnny pauses as he nears the end and Danny and Mike lean in.

JOHNNY (cont'd)  
I wasn't in there more than five minutes and they were just about throwing me out of the building. Apparently I got a little handsy and tried to kiss the guy. If I had known that's all it would take I would have done it sooner!

They all roll with laughter.

JOHNNY (cont'd)  
(proudly)  
But yeah, that's how I got out. I'm a Four F. Not qualified for military service.

MIKE  
That's incredible! I had no idea you could do that.

JOHNNY  
Oh yeah! There's a million ways to do it, too. See, they start to catch on to certain things, so you really gotta be original these days.

DANNY  
Shit. I could never do any of that.

MIKE

Sure you could. Shit, all's you'd have to do is fall asleep in front of 'em. They'd never take anyone who snores that loud, your platoon would kill you before the Viet Cong could.

Danny laughs and shoves him.

DANNY

And you could probably just skip showering for a day and get thrown out.

They both laugh, but Johnny seems to be staring off into space. Danny and Mike exchange looks.

MIKE

Johnny?

JOHNNY

What? Yeah. Sorry. Where was I?

DANNY

You finished, they gave you a Four F.

JOHNNY

Oh, yeah. Yeah. Shit. Never take that much acid. I'm still getting flashbacks to that fucking place.

They endure an awkward silence until he speaks again.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

By the way...If you guys are looking to have some more fun later.

Johnny nods in the direction of the girls.

JOHNNY (cont'd)

Come on up to the third floor. There'll be a little adults only partying going on.

MIKE

Totally!

Johnny gets up to join the girls on the other side of the room.

DANNY

What the fuck does that mean?  
Shouldn't all partying be adults  
only?

Just then, a very underage couple walk by, clearly intoxicated. Danny and Mike both shrug and laugh.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Danny washes his hands and then takes a look at himself in the mirror, holding himself up against the sink. His hand slips and he catches himself. He splashes some water on his face and leaves.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny makes his way around the junk piled in the hall and the people hanging out in it. He passes by the classroom and notices the boy they ate with earlier sitting all alone.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - CLASSROOM - NIGHT

Danny cautiously enters, trying to get the boy's attention.

DANNY

You okay?

The boy is sitting on the floor staring at a worn electric train set.

TOMMY

It's broken.

Danny sits down next to him and takes a look at it. The boy has taken apart the controller with a screwdriver, but the wiring inside proved to be a bit overwhelming.

DANNY

Well, it looks like you got a start  
on fixin' it. Mind if I take a look?

The boy nods. Danny inspects the wiring while he makes small talk.

DANNY (cont'd)

Your mom live here with ya?

He shakes his head.

TOMMY  
My sister.

DANNY  
Oh yeah? You like living here?

The boy shrugs.

TOMMY  
What are you doing?

DANNY  
Well, we really need a soldering  
iron, but I think I can get it  
working. See here?

Danny shows him the corroded wires that have disconnected  
and how he's scraping them down with the screwdriver.

DANNY (cont'd)  
The corrosion is keeping the electric  
current from reaching the train. They  
just need to be cleaned and  
reattached.

TOMMY  
Co-corrosion?

Danny smiles.

DANNY  
The wires are just old, it happens.  
What's your name?

TOMMY  
Tommy.

Danny holds out his hand and Tommy shakes it.

DANNY  
I'm Danny.

Danny twists the exposed wire around the joint.

DANNY (cont'd)  
Now, normally you would solder these  
joints together, but let's see if  
this works.

Danny screws it back together and sets it down. He turns it  
on and it starts right up. He motions to the boy.

DANNY (cont'd)  
 You wanna do the honors?

With an amazed look the boy scoots over to the controller. He pushes the lever and the train whistles and starts chugging around the circular track. The boy gives Danny a forceful hug, knocking him backward.

TOMMY  
 Wow! Thank you, thank you!

He releases Danny and goes back to the toy, manipulating the speed of the train. Danny laughs and gets up.

TOMMY (cont'd)  
 Where are you going?

DANNY  
 I...I gotta find my friend from earlier. Stay in here, okay?

The boy sadly turns back to his train and mutters under his breath.

TOMMY  
 Yeah, okay.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Danny peaks inside. He scans the room for Mike. He's not there.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - NIGHT

Danny enters from the stairway. He hears some VOICES and GIGGLING.

DANNY  
 Mike?

The doors to all the rooms are closed. He peaks into his room, but it's empty. He hears the GIGGLING again. He walks over to the staircase to the third floor and sees Johnny holding the curtain back at the top of the stairs for Mike, Donna, and Amber. Danny turns around.

EXT. COMMUNE HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny walks out the front door and down the steps. He pulls out a cigarette and lights it. He looks in either direction.

To the left is a poorly lit park, and to the right is the street he's walked before with ample street lights. He starts walking that way. There are still people out, but it's a little quieter than it was during the day.

EXT. HAIGHT STREET - NIGHT

When he turns onto Haight Street he's shocked by how rowdy it is. People are formed in loose groups, some standing and some sitting, drinking and smoking on the street. He walks in the quietest direction, stepping over people passed out on the sidewalk.

After passing by a few more groups he sees the homeless man who screamed in his face walking toward him. There's an open phone booth between them and Danny steps inside.

INT. PHONE BOOTH - NIGHT

Danny puts the receiver to his ear and looks outside through the glass. The man walks right past with a big smile on his face. Danny lets out a SIGH and leans back against the wall.

He goes to hang up the phone, but stops. Instead, he fishes out a dime and puts it in the slot. He exhales and dials. His mother, Marie, picks up.

MARIE (V.O.)

Hello?

DANNY

H-hi! Hi mom.

MARIE (V.O.)

Danny? Danny is that you?! What time is it? Is something wrong?

DANNY

I'm fine. Mom. I'm fine. Everything's okay. I'm just calling to say... everything's fine.

MARIE (V.O.)

Danny, it's almost one in the morning. Oh, it's so good to hear your voice. Where are you?

DANNY

Sorry! I'm...I'm in San Francisco.  
We, Mike and I, we're staying at...we  
got a new place. It's real nice. And  
we found some steady work.

MARIE (V.O.)

Well, that's great Danny. That's real  
great.

DANNY

How are you? How's Bobby and Jeanie?

MARIE (V.O.)

Oh, a handful. And it's just Jean  
now. She won't let me call her Jeanie  
anymore. We're doing okay.

Marie pauses for a moment.

MARIE (V.O.) (cont'd)

You know, I kicked your father out.

DANNY

You did?!

Marie's voice speeds up in excitement.

MARIE (V.O.)

I finally did it! I got a job, Danny.  
A good job! Oh, I wish you would come  
home. Are you sure you're okay?

Danny's mood has changed considerably. He's nearly giddy.

DANNY

Yeah. Wow, good for you mom. Yeah.  
I'm fine. I'm great, actually. How  
did...Well where is he?

MARIE (V.O.)

Oh who knows. Jan's husband says he  
sees him down at Bubba's just about  
every time he goes in there.

DANNY

Cleaning himself up, I see...

Danny's voice trails off as he sees the homeless man running  
back toward the phone booth and looking over his shoulder.  
Danny ducks down a little as he watches him run by.

MARIE (V.O.)

Danny?

A VETERAN with an open army jacket runs after him.

VETERAN

Hey! Stop running you son of a bitch!

Then, a third SCRUFFY MAN with long hair and a bandanna stumbles after them, holding his stomach. He slowly passes the phone booth.

MARIE (V.O.)

Danny?

SCRUFFY MAN

He fucking stabbed me, man! He fucking stabbed me!

He continues stumbling down the sidewalk as Danny watches in horror.

MARIE (V.O.)

Danny? Are you still there?

DANNY

Ye-yeah, mom. I'm still here. Well, listen. I might be making a trip back soon...to see you and Bobby and Jeanie, er, Jean.

MARIE (V.O.)

Really?! Oh that would be great, just great. The kids would love to see you.

DANNY

Yeah, yeah. I don't know, though. When, ya know? See if I can get off work or whatever. Well listen, I gotta go, mom.

MARIE (V.O.)

Oh! Okay. Well anytime Danny. Do you need anything?

DANNY

Bye, mom.

MARIE (V.O.)

Goodbye, Danny! I love you, be safe!

Danny hangs up the phone.

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Danny lays in the top bunk wide awake. Morning light is just starting to stream in through the crack between the curtains and the window. He hears Mike COUGH himself awake and GROAN.

DANNY  
Mikey? You up?

MIKE  
Whaaat?

DANNY  
Cigarette?

Mike COUGHS again, viciously.

MIKE  
Nooo. God, my head hurts.

Danny drops down out of his bunk and yanks on Mike's arm.

DANNY  
Come on, some fresh air will help.

MIKE  
Ughh. You fucking suck.

EXT. COMMUNE HOUSE - DAY

Danny and Mike stand in front of the house and smoke. Mike holds his hand over his eyes to block the sun and squints over at Danny.

MIKE  
It's not helping.

Danny laughs.

DANNY  
Yeah, you should really be sleeping  
it off.

MIKE  
Fuck you.

DANNY  
So...How was the third floor?

MIKE

Crazy. Fucking crazy. And beautiful. What happened to you, man? I thought you were with us?

DANNY

Nah. I was...I was wasted. I just went to bed.

MIKE

You missed out. Amber was asking about you.

He nudges Danny who shoves him back and laughs.

DANNY

How long you think you can stay here?

MIKE

What do you mean? It seems like they're cool as long as we help out with stuff.

DANNY

No, I mean, how long do you want to stay here?

MIKE

What are you talking about? This place is amazing!

DANNY

I don't know, man...

MIKE

Wait wait wait. What? What is it, Danny?

DANNY

I don't know! I dunno...I...I talked to my mom last night. She kicked my dad out.

MIKE

Yeah? And...So what? That doesn't really change anything, does it? We still couldn't find jobs up there.

DANNY

We can't find jobs down here!

MIKE

This is a job!

DANNY  
This is a cult.

MIKE  
It's not a cult!

DANNY  
Shhhh!

They both look around and then up at the house. No one is listening. Danny pulls Mike a little further away.

MIKE  
(in a whisper)  
This isn't a cult! They were kind enough to take us in.

DANNY  
I don't know, Mikey. There's some weird shit going on in there. And way too many underage kids hanging around. Like, what the fuck?

Mike starts to get agitated.

MIKE  
Whatever man. Just because you're a square.

Danny responds defensively.

DANNY  
Oh fuck off. Just because I'm not into hard drugs and sex parties does not make me a square.

At that moment a couple is walking by. The YOUNG WOMAN GIGGLES and without stopping says:

YOUNG WOMAN  
Yes it does.

Mike gestures to her and looks at Danny.

DANNY  
Look, whatever. Stay. I don't give a shit.

MIKE  
Danny! Come on. I didn't mean it.

Danny starts up the steps to the house.

MIKE (cont'd)

Danny!

INT. COMMUNE HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Danny packs his things while Mike watches. The other inhabitants are still asleep, so they whisper:

MIKE

Danny! Stop.

Danny responds calmly.

DANNY

What? Look, I'm not mad. I don't even care. So what if I'm a square? Who cares? I just...I can't stay here.

MIKE

Well, where are you gonna go?

DANNY

Home. I'm gonna go home.

EXT. COMMUNE HOUSE - DAY

Danny and Mike stand outside the house in awkward silence. Danny lifts his bag over his shoulder and says:

DANNY

Look...I wanna split before they all wake up.

MIKE

Yeah. Yeah, totally.

DANNY

Be careful, Mike. Seriously.

Mike grins.

MIKE

I'll be fine. I'm gonna miss you. I wish you'd just stay. You're my best friend, Danny.

Mike gives Danny a big hug.

DANNY

I know, I know. I'm gonna miss you too. Good luck with the draft, man.

MIKE

Hey, if I listen to Johnny I won't need it!

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - DAY

Danny arrives at a busy on-ramp where a line of people are queued up. They all look to be about his age. He gets in the back of the line and waits.

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - LATER

Danny hasn't made much progress and is now sitting down on top of his bag, smoking. Most cars drive by, but every once in a while they stop to pick someone up.

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - LATER

Danny is now standing at the front of the line with his thumb out. A baby blue VW Bus pulls up with its window down. A cheerful girl in her early 20s, CHLOE, smiles down at him.

CHLOE

Where ya headed?

DANNY

North. To Washington.

Chloe looks over at the driver, then back down at him.

CHLOE

Are you cool?

Danny pauses for a moment, then replies a little too eagerly.

DANNY

Yeah, I'm cool!

Chloe laughs, but the back door swings open to welcome him in anyways.

INT. VW BUS - DAY (MOVING)

The bus has shag-covered seats and macrame is draped over the tops of the windows. The driver, ASH, is a man in his early 30s with medium-length hair and glasses.

Danny sits behind him facing the back where GRACE, a pretty girl in her early 20s with flowers in her large hair, and JACKSON, a skinny man in his late 20s, are seated.

ASH  
Hi there! I'm Ash.

Ash reaches his hand back to where Danny is sitting and Danny shakes it.

DANNY  
I'm Danny.

ASH  
You met Chloe already.

Ash gestures toward Chloe in the passenger seat. Danny gives her a small wave then turns to the back. Grace reaches out her hand.

GRACE  
I'm Grace, nice to meet you.

Jackson shakes Danny's hand, too.

JACKSON  
Jackson. Hi.

ASH  
So, you're headed all the way up to Washington? Where about?

DANNY  
Seattle...Well, Kent. It's just south of the city.

ASH  
No shit? I'm headed to Seattle. After I drop these guys off.

DANNY  
Well, great! I'm in no rush, so that's perfect.

ASH  
Isn't it nice how life just works out, huh Danny?

Danny looks warily over his shoulder at Ash, but smiles.

DANNY  
Yeah, I guess so.

When he turns back Jackson has a joint extended out to him.

JACKSON

Smoke?

DANNY

Yes, thank you!

GRACE

So, what are you running from, Danny?

DANNY

No one. I mean. I'm not running. Not anymore. I'm going home.

GRACE

That's too bad, we've been on the run for years.

Grace and Jackson GIGGLE to each other.

CHLOE

You can never really go home, Danny, haven't you heard that?

He blushes at her reaction.

ASH

Sure he can. Sure you can, Danny. Just don't expect things to be the same, ya know?

DANNY

I'm counting on it.

JACKSON

What were you doing in The City?

DANNY

Just passing through, really. I was staying with some friends in Fremont, then this place in The Haight.

Grace makes a FAUX-PUKING noise.

GRACE

The Haight? Were you trying to score some smack? That scene is dead, man.

DANNY

I noticed.

CHLOE

Wait, where were you staying in The Haight?

DANNY

The house...No...What'd they call it...?

JACKSON

The Home? Shit. What the Hell were you doing with those crazies?

Danny laughs and shakes his head.

DANNY

My buddy's idea. He's still there.

CHLOE

You made the right choice. Stick with us, Danny. The Haight might be dead, but the Summer of Love is alive and well.

They all GIGGLE as Danny smiles to himself.

EXT. GOLDEN GATE BRIDGE - DAY

The bus makes its way north across the Golden Gate Bridge as the sun starts to set in the Pacific.

EXT. COASTAL ROAD - NIGHT

They pull to the side of the road next to a forested hillside. The ocean is visible through the trees. Ash and Chloe get out of the bus then open the back door. Jackson and Grace do too. Danny hesitates.

ASH

Alright, here we are.

DANNY

What...Where?

ASH

Just for the night. I'm dropping these folks here, remember? We'll be on our way in the morning.

Danny looks uneasy.

ASH (cont'd)  
You said you're in no rush, right?

Danny grabs his bag and follows.

DANNY  
Yeah, you're right. No rush. Where  
are we staying?

CHLOE  
You'll see.

They walk into the trees down toward the ocean.

EXT. BEACH - NIGHT

The sun is just about set when they reach the beach. It's serene and empty, except for a small structure in the distance. As they walk toward it the structure becomes more clear. It's a shack made out of driftwood.

EXT. BEACH SHACK - NIGHT

They sit outside the shack around a fire.

CHLOE  
See, Danny? Isn't it beautiful?

DANNY  
It is.

Jackson passes another joint around.

DANNY (cont'd)  
Who built this?

GRACE  
We did! With some friends who live up  
the hill. A bunch of us from the city  
are starting over out here. Away from  
all the noise. We bought some land  
nearby and are gonna build a home.  
It's just perfect, isn't it?

CHLOE  
But don't tell anyone.

Chloe puts her fingers up to her lips and winks.

CHLOE (cont'd)  
It's our little secret.

JACKSON

We've been tearing the road signs down for years to keep people from finding it.

CHLOE

You're pretty lucky to be here, Danny, you know that?

Chloe moves closer to Danny with a bottle of whiskey and hands it to him. He takes a drink.

DANNY

Well, no one's ever called me lucky before.

Ash digs into his bag and pulls something out.

ASH

You know what, we should celebrate.

He passes small tabs to the other three, then one to Danny. Danny looks down at it. It's printed with the same Mr. Natural comic the rolling papers had on them. Everyone else puts them on their tongues. Danny looks over at Chloe. She lightly nods her head and smiles. He looks back down at it, takes another swig of whiskey, then places it on his tongue.

EXT. BEACH SHACK - DAY

Danny wakes up in the same place he was sitting the night before and looks around. He's the only one there. The fire smolders and a small stream of smoke rises off of it.

DANNY

Hello?

Nothing.

DANNY (cont'd)

HELLO?!

Some birds nearby are startled and fly off. Danny stands up and brushes the sand off his clothes. He inspects the beach shack, but there's no sign of anyone having been there. He grabs his bag and starts walking up the beach.

EXT. COASTAL ROAD - DAY

When he reaches the road the VW Bus is still there. He peaks inside, but no one is in it.

In the daylight he can see that the street has a few businesses on it. There's a restaurant named "SMILEY'S" on one side and another named "SCOWLEY'S" on the other. He starts across the street.

INT. SCOWLEY'S CAFE - DAY

The cafe has a kitschy coastal interior with teal seats and white walls, every inch of which are covered in old photos and memorabilia. Danny walks in and looks around. A WAITRESS in her 50s stands behind the counter and another woman in her 40s, VALERIE, sits across from her drinking coffee. Danny pauses before approaching; their eyes follow him.

WAITRESS

Hello there. What can I get you?

DANNY

Umm, I actually just have a question.

Her eyebrows raise as she waits for him to ask.

DANNY (cont'd)

...Has anyone else been in here today?

WAITRESS

Sweetheart, you're going to have to be a little more specific than that.

DANNY

Sorry, have any other young peop...I mean. I'm looking for two guys and two girls. That's their van out there.

Danny points through the windows.

WAITRESS

I'm sorry sweetie, just a couple of regulars earlier and Valerie, here.

Danny looks over at Valerie and smiles. Then back at the waitress.

DANNY

Okay. Thanks.

He turns to leave and she stops him.

WAITRESS

Hang on, don't you want something to eat?

Danny's stomach audibly GROWLS at the mention of food.

DANNY

I...I'm okay. I'm not really hungry...

WAITRESS

Oh nonsense! Take a seat. It's on the house.

He cringes in embarrassment, but sits down.

INT. SCOWLEY'S CAFE - LATER

Danny is finishing up a plate of eggs and bacon and gulps down the last of his coffee.

WAITRESS

I knew you were hungry.

Valerie watches as Danny opens his wallet to peer inside. He lays his last dollar on the counter.

VALERIE

Your friends leave you, hun?

DANNY

Oh, no...I mean, they're not really my friends, we just met. But, yeah. I guess they did. Well, I mean, they couldn't have gone far. The van's still there.

VALERIE

Where are you headed?

DANNY

Home...North. To Washington.

She eyes him up, then says:

VALERIE

Well, I've got a ride outside. I'm just taking a break on my way up to Eureka, near the Oregon border. I've got a few stops to make, but I could have you there before nightfall.

Danny looks outside at the van and then back at her.

DANNY  
Yeah. Yeah, okay, that would be great!

EXT. COASTAL ROAD - DAY

Valerie leads Danny to a large, red box truck. On the bumper is a Mr. Natural sticker that says "Keep on Truckin'". Valerie gets in and opens the passenger door for him.

VALERIE  
Careful! It's a bit of a jump up.

Danny takes one more look back at the VW Bus then gets in.

EXT. HILLY HIGHWAY - DAY

The truck drives through the rolling hills of Sonoma County.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY (MOVING)

Danny watches as Valerie deftly speeds down the curvy highway.

DANNY  
You know, I was trying to get a job in shipping a couple days ago.

VALERIE  
Yeah? You and every other eighteen-year-old boy. Do us a favor and find another profession.

Danny is taken aback by her reaction. She laughs.

VALERIE (cont'd)  
Lighten up, hun, I'm just joking. Of course, there is some truth to it. Not sure if you've noticed, but there aren't too many of us women truck drivers out here. And they'd like to keep it that way, too. I've been doing this goin' on ten years now and they're always trying to replace me with some punk kid that can barely pee straight.

DANNY

Well, you don't have to worry about me. Couldn't even get a job at the ship yard until after the draft.

VALERIE

Aww, I'm sorry. Ya know, I've got a son a few years younger than you. I'm worried sick about the whole thing. Just hope the damn thing ends before...Well, you know.

DANNY

Me too.

VALERIE

We'll be alright. Just gotta keep on truckin'!

Valerie guffaws to herself and fishes out some pills from her pocket. She pops one in her mouth and takes a swig of coke. Danny tries to hide the inquisitive look on his face.

VALERIE (cont'd)

Sorry hun, how rude. You want one?

She hands him a small black pill.

DANNY

What is it?

She laughs at his innocence.

VALERIE

They're Black Beauties.

Nothing.

VALERIE (cont'd)

Bennies? Lid poppers? Eye openers?  
...Uppers?

Still nothing.

VALERIE (cont'd)

Speed?

DANNY

Oh! Sure. Speed. What's it do?

VALERIE

What's it sound like?

She laughs again, then calmly tries to quell his concerns.

VALERIE (cont'd)

It's like drinking ten cups of coffee all at once. I use 'em to stay awake on these long drives...Look, it ain't gonna kill ya.

Danny shrugs and swallows it.

EXT. FOREST HIGHWAY - DAY

The truck speeds down a highway lined with evergreens past a sign that reads "101 Eureka".

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY (MOVING)

Danny is talking a mile a minute as they drive.

DANNY

...And my mom, well, my mom's great. Don't get me wrong. But I just feel all this pressure all the time, you know? When Carl was your age he was doing this. Carl was always good at that. It drives me crazy. I get it! Carl was better than me! What do you want me to do?! At least I'm trying, right? We can't all be like Carl. Somebody's gotta flip burgers, and mop floors...and, and drive trucks!... Sorry, Val. You don't mind if I call you Val, do you?

She laughs and shakes her head.

VALERIE

It's okay. Sure, why not? Listen, we can pick back up on this, but we've got a stop coming up. Think you can help me out a bit?

DANNY

Oh yeah, what do we need to do? Anything you need I can help. Some heavy lifting? I've got you covered...

EXT. VINEYARD - DAY

The truck pulls up to a large barn outside of a vineyard where two workers are waiting. Valerie gets out to shake their hands and Danny follows.

The two workers pull back the barn doors and start carrying crates over to the truck. Valerie opens up the back and pulls herself up into the cargo area. She motions for Danny to do the same. The workers pass the crates up to Danny and Valerie, who stack them neatly in back.

INT. TRUCK CAB - DAY (MOVING)

They speed through Humboldt County and Danny starts to fall asleep. Valerie pops another pill and lets him rest as the sun starts to go down.

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - NIGHT

The truck is pulled over on a rural freeway, where the 299 breaks off from the 101. The sun is almost set.

INT. TRUCK CAB - NIGHT

Valerie gently wakes Danny.

VALERIE

Danny. Hey.

Danny wakes up and wipes his mouth.

DANNY

Huh? Are we here?

VALERIE

We're here. I'm heading east then down to Sacramento. You gonna be okay?

Danny takes a look outside the window.

DANNY

Yeah, yup! I'll be fine. Thank you so much, Val.

VALERIE

No problem, hun. Stay safe.

Danny pauses before leaving, then reaches over to give Valerie a hug. She smiles and hugs him back.

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - NIGHT

Valerie honks her horn as she pulls away, leaving Danny alone on the side of the road. The sun fades fast as Danny holds out his thumb with his bag over his shoulder. He doesn't have to wait long before a silver Chevy Corvair pulls to the side of the road.

GERALD, a man in his 30s with big glasses and a thick mustache, calls out from the driver seat.

GERALD  
Where ya goin'?

DANNY  
Seattle.

GERALD  
Hop in.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

The interior of the car is spotless, but Gerald still leans over to wipe down the dash in front of Danny before holding out his hand to introduce himself.

GERALD  
Gerald.

DANNY  
Danny.

GERALD  
Nice to meet you, Danny. I'm planning on driving through the night, should be there by morning.

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - NIGHT

The Chevy speeds off into the night.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT (MOVING)

Danny looks over at Gerald and smiles, then laughs uncomfortably.

DANNY  
So...You from Seattle?

GERALD  
Nope.

Danny nods and tries to think of something else to say. An awkward silence settles in. Danny starts to drum his hands on his leg, but Gerald glances over with an annoyed look.

DANNY  
Sorry.

EXT. COASTAL HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Chevy streaks down the 101, right along the Pacific.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT (MOVING)

Danny reaches for the radio to break up the silence.

DANNY  
How about some music?

Gerald blocks his hand from the controls.

GERALD  
Don't! Heh, sorry. I just, I have it programmed exactly how I want it, ya know? Here.

He flicks on the radio and presses one of the presets.

DANNY  
Thanks.

Danny fumbles around in his pocket and pulls out a lighter then pops a cigarette into his mouth. He pauses and looks over at Gerald.

DANNY (cont'd)  
Ehm. Do you mind if I, uh...?

GERALD  
Oooh. I'd really prefer if you didn't smoke in the car.

Danny nods and puts the cigarette away.

DANNY  
Sure, sure.

Danny yawns.

GERALD

You tired? Go ahead and sleep, I don't mind.

DANNY

Really? Cuz I've got no problem staying up.

GERALD

No no, don't worry about it. Get some shut eye.

Danny closes his eyes and rests his head against the window.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Chevy weaves through the mountains on the 199.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Danny BREATHES heavily as he sleeps. Gerald looks over at him out of the corner of his eye. He shifts uneasily in his seat, but focuses on the road. Danny's BREATHING gets louder and louder until it becomes full-blown SNORING.

Gerald SIGHS and shakes his head, trying to ignore it. He fidgets in his seat then EXHALES sharply. Finally, he reaches over and nudges Danny.

GERALD

Hey...Hey!

Danny readjusts and stops for a moment, but almost immediately starts SNORING again.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

They turn left under an overpass onto the I-5.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Gerald turns the MUSIC up louder, but Danny's SNORING cuts right through it. Gerald shoves him again, but it's no use. He tries SINGING along to the radio to distract himself, but eventually gives up in frustration. He flips the music off and SIGHS angrily. He slows the car down.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Chevy pulls over to the shoulder.

INT. CHEVY - NIGHT

Gerald shakes Danny awake with both arms.

DANNY  
Wha-where are we?

GERALD  
Get out.

DANNY  
What?

GERALD  
Get the fuck out of my car!

DANNY  
Wha, why?

Danny looks around frantically. Passing cars fly by them, rocking the Chevy.

DANNY (cont'd)  
This is the freeway, man. You can't  
just kick me out on the freeway!

Gerald shoves him again and raises a fist. Danny grabs his bag and grips the door handle. He reluctantly opens it and pulls his stuff out with him.

EXT. MOUNTAIN HIGHWAY - NIGHT

The Chevy speeds off before the passenger door is even closed.

DANNY  
Hey, what the fuck, man!? What am I  
supposed to do?!

Cars whiz by, illuminating Danny in their headlights as they pass. Danny throws his bag down, kicks it and screams:

DANNY (cont'd)  
Fuuuuuuuuuck!

He plops himself down against the metal railing and fights back tears, breathing heavily before gathering himself.

He picks up his bag and starts walking backward with his thumb out, shielding his eyes when headlights get too close.

Eventually, a car starts to slow down and pulls onto the shoulder right in front of him. Danny breathes a sigh of relief. Suddenly, the top of the car lights up red and blue.

Two young policeman get out and approach him. The driver, JAMES, is tall with dark hair. His partner, RICK, is short and blonde. Danny drops his bag and puts his hands behind his head.

INT. POLICE CAR - NIGHT (MOVING)

Danny slumps down in the back seat awkwardly with his hands cuffed behind him. His bag gets tossed in, too, landing heavily on his lap. The car speeds off and with each bump and swerve Danny gets tossed around, struggling to keep from falling over or hitting his head.

DANNY  
Hey, man. Take it easy!

The officers laugh. James swerves the car violently and Danny flies across the back seat.

RICK  
(mockingly)  
Hey, man. Take it easy!

Danny scowls into the rear-view mirror then casts his gaze out the window.

JAKE  
Ya know, we've had just about enough  
of you longhairs coming up here,  
invading our towns. You're like a  
disease.

Jake swerves the car again, but Danny is braced for it.

DANNY  
Where are we?

JAKE  
Goddamn hippie doesn't even know  
where he is.

Rick turns his head back to look at Danny, then shines a flashlight in his face. Danny squints and turns his head.

RICK  
What kinda drugs are you on, kid?

He turns the flashlight off and tucks it away. He returns with his badge. The leather badge holder is emblazoned with a patch that reads "THE GREAT SEAL OF STATE OF JEFFERSON".

RICK (cont'd)  
Welcome to the fifty first state.

DANNY  
State of Jefferson...? The what?

Jake swerves the car again, sending Danny sideways.

INT. JAIL - NIGHT

Jake shoves Danny into a small room with four desks facing two large cells along the back wall. Danny's forehead and lip have small cuts and his nose is bleeding. Rick follows close behind. KELLY, an overweight policeman in his 50s with glasses, sits at one of the desks, going through stacks of paperwork. He slides his glasses down to analyze the situation.

KELLY  
Whatcha got?

RICK  
Hitchhiker. Found him walking down I-Five outside of Grants Pass.

KELLY  
Well, what the Hell did you bring him here for?

JAKE  
Ehm. Sir, it's illegal to hitchhike on the interstate.

KELLY  
I know goddamn well it's illegal to hitchhike on the interstate. You should have just dropped him off in town. Now we've gotta process him and one of you idiots is gonna have to spend the night babysitting.

Kelly SIGHS and puts down his papers. With some labor he pulls himself up out of his chair and walks over to them.

KELLY (cont'd)  
You okay, son?

DANNY  
Ye, yes sir.

Kelly holds Danny by the chin and inspects his face.

KELLY  
Get these cuffs off him.

Rick fumbles around with the lock until Danny's hands are free. Danny rubs his wrists and stretches out his arms.

KELLY (cont'd)  
We'll have to keep you overnight, but you should be able to get in front of a judge first thing in the morning.

DANNY  
A judge?

Kelly gently leads Danny over to one of the cells and motions for him to get in.

KELLY  
It's just a formality. You hungry?

Danny nods. Kelly addresses the officers.

KELLY (cont'd)  
Get him some hot food and some bedding.

Kelly closes the cell door and locks it.

KELLY (cont'd)  
Try and get some sleep.

Kelly turns to walk back to his desk and Danny stops him.

DANNY  
Ehm, sir? Uhh...Where am I?

KELLY  
Jackson County Jail.

Danny still has a puzzled look on his face.

KELLY (cont'd)  
In Medford...Oregon.

DANNY  
(quietly)  
Oh! Well, uh, what's...what's the  
State of Jefferson?

Kelly rolls his eyes and yells back at Jake and Rick.

KELLY  
You goddamn hicks still at it with  
that State of Jefferson bull shit?  
Jesus Christ, give it up.

INT. JAIL CELL - NIGHT

Danny lays on a metal bench along the wall and tries to get some sleep. A finished plate of food sits on the ground beside him. He readjusts the pillow and blanket underneath him, but its no use. His attention drifts to the walls of the cell, scratched and graffitied by those that came before him. His hand reaches up to trace a crude illustration of Mr. Natural.

INT. JAIL CELL - DAY

Danny is awakened by the RAPPING of a night stick on the cell bars. Rick is standing there with a plate of eggs and sausage. His cocky demeanor has waned into a submissive tone.

RICK  
Breakfast. You can see the judge in  
an hour.

He slides the meal into Danny's cell and then slumps back over to his desk. Danny smiles and grabs the plate.

INT. COURTROOM - DAY

Danny looks freshly showered as he stands in front of the JUDGE, a white-haired woman in her 70s. The only other people in the courtroom are the arresting officers and a BAILIFF. She strains her eyes and holds her glasses in one hand and the report in the other. She sets it down and then looks out at Danny.

JUDGE  
What business do you have here in  
Jackson County, young man?

DANNY  
No business, ma'am. Just passing  
through.

BAILIFF  
Your honor.

DANNY  
Your honor.

JUDGE  
Where from and where to?

DANNY  
From Oakland, I mean, San Francisco,  
ma'am. Ehm. Your honor. Heading home.  
To Washington. Err, Seattle. Well,  
Kent really. You see what had  
happened was I-

The judge snaps at his verbosity.

JUDGE  
-Just answer the questions I ask you  
as succinctly as possible.

DANNY  
Yes, your honor.

JUDGE  
What were you doing out hitchhiking  
on the interstate? You do know that  
it's against the law to do so?

DANNY  
My ride kicked me out, your honor.

The judge references the report.

JUDGE  
It says here you may have been under  
the influence. Is that why they  
kicked you out? Were you on drugs?

DANNY  
Not at the time...I mean, no, your  
honor.

She glares down at him, then tosses the report aside. She  
looks over at Jake and Rick.

JUDGE  
You two brought him in?

JAKE  
Yes, your honor.

RICK  
Yes, your honor.

JUDGE  
Why?

JAKE  
It's illegal to hitchhike on the interstate, your honor.

JUDGE  
I know it's illegal to hitchhike on the interstate, I just said it's illegal to hitchhike on the interstate! But why did you bring him in? Why not just give him a warning and drop him off instead of wasting everyone's time?

RICK  
Well, as you said, your honor-

JUDGE  
-Rhetorical question, officer.

Jake and Rick look a bit confused.

JUDGE (cont'd)  
That means you don't have to answer.

She addresses Danny again.

JUDGE (cont'd)  
Now, I'm going to let you walk, but with the assumption that you will return home, and that you not be caught hitchhiking in Jackson County again. We get too many people...like you...coming into our communities causing trouble. I suggest you make some life changes, young man. Find a job. And for God's sake, get a haircut.

The judge HAMMERS the gavel and Danny smiles.

EXT. FREEWAY RAMP - DAY

Danny stands on the side of the road with his bag over his shoulder and thumb out. A highway sign with "62" is visible behind him. A few cars drive by until another baby blue VW Bus pulls up next to him.

The passenger window rolls down and Danny approaches it. There's no one in it but the driver, who leans over to talk to him. Danny is surprised to see Ash behind the wheel.

ASH  
Hey there, where ya headed?

DANNY  
Ash, it's me, Danny.

Ash squints his eyes.

ASH  
Danny...Where do I know you from?

DANNY  
I...you gave me a ride a few days ago, remember? We stopped at the beach to spend the night...Just north of San Francisco.

ASH  
Ah yeah...I was just in San Francisco. What did you say your name was again?

DANNY  
...It's Danny

ASH  
Right. Okay. Well, where ya headed, Danny?

DANNY  
North...To Washington...

ASH  
Where about?

DANNY  
Seattle...Well, Kent. It's just south of the city.

ASH  
No shit? I'm headed to Seattle! Isn't it nice how life just works out, huh Danny?

DANNY  
Yeah, I guess it is.

INT. VW BUS - DAY (MOVING)

Danny tries to ignore the unnecessary déjà vu.

DANNY  
Thanks for picking me up.

ASH  
No problem. Say, you don't mind if we  
make a quick stop on the way, do ya?  
Shouldn't take more than a few hours.

Danny SIGHS and accepts his fate.

DANNY  
Yeah, sure...I'm in no rush.

ASH  
Great! That's great.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The bus winds its way up into the mountains.

EXT. DIRT ROAD - DAY

They pull onto a dirt road in the middle of the woods.

INT. VW BUS - DAY

The bus pulls to a stop in front of an old cabin.

ASH  
Here we are.

Ash opens his door to get out. Danny follows.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Ash opens the back of the bus and digs around. He pulls out two pairs of hand shears and hands one to Danny.

ASH  
Ever done any gardening?

DANNY  
Umm...No. Not really.

ASH

Oh it's easy, you'll do fine.

Ash walks Danny around the outside of the small cabin. An outhouse stands a few yards away from it. There's a stack of wood leaned against one wall and a rusty old tractor parked nearby. The grounds are unkept and overgrown.

ASH (cont'd)

Ahhh. It's so great to be in nature.

When they turn the corner to the back side Danny stops dead. There's a huge field of marijuana growing in the middle of a clearing.

DANNY

Holy shit.

Ash proudly admires the growth and inhales deeply.

ASH

Beautiful, isn't it?

He gets right to work on giving Danny a tutorial.

ASH (cont'd)

So, all ya have to do is grip the plant by the stem, here, and take your shears and...

He snips the entire plant down.

ASH (cont'd)

Then just carefully come drop it here. Try not to jostle it too much or you'll lose some of the buds.

He carries the plant over to a wheelbarrow.

ASH (cont'd)

We'll just do a couple barrowfuls until we fill up the back of the van.

Danny is still staring in amazement.

ASH (cont'd)

Come on, give it a try.

Danny snaps out of it and finds a plant to start with. He watches Ash cut down another one and then does the same. Once the wheel barrow is full Ash wheels it over to the van. They load it in then head back to cut more.

INT. VW BUS - DAY (MOVING)

Danny looks back at the harvest and then over at Ash.

DANNY

So all this is yours? That field and everything?

ASH

Oh yeah. Been coming out here for years. It was my daddy's cabin and when he passed away and none of the other siblings wanted it. Too much trouble. But it's perfect for me. Far enough out that nobody'll ever bother with it. Keeps some money in my pocket.

Danny looks back at their haul again. Ash smiles.

ASH (cont'd)

You want some?

Ash digs in the glove box and pulls out a full bag of weed. He hands it to Danny.

ASH (cont'd)

Just a little thanks for the help.

DANNY

Where are you taking the rest of it?

ASH

Oh, not too far. We'll be there in no time.

EXT. MOUNTAIN ROAD - DAY

The bus slowly makes its way down the windy mountain road.

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

The wooded road eventually opens up to a flat highway surrounded by farmland. The bus passes by a police car and Danny hides his face a bit as it does. It turns in the opposite direction. They pass by a sign that reads "INTERSTATE 84".

The rural scenery is interrupted by restaurants, industrial buildings, and a strip mall along the highway. The bus takes the exit into the town.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - DAY

They drive through the gridded streets of a small town until they turn into a mobile home park.

INT. VW BUS - DAY (MOVING)

Danny stares out the window, making unintentional eye contact with residents as they pass.

EXT. MOBILE HOME PARK - DAY

Children play with a ball in the street and bike alongside the bus as they pass. They pull up to a small red trailer.

INT. VW BUS - DAY

Ash leaves the engine running while they wait outside the house. He nervously taps the steering wheel and checks his watch. He looks over at Danny; reminded that he's there Ash stops fidgeting and laughs.

ASH  
We're a little early.

Danny slumps down in his chair and peaks out the window.

DANNY  
Who are we waiting for?

ASH  
There he is.

BRUCE, a large man with a shaved head, comes out of the house followed by OTTO, a skinny man with long hair and a thick, gray beard. They both wear leather vests with patches and have pistols on their hips. Danny looks over at Ash for guidance. Ash opens the door to get out and motions for Danny to stay. Danny watches as he greets the two men, then walks them around to the side of the bus.

EXT. RED TRAILER - DAY

They open the bus door and stop when they notice Danny.

BRUCE  
What the fuck?!

Otto grabs Ash and firmly presses him against the bus.

OTTO

You're supposed to be alone. Who's the kid?

Bruce pulls out his gun and opens the passenger door. He motions for Danny to step outside with it.

BRUCE

Get the fuck out of the car.

Danny obeys. Bruce spins him around and shoves his face against the door. He pats him down and pushes him into the hard metal frame.

ASH

He's...nobody. Just a friend!

OTTO

How many times we told you to come alone? That no one else can know our location?!

He presses Ash against the bus a little harder.

ASH

I'm sorry!

OTTO

These goddamn hippies never listen.

BRUCE

What are you doing here, kid?

DANNY

Nothing! I'm just trying to get home.

He twists Danny's arm.

DANNY (cont'd)

I swear! I'm just a hitchhiker. Ash needed some help at the cabin and I needed a ride.

OTTO

Is that right?

ASH

Yes! I'm sorry. I picked him up this morning. He's just some kid. He doesn't even know where we are.

The two men look at each other and nod. They let Danny and Ash go. Otto pats Ash affectionately on the shoulder and looks inside the bus.

OTTO  
Well alright, let's see what we've got.

He and Bruce laugh with joy at the sight. They begin hauling everything into the house.

BRUCE  
A little help, boys?

Danny and Ash start unloading the van and carrying the plants into the garage of the red trailer. When they're finished Bruce hands Ash a stack of cash.

BRUCE (cont'd)  
Alone, next time.

INT. VW BUS - DAY

Ash gets in with a big smile on his face and looks over at Danny. He waves the money in his hand.

ASH  
Alright! Let's get this show on the road.

Danny looks like he's going to be sick.

DANNY  
No more stops...Please?

ASH  
No more stops!

EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - DAY

The bus cruises down the highway as the sun starts to set.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

They come to a bridge over the Columbia River and pass by a sign that reads "WELCOME TO Washington".

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT (MOVING)

Light rain hits the windshield as they drive through a suburban landscape. The taillights of traffic distort and illuminate through the wet glass.

DANNY  
Not too much further.

Danny takes a look down at the clock. It's 11:47PM. He looks out the window and bites his lip.

DANNY (cont'd)  
Actually, could you turn in here?

EXT. BUBBA'S PLACE - NIGHT

They pull off the road and into a parking lot. There's a bar with a sign that reads "Bubba's Place" overhead.

INT. VW BUS - NIGHT

Danny reaches his hand out to shake Ash's.

DANNY  
Thanks, man.

ASH  
Any time.

Danny starts to leave and Ash stops him.

ASH (cont'd)  
Some advice? Don't be in such a rush, kid.

Danny forces a smile, then grabs his bag and steps outside. It's raining harder now, so he slams the door and runs to the bar.

INT. BUBBA'S PLACE - NIGHT

Danny wipes his shoes on the mat when he walks in and brushes some of the rain from his clothes. It's a small old bar with a few tables and chairs on one side and a billiards table on the other. A couple of men in their 30s play pool and a lone patron sits at the bar. The bartender washes glasses behind it.

Danny approaches the man at the bar and sits down next to him. It's his father, Frank. Frank slowly looks over at Danny and then perks up when he sees him.

FRANK  
Danny? It's my son, Danny!

Frank motions to the bartender and wraps his arm around his son.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Get this man a beer.

Danny tries to shrug him off, but Frank just pulls him in closer.

DANNY  
No, I'm good, dad.

FRANK  
Come on! Be a man for once.

The bartender sets a beer down in front of Danny.

FRANK (cont'd)  
How the Hell are ya? California kid now, huh? What are you doing back?

DANNY  
I...I don't know...

Danny takes a drink of his beer.

DANNY (cont'd)  
I heard mom kicked you out?

FRANK  
That no good backstabbing bitch...

Frank doesn't have the energy to get worked up and slouches down in sadness.

FRANK (cont'd)  
What'd you come here for, even? To make fun of your old man?

DANNY  
No. I, I guess...I just had to see if it was true. You okay?

FRANK  
I'm fine. I've always taken care of myself, haven't I?

DANNY  
Where are you staying?

FRANK  
Here and there, what's it to you?

Danny takes another drink, searching for why he came at all.

DANNY  
You remember the last thing you said  
to Carl, before he left?

Frank turns away from Danny and scoffs.

FRANK  
I don't want to talk about that.

DANNY  
How you were finally proud of him,  
now that he was-

FRANK  
-I said I don't want to talk about  
it!

Frank POUNDS his fist against the bar. Danny SIGHS and takes another drink.

DANNY  
You know...my draft date got set.  
It's...What's today, Wednesday? I  
think it's tomorrow morning.

Frank perks up again, but this time he grabs Danny by the shoulder and looks him right in the eyes.

FRANK  
Don't go, Danny. Whatever happens.

Danny is taken aback.

DANNY  
What?

FRANK  
Listen to me. I've got some old  
friends up in Canada. Hell! You're  
better off in jail. Just don't let  
them send you. Whatever they say  
they'll do to you.

Danny grabs his father's hand and tries to pull it away, but he strengthens his grip.

FRANK (cont'd)  
Promise me.

DANNY  
Alright! Alright...I promise.

Frank hugs him and buries his head into Danny's shoulder. Surprised, Danny places his hand on Frank's back for a moment, but then stands up.

DANNY (cont'd)  
I gotta go.

Frank wipes his eyes.

FRANK  
Yeah, fine. Go.

Danny leaves him sitting alone at the bar.

EXT. SUBURBAN ROAD - NIGHT

Danny walks with his bag through the rain, illuminated by streetlights.

EXT. WALLACE HOUSE - NIGHT

Danny stands at the front door and knocks. The lights flick on in the house and the front door opens to reveal his mother, Marie.

MARIE  
Danny?

They both pause for a moment, then Danny drops his bag and hugs her. He buries his head in her shoulder and cries.

MARIE (cont'd)  
Shhhh, shhh. It's okay. It's okay.

INT. WALLACE HOUSE - NIGHT

Marie brings Danny a towel and a warm drink. He dries off his hair from the rain and wipes his face then sits down on the couch.

MARIE  
The kids are asleep. Want me to wake them?

DANNY

No...Thanks. I'll say hi in the morning.

MARIE

How long are you home?

DANNY

I...I don't know. A bit. Is that okay?

MARIE

Of course! As long as you want. Oh it's so good to see you. Are you sure you're okay?

She inspects his face, still lightly cut up from the encounter with the police. He gently brushes her hand away.

DANNY

Happy to be home.

MARIE

Do you want me to fix you up something? You look like you haven't eaten in weeks.

DANNY

No. I'm fine, really. Just tired.

She gives him one last hug and kisses him on the forehead.

INT. WALLACE HOUSE - SHOWER - NIGHT

Danny holds himself up against the shower wall and closes his eyes. He wipes his hand over his face and SIGHS.

INT. WALLACE HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Danny, wearing a white shirt and dark boxers, walks into his childhood room. It's divided into two halves with a bed on each side. The right side is covered in photos of musicians torn from magazines and the left a large map of the world.

Danny sets down his bag and walks over to the dresser on the left side, noticing some new additions. There's a black and white portrait of Carl in his marine uniform. Danny picks it up and runs his finger across the photo.

Next to it is a folded up American flag. Laying on top of the flag are four medals.

Danny picks up each one and studies them: the Vietnam Service Medal, the National Defense Service Medal, the Purple Heart, and the Medal of Honor.

Behind the flag is a framed newspaper clipping with his brother's photo that reads "Kent Marine Sgt. Wallace Killed in Vietnam".

Another framed photo on the dresser shows the two of them as kids; Carl's arm is wrapped around Danny. Danny picks it up and walks across the room. He sits down on the edge of his bed and stares at the photo for a moment, then sets it on his nightstand. He turns the light off and lies down. A streetlight dimly casts light onto his face through the blinds covering his window.

He stares up at the ceiling and then closes his eyes.

FADE OUT.

THE END