THE SQUID AND THE WHALE

by

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FRANK (V.O.)

Mom and me versus you and Dad.

INT. TENNIS COURTS - DAY

A big tent-like bubble. About eight courts. Mostly empty.

An older couple plays on 2. On 5, BERNARD BERKMAN, late 40's, and WALT BERKMAN, 16, play against JOAN BERKMAN, late 30's, and FRANK BERKMAN, 17. Frank, who's skilled for his age, serves a bullet.

BERNARD

Long.

FRANK

That looked pretty good.

BERNARD

It was out.

JOAN

(for Frank's benefit)

It did look good.

WALT

Frank, it was out!

BERNARD

It's my call. Out!

Frank looks back in disbelief.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

(aside to Walt)

If you can, try and hit at your mother's backhand, it's pretty weak.

WALT

Got it.

Frank serves a soft second serve which Walt smacks to Joan's backhand. She can't return it.

WALT (CONT'D)

Yes!

JOAN

Don't gloat, Walt.

Frank tosses the balls back over the net to Bernard.

BERNARD

5 games to 3, us.

Bernard, clearly self-taught but effective, serves into the net.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Fuck! Come on, Bernard.

JOAN
Bernard, don't curse!

BERNARD
I'm cursing at myself.

Bernard serves. Frank returns it. Walt volleys at his mother's head. She ducks. It's in.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Nice shot.

WALT
Thanks.

JOAN
(growing tense)
Watch out, Walt.

WALT
It's part of the game, Mom.

Bernard serves. Joan returns it. Bernard hits an approach shot and goes to the net. Joan hits a weak lob and Bernard smashes it. The ball smacks off Joan's back and sails onto another court. Bernard laughs.

WALT (CONT'D)
Yes!

Joan, disgusted, drops her racquet and walks off the court.

BERNARD
Joan! I'm sorry! It was an accident!

Bernard goes after her. Frank and Walt approach the net. They watch Bernard and Joan talk over by the entrance.

WALT
(shakes his head, smiling)
You got to get a second serve.

Joan, angrily, walks out leaving Bernard behind. Bernard waves for the kids to follow. Both the boys groan.

INT/EXT. THE BERKMAN'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

TITLE:

Park Slope, Brooklyn, New York 1986

Bernard drives an old maroon Peugeot. Joan in the passenger seat.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

In the back, Walt listens to his Walkman as he pulls on a loose string on the back of his father's seat. Frank reads a book on the Galapagos Islands.

INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Frank drinks mouthwash, gargles and swallows it. He readjusts the position of a ceramic turtle on a shelf full of different size turtles. His walls are covered with posters of Vitas Gerulaitis, Arthur Ashe and pictures of animals from the Galapagos Island. He climbs into bed. Joan sits beside him.

FRANK

Did Dad hit you on purpose?

JOAN

No. He wouldn't do that, but he got too caught up in the game.

FRANK

It felt on purpose.

JOAN

(Pause)

I know what you mean. But it wasn't.

They both say nothing for a moment.

FRANK

Are you getting a divorce? You promised when we were in New Hampshire you and Dad would always be married.

JOAN

Which New Hampshire?

FRANK

The one where the cat got caught in the radiator.

JOAN

I don't remember.

FRANK

You did. I asked you when we were in New Hampshire and you promised.

Joan studies his face.

JOAN

Did I? Hmm.

FRANK

(Pause)

Do the ant with the iron boots.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Okay, but you're getting too old for that.

She takes his bare foot and walks with her fingernails across its bottom.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Here comes the ant with the iron boots.

Frank's face clenches, both loving and hating the ticklishness.

INT. BROOKLYN HOUSE - NIGHT

A party. Kids gather in clusters. Walt and his buddies, LANCE and JEFFREY, 16, hang out by the window. Walt lectures:

WALT
It's Welles' masterpiece, really. Many people think it's Citizen Kane, but Magnificent Ambersons, if it hadn't been ruined by the studio, would've been his crowning achievement. As it is, it's still brilliant. It's the old story, genius not being recognized by the industry.

LANCE
It sounds great. Who's in it?

WALT
(pause)
Orson Welles? I don't know, I haven't seen it yet. I've seen stills.
(confidence returning)
My Dad turned me on to it.

They watch SOPHIE GREENBERG, 17, who is probably going to be quite pretty, but hasn't gotten there yet, across the room talking to her friends.

JEFFREY
Sophie's looking good.

LANCE
Walt, I heard she likes you.

WALT
She's kind of cute.

JEFFREY
Very cute.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
Yeah, she's cute. She's not gorgeous, though. She's not Kate Roache cute.

KATE ROACHE, 16, one of those girls who got real pretty real fast, talks to a group of boys.

LANCE
No, but who is? I mean, besides Kate Roache. And Kate just likes college assholes.

JEFFREY
Dicks. She's a whore.

OTTO, 16, their other friend approaches. Lance holds out his finger like it's radar and picking up a signal coming from Otto. He beeps quicker and quicker.

LANCE
Ooh, my loser detector is going off...beep...beep...beep...beep...

Otto is clearly used to this, but still annoyed.

OTTO
Okay, enough.

LANCE
You know Otto's never jerked off.

WALT
Really?

OTTO
Thanks, Lance. Last time I confide in you at a sleepover.

JEFFREY
Why wouldn't you jerk off?

OTTO
Never occurred to me.

WALT
You think Sophie's cute enough?

JEFFREY
For what?

WALT
To be my girlfriend.

JEFFREY
Yeah, why not?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

LANCE
I heard she took her shirt off for Nelson Barton over break.

WALT
Really? He's an ass. Isn't she a senior, she'll be leaving for college.

LANCE
You don't have to marry her.

JEFFREY
Just fuck her. Fuck her ass. With your cock.

They both look at Jeffrey, taken aback.

WALT
Jesus.

Sophie looks in Walt's direction. He looks away, then looks back and she's no longer looking.

OMITTED

INT. BERKMAN LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Frank walks down the stairs, ready for school. Bernard is folding up the couch, trying to do it quickly.

FRANK
What are you doing?

BERNARD
Just fixing up the couch.

FRANK
Did you sleep there?

BERNARD
(pause)
Yeah, our bed is hurting my back.

FRANK
Isn't the couch worse than the bed? For backs?

BERNARD
No. This...this is better.

WALT walks Frank to school. They both carry their bookbags.

(CONTINUED)
FRANK
When does Mom's story come out in the magazine?

WALT
It's not a magazine, it's a literary journal. Next month, I think.

FRANK
It'll be weird having two writers as parents.

WALT
Well...Dad influenced her. She never wrote before she met him.

FRANK
I haven't read any of Dad's books.

WALT
I've looked at them. They're great. Very dense. I think he needs a new agent. It's been too long since his last book. The publishing world isn't receptive always to real literary talent.

FRANK
Maybe Mom will be famous instead.

WALT
Dad's the writer.

FRANK
But maybe Mom's better.

WALT
That's way off base, Frank. Way off base.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

INSERT: A sign-up sheet written in three colors of magic marker on poster board tacked up on a bulletin board. It reads: "CAN YOU DO SOMETHING NO ONE ELSE CAN? PROVE IT AT THE ANNUAL MIDWOOD HIGH TALENT SHOW. BE THERE OR BE RECTANGULAR."

A rectangle made of yarn is glued to the bottom of the sign.

WALT and another kid, TONY, study the poster.

WALT
What are you gonna do, Tony?
TONY
Puppets. I make my own puppets and perform these rather elaborate and innovative narratives that I invent for them. Yourself?

WALT
(shrugs)
I think I might just do a song on guitar.

INT. TENNIS COURTS - DAY

The bubble. Frank, in his mismatched whites, serves to the instructor, IVAN, late 30's. CARL, 17, waits his turn at the baseline. Bernard watches from the sidelines.

FRANK
Ivan hit with Arthur Ashe once.

CARL
Wasn't he ranked like four hundred and two or something?

FRANK
Two hundred and sixty-eight. He said Ashe was a gentleman and thanked Ivan after they hit. Ivan could've been a champion if he hadn't hurt his knee.

Ivan jogs to the net.

IVAN
Okay, brother, let's see some ground strokes.

Ivan volleys to Frank who smacks a bullet way out.

IVAN (CONT'D)
You gotta ease up there, my brother. Jimmy Connors hits everything as hard as he can, but we can't all get away with that. Let's see a backhand.

Frank tries his weak, flat one handed backhand.

IVAN (CONT'D)
Two hands. My brother, who taught you these junkyard strokes?

FRANK
My Dad. He's self-taught.

IVAN
I heard that. Well, we're gonna have to undo some of this damage.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRANK
He won't like that.

IVAN
Hey, Bernard, you teaching my brother junkyard chip shots?

Bernard perks up and jogs onto the court.

BERNARD
A one handed backhand is an elegant stroke.

IVAN
My brother doesn't want a weak chip shot for a backhand.

FRANK
I don't care.

BERNARD
It's McEnroe's stroke. He's a master of the chip game.

Ivan shrugs, checks his watch and turns to the boys.

IVAN
Okay, my brothers, that's it for today.

BERNARD
Ivan, you want to hit a little?

IVAN
I got a few minutes.

BERNARD
Frank, you and Carl hang out. Give me your racquet.

CUT TO:

Bernard holds Frank's junior racquet and, in his street clothes, waits at the baseline. He dabs his forehead with Frank's single wristband. They begin. Ivan has fluid strokes, Bernard his awkward slices. There's a palpable tension as the two men hit. Bernard playing full out. Frank and Carl watch, impressed Bernard can hold his own. Bernard hits a slice backhand down the line and approaches the net. Ivan puts it away.

INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

Bernard drives, having sweated through his shirt and pants. Frank, in the front seat.

(CONTINUED)
BERNARD
Are you interested in any arts?

FRANK
I wouldn't mind being a pro.

BERNARD
It's very hard to be a professional player. As good as even someone like Ivan is, he isn't in a league with McEnroe or Connors.

FRANK
I don't mean a pro like that. I mean, like a pro at the bubble. Like Ivan.

BERNARD
You don't want to be a pro.

(pause)
I'm sure I lost my parking space so we're gonna have to drive around.

FRANK
Can you drop me off?

BERNARD
No. I picked you up, the least you can do is ride around with me.

FRANK
(resigned)
Okay.

11 INT. WA1T'S ROOM - NIGHT

We START on the record sleeve of Pink Floyd's "The Wall" and MOVE to the sheet music for the song, "Hey You". We CONTINUE up to Walt, who sits crosslegged, headphones on, playing along on guitar.

12 INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bernard and Joan sit on the couch watching as Walt plays and sings the same Pink Floyd song. Frank sings back up.

WALT
"Hey you. Out there in the cold..."

The boys finish the song. Bernard and Joan applaud.

JOAN
Terrific, honeys!

BERNARD
Walt, did you write that song?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
Yes.

Frank looks at Walt, surprised.

WALT (CONT'D)
Frank had some good ideas too.

Joan smiles at Frank. He shrugs modestly, but confused.

BERNARD
Very dense. Very interesting.

WALT
Yeah. I signed up for the talent thing they have at school.

JOAN
{suddenly stern}
Great. Make sure you practice a lot.

WALT
{annoyed}
Mom...I'll be fine.

JOAN
Just remember, you'll be in front of a lot of people.

WALT
Mom, don't ruin the whole thing for me.

BERNARD
You'll win. If you don't win, something's wrong with them -- which is probably the case actually. People can be very stupid.

The phone rings. Joan, in an overly casual gesture, stands and walks tightly, but briskly into the kitchen.

JOAN
I'll get it.

Bernard watches her disappear.

BERNARD
Walt, would you like to come to my class tomorrow after school?

WALT
Yeah.

FRANK
Could I come?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

BERNARD
You have tennis.
(pause)
You’re going to be doing that which is its own thing.

A muffled “Hello” from the other room, some hushed conversation. Bernard still looks in Joan’s direction, trying to make out what she’s saying, his face darkening.

FRANK
Look how young Dad looks.

Frank holds a copy of Under Water, a novel by Bernard Berkman. He shows Walt the photo of their Dad on the back of the book.

WALT
That’s funny.

They laugh. Bernard’s eyes remain fixed on the kitchen.

WALT (CONT’D)
Dad, can I have this?

BERNARD
Okay.

WALT
Would you write something in it?

Bernard, distracted, opens the book, scribbles “Best Wishes” and his signature. A moment, then he reconsiders and writes “Dad” in parentheses. Walt examines it, smiles, and says cheerily:

WALT (CONT’D)
Thanks.

INT. BROOKLYN COLLEGE CLASSROOM - DAY

Bernard sits around a table with fifteen GRADUATE STUDENTS. Walt sits there as well. LILI THORN, 24, reads her story.

LILI
“I absorb sex indiscriminately, numb and impartial. I suck men of their interiors, a fuck that unites John, Dan, Scott. Whomever. In the popular lust and paternal hunt for my possession...”

We move around the room of students, who mostly listen politely or with vague interest. One is a burly, curly haired GUY who stares intently at Lili, but doesn’t appear to be listening. Walt is fascinated. Bernard watches, also very interested.
Bernard drives, in a bright mood. Walt in the seat next to him.

BERNARD
She's a very risky writer, Lili. Very racy. I mean, exhibiting her cunt in that fashion is very racy. I mean Lili has her influences in post modern literature, it's a bit derivative of Kafka, but for a student, very racy. Did you get that it was her cunt?

WALT
Oh, yeah.

BERNARD
Did you like it?

WALT
Yeah. A lot.

BERNARD
You'd like Kafka. One of my predecessors. Particularly The Metamorphosis.

WALT
(committing to memory)
The Metamorphosis.

Bernard turns the car onto their block.

BERNARD
No fucking spaces.

WALT
I'll keep you company while we look.

BERNARD
Thank you.

WALT
Dad, what were your wives like before Mom?

BERNARD
Wife really. The first one was annulled. I was nineteen.

WALT
What was she like?

BERNARD
The annulled one?
CONTINUED:

WALT
No, the one you'd call a wife.

BERNARD
(thinks)
Difficult.

The car turns the corner. Joan and a MAN are talking very close. Walt cranes his neck to get a better look. Bernard sees this too.

WALT
That's Mom.

BERNARD
(blankly)
Yeah, that's mom.

They keep driving.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
(pause, to himself)
What was she wearing? No, I guess I've seen that before.

Neither of them says anything. Bernard hits the blinker.

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The family eats in silence. Walt makes quick eye contact with his mother who smiles warmly at him. He doesn't smile back. Bernard looks distracted, upset. Frank takes a nut off his plate and puts it up his nose.

JOAN
Frank! Did you just put that peanut up your nose?

FRANK
(pause)
Cashew. Yes.

He tries to blow it out, but to no avail. He looks at his mother, unsure of what to do.

JOAN
Oh, pickle. That's just an idiotic, stupid thing to do. That peanut can kill you.

Frank acts like he got it out.

FRANK
No, it's out. I got it.

But he didn't. Walt gives Frank a look, turns to his Dad.
CONTINUED:

WALT
We're reading A Tale of Two Cities in English. Is that any good?

BERNARD
It's minor Dickens. Popular in schools, but I think David Copperfield or Great Expectations is much richer. What is it about high school that you read all the worst books by good writers?

JOAN
You should read it yourself and see what you think of it.

WALT
(curly)
I don't wanna waste my time.

Joan is surprised by this. Walt doesn't look up.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bernard is arranging the pull-out couch for bed. A click, click, click is coming from the other room. He places a glass of water and his watch by the bedside and goes into:

INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Joan is typing at the dining room table. Bernard stops in the doorway and watches. He looks at her with silent resentment.

BERNARD
What are you writing?

JOAN
I'm working on the Peugeot story.

BERNARD
Did you take my note about the ending?

JOAN
Some of it.

BERNARD
Does he still die?

JOAN
Yeah.

BERNARD
Then you didn't take my note.

The phone rings. They both look at it. A pause and Joan answers it.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Hello?...Hi...

She looks at Bernard awkwardly. Suddenly he charges at her, grabs the phone and slams it down.

18 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

The distant sound of yelling. Frank rolls over in bed, trying not to listen. He tries to breathe out of his nostril, the cashew still lodged up there.

19 INT. WALT'S ROOM/HALLWAY - NIGHT

Walt, sitting up in bed, is trying to hear. His father yells, "You're making me crazy!". Walt gets up and walks down the hallway. He lies down at the top of the stairs and listens.

20 INT. BERKMAN LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Walt and Frank are putting on their coats, packing bookbags. Bernard stands in the doorway.

BERNARD
Umm, boys, make sure you come home right after school.

FRANK
Why?

BERNARD
We're having a family conference.

WALT
What's that?

BERNARD
A talk. Just come home.

WALT
What about?

BERNARD
We'll go over it tonight.

WALT
Can't you give us a hint?

BERNARD
(flustered)
No, just...tonight, we'll go over everything.
21 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - MORNING
Walt and Frank walk in silence, both looking anxious. Walt drops Frank off at his school.

22 INT. SUBWAY - MORNING
Walt sits, a blank look on his face.

23 INT. JUNIOR HIGHSCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY
Frank sits with Carl on a couch. Carl talks incessantly, Frank does not respond.

24 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - LATE DAY
Same spot. Frank is waiting as Walt picks him up. They start home together, just as anxious and silent. They do not speak, even to say, Hello.

25 INT. BERMAN LIVING ROOM - DUSK
Frank and Walt sit in front of Bernard in an oddly formal manner.

BERNARD
Just waiting for your mother.

The toilet flushes and Joan comes out of the bathroom and joins them. The boys hold their noses.

WALT
Oh, mom.

JOAN
Sorry. Okay.

BERNARD
Okay. All set?

JOAN
Yes.

BERNARD
Okay, your mom and I...

Anticipating what's coming. Frank just bursts into tears.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Okay... yeah... Mom and I are going...
(off Frank's tears) Yeah... we're going to separate.

Frank puts his head in his hands, crying harder. Walt looks at his brother and back at his Mom who smiles at him. He doesn't know what to say.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
You're not going to be leaving either of us.

BERNARD
(like it's a great opportunity)
We're gonna have joint custody. Frank, it's okay. I've got an elegant new house across the park.

FRANK
Across the park! That's so far away. Is that even Brooklyn?

BERNARD
It's only five stops on the subway from here. It's an elegant block. The filet of the neighborhood.
(smiling at Walt)
We'll have a ping pong table.

WALT
I don't play ping pong.

JOAN
And we'll both see you equally.

WALT
How will that work?

BERNARD
We're splitting up the week. Alternating days.

FRANK
Why?

BERNARD
Cause I love you and want to see you as much as your mother does.

WALT
But there's seven days.

BERNARD
Right.

WALT
How will you split evenly with seven days?

BERNARD
Oh, I got you Tuesday, Wednesday and Saturday. And every other Thursday.

(Continued)
(crying)
Every other?

BERNARD
That’s how we each have you equally.

JOAN
That was your father’s idea.

FRANK
(sobbing)
Don’t do this.

WALT
How will I get to school?

BERNARD
There’s a subway four blocks from the house. Four or five. No more than six blocks.

WALT
What about the cat?

The CAT, a fat furry thing, watches from the archway.

JOAN
Shit, the cat.

BERNARD
We didn’t discuss the cat.

Bernard looks at Jean, who is waiting for him to answer.

JOAN
Your father will pick him up on those days when you’re switching houses.

BERNARD
(annoyed)
I’ll have to drive here two additional times a week?

JOAN
I guess so. You got a place on the other side of the park. If you’d gotten a place near here, it wouldn’t be a problem.

BERNARD
This neighborhood has gotten very expensive. Joan, it’s very painful for me to stay in this neighborhood, you know that. Don’t be difficult. I feel banished.

(CONTINUED)
Frank starts crying again.

JOAN
Oh, pickle...

WALT
So, Dad, what will happen with the cat?
(realizing)
And my guitar. Who will transfer my guitar?

BERNARD
(muttering)
We'll figure something out.

INT. BERKMAN BATHROOM - NIGHT

Joan brushes her teeth. She turns and is startled to see Walt in the doorway. He's very grave.

WALT
Is it cause Dad isn't as successful as he used to be?

Joan says nothing. She spits into the sink.

WALT (CONT'D)
Now that you're publishing and he--

JOAN
Walt, that's not a nice thing to say.

WALT
Because this is a great family and I don't know why you're screwing it up.

JOAN
If we could avoid it, I would.

WALT
Why are you doing this now? You've been together sixteen years--

JOAN
Seventeen.

WALT
I can't imagine living with you guys like this.

JOAN
Don't most of your friends already have divorced parents?

WALT
Yeah, but I don't.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Joan's face has a light sheen of sweat. She buries her face in a towel for a moment. She resurfaces and locks eyes with her son.

JOAN
Well, now you do.

WALT
I think you're doing a foolish, foolish thing.

JOAN
Listen, chicken. I understand how unhappy you are. I'm unhappy too. And I don't want you or Frank to blame yourself for any of this.

(direct)
It has nothing to do with you.

Walt, flustered, walks into his room.

Joan looks at herself in the mirror. She leans in, her lips are very dry. She takes a loose piece of chapped skin and tears it from her lip. It starts to bleed.

27 INT. BERKMAN LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Bernard sleeps on the pull-out couch. Joan quietly walks by with a stack of books in her arms.

28 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - NIGHT

Frank wakes up with a start.

FRANK
Woa, woa...

He looks down at his feet. Joan is sliding books under his bed.

JOAN
Shh. It's okay, go back to sleep.

FRANK
(pause)
Are those books?

JOAN
Yes. These are my books.

FRANK
Why are they going under the bed?

JOAN
Because I bought them and I don't want to lose them.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Joan sits down on the floor cross-legged. She sighs and says to herself.

JOAN (CONT'D)
We'll put them back on the shelf when your father leaves.

29 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - MORNING

Walt and Frank walk to school in silence. Frank's eyes are red and puffy from crying. Walt stays cool.

WALT
Until things are certain I don't think we should say anything to anyone yet.

FRANK
Why?

WALT
Cause we never know and I don't want people to know our business.

FRANK
I told Carl.

WALT
Already?

FRANK
I called him last night. I also told Matt and Dale.

Frank bursts into tears just thinking about it.

WALT
And Dale. Shit, now everyone will know. Jesus, Frank.

FRANK
Mom says we should tell people.

WALT
Mom doesn't have to go to school.
Stop crying.

Frank takes off for his school. Walt, dismissively, waves him off and heads for the subway.

30 EXT. SUBWAY PLATFORM - MORNING

Walt, Jeffrey, Otto and Lance exit the train. Walt wants to say something, but doesn't know how to say it. The others are a bit stilted as well, aware that something is up.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LAN
c
I constantly get a boner on the D
train.

JEFF
Just the D?

LAN
c
Other trains too. Bus sometimes. New
York transportation pretty much does
it.

WALT
My parents are divorcing.
The boys all kind of mumble, nod.

WALT (CONT’D)
I figured you all might know already,
but that’s... anyway, it sort of sucks.

More mumbling, agreeing. Otto turns to Walt.

OTTO
I heard it’s joint custody. Joint
custody blows.

WALT
I was told it’s better.

OTTO
It’s miserable. My parents didn’t
want to uproot me and Rebecca so we
stayed in the house and they both took
separate apartments and switched off
coming to us. Then my Mom met Dexter,
and my Dad freaked out. And then they
sold the house and I go back and forth
anyway. Joint custody blows.

A train rumbles into the station. CUT TO BLACK.

INT./EXT. BERNARD’S PEUGEOT - DUSK

Bernard pulls up in front of the Jewish Community Center.
Walt, in a mismatched jacket and tie, is buckled in next to
him.

BERNARD
I’m gonna take you guys to see my new
house next week. It’ll be nice to
move in finally, that couch is killing
my back.

WALT
(nods)
Could I have some money?

(CONTINUED)
BERNARD

For what?

WALT

To get something to eat after class.

BERNARD

Here.

Walt digs in his wallet and produces two dollars. Walt frowns.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

What?

WALT

Two dollars won't get me a plate of fries.

BERNARD

How much is a plate of fries?

WALT

I don't know. Four dollars?

BERNARD

For fries?

Bernard, incredulous, goes into his pockets. He trickles some change into Walt's hand. Walt says nothing. Walt climbs out of the car, shuts the door. Turns to the Center and then back at his Dad. They meet eyes for a second and Walt waves, but Bernard has turned away, missing the gesture.

DANCE TEACHER (C.S.)

Okay, rotate.

INT. JEWISH COMMUNITY CENTER - DUSK

A circle of girls and a rotating circle of boys. Most kids in clashing, odd formal wear. Each boy dances a dance with a girl and then moves on to the next girl. Walt moves over to Sophie.

SOPHIE

You live in Park Slope, right?

WALT

My mom does... and I do sometimes.

DANCE TEACHER

Side, step, back step, side, step, back step...

(CONT'D)
WALT
I'm also going to live on the other
side of the park. Half the time.

SOPHIE
Prospect Heights?

WALT
I don't know what the neighborhood's
called actually. The street's
Stratford Road. My Dad's moving
there.

SOPHIE
I know Stratford. What number on
Stratford?

WALT
Umm... three something maybe... I'm not
sure actually. I haven't seen it yet.
I hear it's the filest of the
neighborhood.

Sophie nods, unsure what that means. They dance.

WALT (CONT'D)
You like Franz Kafka?

SOPHIE
I don't know him.

WALT
He's great. The Metamorphosis is a
masterpiece.

SOPHIE
Sounds good.

WALT
It is.

SOPHIE
Have you read This Side of Paradise?

WALT
No. but it's minor Fitzgerald.

SOPHIE
Is it? I loved it.

WALT
It's a minor work. Gatsby's his
masterpiece and Tender is The Night
has dazzling moments. Last Tycoon, had
he finished it--

(Continued)
CONTINUED: (2)

DANCE TEACHER

Shhh!

Walt makes a face to Sophie and they laugh.

33 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DAY

Bernard waits outside Joan's house. He keeps the car running, tensely clutching the wheel. He opens the glove compartment, takes out a mix tape made by Walt and puts it in the tape deck. He puts his hands back on the wheel. Finally, Walt and Frank come out the front door. Frank holds the cat under his arm.

34 INT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DAY

They drive. Walt goes into his bag and takes out a couple of books, Dostoevsky, Melville, and hands them to Bernard.

BERNARD

Oh, thanks. Yeah, I forgot to take these. She has a few of my books still. She went around writing her maiden name in all the books once she knew we were splitting. But these were definitely mine.

FRANK

Are you and Walt stealing from Mom?

BERNARD

These were mine, Frank.

A SCREECH as Bernard slams on the brakes just avoiding Ivan who is crossing the street.

IVAN

Wow!

BERNARD

Watch out! Jesus.

Ivan, dressed up in a blazer with jeans and cowboy boots, peers in the window.

IVAN

Whoops. Hey Bernard. Walt. Hey, brother. How's the backhand?

Frank

(smiling)

Good.

IVAN

(whispers)

Two hands. No junkyard now.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Frank shakes his head, in agreement.

IVAN (CONT'D)
Uh, Bernard, Joan says you have a check for me.

BERNARD
She said that? No, tennis is hers.

IVAN
She says it's yours.

BERNARD
She's wrong. In our separation agreement, it says she handles tennis and winter coats. I do sneakers and camp.

IVAN
Okay, I'll take it up with her.

Ivan winks at Frank and continues on. Bernard drives.

BERNARD
Ivan's a bit of a half-wit, isn't he?

Walt laughs. So then does Bernard. Frank, annoyed, turns around to see Ivan climbing the stairs at Joan's.

The car turns the corner, we pan to a subway stop and down the stairs.

35 INT/EXT. SUBWAY STATIONS - DAY

As the train passes by we see each subway stop on the way to Bernard's: Parkside, Prospect, Church, Beverly, Cortelyou. We pan from the outside of Cortelyou to Bernard's Peugeot as it pulls up to:

36 EXT. BERNARD'S NEW HOME - DAY

His house is a Victorian structure, but pretty dilapidated. The porch bows to one side, the stairs are rotting. Walt and Frank climb out of the car, a bit taken aback by this place. Frank still has the cat. Bernard grins.

37 INT. BERNARD'S NEW HOME - DAY

Bernard unlocks the door and he, Walt and Frank enter. It's quite ramshackled, falling apart. Mismatched, ratty furniture. Frank puts the cat down.

BERNARD
It was important to me to have a place like your mother's. I'm gonna cook and run the household like you're used to.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRANK
This is nothing like our house.

BERNARD
You mean your mother's house.

FRANK
What?

BERNARD
This is nothing like your mother's house.

FRANK
That's what I just said.

BERNARD
No, you said, "our" house. That's your mother's house. This is your house too.

FRANK
No, this is your house.

BERNARD
It's our house.

Frank turns to see the cat peeing in the corner.

INT. FRANK'S NEW ROOM - DAY

The room is already sparsely and randomly decorated, a few odd posters on the walls. Frank looks at an image of Ilie Nastase. He shakes his head.

FRANK
I hate Nastase, you know that. Ivan met Nastase and said he was an asshole.

BERNARD
Well, I couldn't find Vitas Gerulitis.

FRANK
I have a Vitas poster at home...at Mom's. And all my turtles.

BERNARD
We can get you some turtles. I know you like the amphibians.

FRANK
Turtles are reptiles.

BERNARD
Here's a desk for you to do your homework.

(Continued)
Bernard indicates one of those chair/desks where the writing slab is attached to the arm of the chair. Frank goes over and sits in it. He looks horribly uncomfortable.

FRANK

Dad, this is for a lefty.

Bernard says nothing.

39  INT. WALT’S NEW ROOM - NIGHT

The Knicks game is coming from the TV downstairs. The room has been set up with much more care, a few selected books on a desk and posters of Samuel Beckett and Antonioni’s “Blow Up” tacked to the wall. Walt and Frank each wear one brown boxing glove. They jab at each other softly.

FRANK

Dad got me a lefty desk.

WALT

Frank, don’t be difficult. We need to be supportive of Dad.

FRANK

I hate it here.

WALT

Don’t be a chick. You can get a righty desk later.

FRANK

Why do I want a desk at home anyway? I don’t want a chalkboard or a ball going off every forty-five minutes either.

WALT

He likes being with us.

FRANK

He likes having us in the house. You got books. I didn’t get books.

WALT

Cause these are books Dad knows I like.

FRANK

I wanna go back to Mom’s.

WALT

Why do you wanna go to Mom’s? She caused this, chick.

FRANK

No she didn’t.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRAK (CONT'D)
I'm not being a chick you fucking ass man!

WALT (CONT'D)
You're hurting me. Really hurting me.

Walt's face suddenly grows emotional, he's on the edge of crying. He releases Frank and sits up. Frank coughs.

FRAK (CONT'D)
One turtle would've made a difference.
Walt doesn't know how to react. Frank, uneasily, walks out of the room.

40 INT. FRANK'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Frank enters, holding his sore chest. He sits in his lefty desk chair. He buries his head in his arms, but has trouble since the desk board is on the wrong side.

41 OMITTED

42 INT. BERNARD'S COLLEGE OFFICE - DAY

The students file out. Lili walks up to Bernard who is packing up his briefcase, she hands him a story. Walt waits for his Dad.

LILI
I hope you like it. Your notes were awesome. Bernard. I loved your idea for the change in tense at the end.

BERNARD
Yeah, I think it could be the coup of the story.

LILI
I reread A Hunger Artist on your suggestion and stole a couple things. See if you can spot them.

BERNARD
Good story to steal from.

She grins at Walt who instantly blushes. She walks away. They stare at her silently the entire length of the hallway.

43 INT. TENNIS COURTS - DAY

Frank hits long. Ivan at the net.

FRANK
Fuck!

IVAN
Frank!

FRANK
Sorry.

Bernard and Walt watch the lesson from the sidelines.

WALT
How long were you and Mom not getting along?

(CONTINUED)
BERNARD
Oh...a couple of years.

WALT
Why didn't you tell me?

BERNARD
I thought we would work it out. I wanted to. I tried, as you know. I tried very hard. Your mother ultimately wasn't interested in that.

WALT
Why not?

BERNARD
I think it has very little to do with me. She could never make up her mind. She'd pull away and then get angry at me for not being more aggressive. Her affair with that man Richard really made it difficult finally for me to save the marriage. It became a fait accompli.

Walt's face whitens.

WALT
Affair?

Frank makes another error.

FRANK
Mother shit fucker!

IVAN
Frank!

BERNARD
With Richard.

WALT
Who's Richard?

BERNARD
Oh...man from the neighborhood. I think she met him at one of Frank's little league games. A shrink. Seems sort of like an ordinary guy. Not an intellectual.

WALT
How long was she having the affair?

BERNARD
Oh...about four years.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Why don’t you tell me, Walt.

WALT
Because you cheated on Dad.

Joan takes a breath. Frank looks at Walt, surprised.

JOAN
How did you hear that?
(pause)
Your father told you?

WALT
Yeah, he told me. Why did you, Mom?

JOAN
I...I was having a hard time.

WALT
Where were we during all this? Did you bring men home?

Joan pauses, thinking about how to answer.

JOAN
Not while...not...not when your father was in town. You guys actually met Richard, both of you boys, he came for take-out once. You remember? Your father was in Seattle. You talked about the Stones.

WALT
He had the Sticky Fingers with the real zipper?

JOAN
(pause)
Yeah? I don’t remember.

WALT
Oh God. Under our noses. Like a brothel. Men coming in and out.

FRANK
Walt, shut up.

JOAN
If you want me to explain, I will.

WALT
I don’t wanna hear about it.

FRANK
I do.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN
Well, Walt doesn’t do I won’t say anything.

Joan returns to the coffee table and starts to lift it.

FRANK
Walt can leave.

WALT
You disgust me. You weren’t even a writer until recently. You just bailed on Dad cause he’s not as successful as he used to be and he hasn’t gotten the recognition he deserves.

Joan drops the table down. She’s caught off-guard.

JOAN
You sound like your father.

WALT
Well, I’m glad I sound like him. You disgust me.

JOAN
You’re being a shit, Walt.

Walt and Frank are both taken aback.

WALT
I’m taking the cat.

Walt tries to grab the cat which hisses at him. Frank stands between Walt and the animal.

FRANK
You can’t have him, it’s his night here.

Walt gives Frank a shove, and leaves, slamming the door for emphasis.

45 INT. BERNARD’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Walt and his father sit in front of the TV watching “Three’s Company”. The phone rings. Walt picks it up.

46 INT. FRANK’S ROOM - INTERCUT

Tangerine Dream’s “Love On A Real Train” from Risky Business plays on the record player. Frank sits on his bed, shirtless, a beer in his lap. He checks out his muscle in the mirror, where he’s drawn a tattoo with magic marker that reads: Vitas.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

FRANK
She also had an affair with some therapist.

INT. WALT'S ROOM AT DAD'S - INTERCUT

Walt takes the phone into his room, sits on the floor.

WALT
I don't want to know.

FRANK
And Otto's father, Don.

WALT
(blanches)
Otto's father?

FRANK
Yeah. But it's over.

WALT
Otto. Otto doesn't masturbate.

FRANK
She said the affairs have been kind of miserable for her. She's dating now, but nothing serious.

WALT
She's crazy. She should keep her affairs to herself. I'm not going back to Mom's.

FRANK
You have to. Joint custody.

WALT
Fuck joint custody.

Frank cracks open the beer. Walt reacts to the noise.

WALT (CONT'D)
Is Mom letting you drink soda?

FRANK
Beer.

WALT
Since when do you drink beer?

FRANK
Since recently.

Frank poses in his mirror as if he's hitting a shirtless two handed backhand.
CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)
You think Don and she did it?

WALT
Oh, God, I don’t wanna think about it.

FRANK
Imagine Don’s dick in Mom’s mouth.

WALT
[shocked]
Who are you? Stop it.

FRANK
I’m just asking. Do you think they do that? You think she gets anal sex from Don?

WALT
[sadly]
Stop, okay. It’s disgusting. Don’t.

Silence on both ends.

48 INT. JOAN’S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Frank drinks mouthwash and swallows it. He and Joan look in the mirror.

FRANK
(touching her face)
We have the same bone structure.

JOAN
No, you have your Dad’s features.

FRANK
Really? Fuck it.

JOAN
(sternly)
Frank...

FRANK
I thought I had your bone structure.

JOAN
(matter of factly)
No.

They continue to stare in the mirror.

FRANK
You’re ugly.
CONTINUED:

JOAN

(hesitates)

No. I'm not...pickle. Why would you say that?

FRANK

Cause I think it's true. I think Carl thinks you're ugly.

JOAN

I'm not though, sweetie--

Joan starts to cry. Frank is startled by this. He suddenly feels terrible.

FRANK

I'm sorry, mom. Mom, I'm sorry. I was talking about myself.

Frank takes her hand. Joan starts crying harder.

JOAN

It's okay. It's okay to say that.

You can think I'm ugly if you want.

FRANK

But I was talking about myself. Mom, I was.

He reaches his arms around her shaking body.

49 INT. JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL LIBRARY - DAY

Frank sits at a table, a book about Arthur Ashe in front of him. He looks at a GIRL talking to her friend a few tables away. He gathers his stuff and rises.

We FOLLOW Frank into the stacks to a hidden place in back. He removes a torn out piece of some porn mag from his bag. It barely shows anything. He looks around and starts humping the side of the bookcase. When he's through he reaches into his pants, takes his semen and spreads it across some books on the shelf.

50 INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Walt sits across from Otto. Otto stands, to bus his tray.

WALT

I found out something last night.

OTTO

What's that?

WALT

That your Dad was fucking my mom.
CONTINUED;

Otto sits.

OTTO
What?

WALT
You heard me.

OTTO
I don’t believe it.

Lance and Jeffrey pass. Lance mouths “loser detector” to Otto. Otto makes a face.

WALT
Yeah, supposedly going on for a year or so about two years ago.

Otto shuts his eyes for a moment, letting it sink in.

OTTO
Where’d they do it, you think?

WALT
I don’t know. Hotel?

OTTO
What a cliche. Your mom told you this?

WALT
She told Frank who told me.

OTTO
She told Frank? Ugh. I’m so horrified by this.

WALT
Thanks.

OTTO
I don’t mean by your mom. She’s very attractive.

WALT
Thanks.

OTTO
It’s just... I guess... do I bring it up at dinner tonight?

WALT
It was just an affair. A fuck. We’re not gonna be brothers or anything. She said your Dad’s pretty fucked up with women.

(Continued)
INT. SOPHIE'S PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - DAY

Sophie and Walt drink wine coolers and listen to records.

SOPHIE
Oh, I read The Metamorphosis. You were right, it's great.

WALT
Oh?

SOPHIE
Yeah, I mean so bizarre. What do you think is happening at the end with the sister?

WALT
Oh...I think she's...it's ambiguous really.

SOPHIE
Yeah. I mean, it's gross when he turns into the bug, but I love how matter of fact everything is.

WALT
Yeah, it's very Kafkaesque.

She looks at him oddly. She laughs.

SOPHIE
Cause it's written by Franz Kafka.

WALT
(pause)
Right. I mean, clearly.

She and he meet eyes. He leans in part way, stops. She follows through and they kiss. His mouth opens, hers doesn't. They stop for a second, smile at one another and start kissing again.

SOPHIE
You're shoving the whole tongue in me.

WALT
Oh...sorry.
CONTINUED:

SOPHIE
S’okay. Just do it a little. Like little licks.

WALT
(with his tongue in her mouth)
Like this?

SOPHIE
(with his tongue in her mouth)
Yeah.

They kiss for a bit. They release and look at each other.

WALT
I wish you didn’t have so many freckles on your face.

Sophie is on the edge of a reaction.

WALT (CONT’D)
Not really though. I don’t know.

INT. BERNARD’S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Bernard is opening a letter. It’s a form rejection letter from an agency addressed to Mr. Beckman. He tosses it on the coffee table, pissed. Frank walks into the room.

FRANK
I’m feeling kind of feverish. Do we have any Tylenol?

BERNARD
(distracted)
I don’t know.

FRANK
I didn’t see any.

BERNARD
Then there isn’t any.

FRANK
Can we get some?

Bernard goes into his wallet and hands him two dollars.

FRANK (CONT’D)
Is this enough?

BERNARD
Get a small one.
53 INT. DRUGSTORE - DAY

Frank puts the Tylenol on the counter. The SALESMAN rings it up.

SALESMAN

Three fifty-seven.

Frank looks at him. "Really"? The guy waits.

54 EXT. BERNARD'S HOUSE - DAY

Bernard, holding the front door open, looks down at Frank.

BERNARD

For a small one?

Frank nods. Bernard goes into his pockets, gives Frank two dollars. Frank, now sweating with fever, turns back around.

55 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - DAY

Frank shuffles out of the store, the Tylenol in his hand. He looks terrible.

56 INT. BERNARD'S KITCHEN - DAY

Frank enters. Bernard is reading the paper.

FRANK

I got it.

BERNARD

You have change?

Frank digs into his pockets and hands his father back the forty-three cents.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

You wanna play ping pong?

FRANK

I'm gonna lie down.

BERNARD

One game.

57 INT. BERNARD'S ATTIC - DAY

Frank serves it off the table.

FRANK

Fuckin' shit!

He slams his paddle on the table.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD
19 to 7. Have you given more thought to what you're interested in?

Frank intentionally hits it out.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Come on, you have to try. It's no fun for me if you don't try.

FRANK
I want to be a tennis pro like Ivan.

BERNARD
Come on, you don't want to be a tennis pro.

FRANK
Why not?

BERNARD
It's not serious. I mean, McEnroe or Borg is an artist, it's like dance. Connors has a brutish brilliance. But at Ivan's level... Ivan is fine, but he's not a serious guy. He's a philistine.

FRANK
What's a philistine?

BERNARD
A guy who doesn't care about books or interesting films or things. Your mother's brother Ned is also a philistine.

FRANK
Then I'm a philistine.

BERNARD
No, you're interested in books and things. You liked The Wild Child when we saw it.

FRANK
But lots of people can like that movie.

(considering it)
No, I'm a philistine.

Frank serves. Bernard puts it away.

INT. BERNARD'S DINING ROOM/KITCHEN - NIGHT

Walt and Frank wait at the dining room table, plates in front of them with raw carrots, as Bernard, around the corner in the kitchen, fries up the veal cutlets.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD (O.S.)
When am I going to meet the famous Sophie?

WALT
I don’t know. She’s not gorgeous, but she’s cute.

BERNARD (O.S.)
You have plenty of time to sleep with gorgeous women.

Walt smiles at this thought.

BERNARD (O.S.) (CONT’D)
Goddamn it!

Frank gets up, walks around the corner and peers in the kitchen. The real cutlets are scattered on the floor. Bernard is picking them up, his back to Frank. Frank returns to the table and Walt.

FRANK
They fell on the floor.

58 MOMENTS LATER

Bernard, Walt and Frank sit at the table eating the cutlets. Frank removes something from his mouth with disgust.

BERNARD
When my first novel came out, I had a lot of opportunities. I was with your mother so I didn’t partake. And I’ve never had an affair with a student, although many have come on to me. That’s why you might not want to be attached at your age. But it sounds like Sophie’s good for now.

FRANK
Why’d you yell goddamn it?

BERNARD
(not looking up)
I burned myself.

WALT
The cutlets are great. Dad, did you hear from that agent?

BERNARD
Umm, not yet.

(CONTINUED)
CONTRIBUTED:

WALT
But if he likes your novel, then you get it published, right?

BERNARD
Basically.

FRANK
What happened to your old agent, Fred?

BERNARD
He pissed me off. Made a disparaging remark about the Knicks at a party.
Said they played like thugs. I found it really offensive. He's kind of a jerk.

Frank looks down, the bit of porn mag he had before him between his legs on the chair.

BERNARD (CON'T)
I think it was important to your mother that I achieve some sort of commercial success. And when I didn't meet her expectations in that area...

He clears his throat. He looks at Walt and shrugs.

60 INT. MIDWOOD HALLWAY - DAY
Walt and Sophie pass each other, handing off folded notes.

61 INT. CLASSROOM - MOMENTS LATER
Walt takes his seat and opens the loose-leaf note. The lyrics to Bryan Adams' "Run To You".

62 INT. HIGH SCHOOL PHYSICS LAB - SAME
Sophie quickly opens her note too. A typed quote from Bartra to Simone de Beauvoir.

63 EXT. MIDWOOD HIGH SCHOOL - DAY
Walt and Sophie walk together, holding hands.

SOPHIE
What you're going to witness is a Greenberg family tradition. Friday night Chinese at Hunan Palace. I hope you're prepared.

They pass by WENDY CHEN, a classmate. Walt grabs Sophie's hand. They both say, Hi as she passes.

SOPHIE (CON'T)
Why'd you let go of my hand?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
What?

SOPHIE
When we passed Wendy, you let go.

WALT
I didn’t realize.

He picks her hand back up.

64 INT. HUNAN PALACE - DUSK

MR. and MRS. GREENBERG, Sophie and Walt. The Waiter brings them sizzling soup.

MRS. GREENBERG
Walt, is there anything special you’d like to order?

WALT
No, I’m just happy to have the same amount of dishes as people. In my family, it’s always one dish less the number of people. That’s our family tradition, not ordering enough food.

MRS. GREENBERG
(laughing)
That’s funny. Oh, he’s funny, Sophie.

SOPHIE
I know.

Sophie kicks Walt under the table. He looks around at the family, together, happy. It’s all very comfortable.

65 EXT. JOAN’S HOUSE - DUSK

Bernard sits in the car. A moment. He gets out, opens the backseat, takes out the pet carrier. The cat mews from inside as he walks up the familiar stoop of his old house. Rings. A beat. Joan opens the front door.

JOAN
You’re early.

BERNARD
Hi, Joan.

He hands her the cat.

JOAN
Don’t feed him the generic stuff.

BERNARD
What?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
Frank says you're feeding the cat generic food. Get Purina, it's what he likes.

BERNARD
It's the same damn thing, Joan.

JOAN
Okay. It's not, but...

BERNARD
He's my cat too. You remember when he got stuck in the wall in New Hampshire and I rescued him. I know how to handle it.

JOAN
It was a radiator.

BERNARD
What?

JOAN
He was stuck in a radiator.

Bernard says nothing.

JOAN (CONT'D)
You trimmed your beard.

BERNARD
It was starting to get a little feral. You look well.

JOAN
Yeah? Thanks.

BERNARD
Things are good here. Teaching's going well. And I'm playing the best tennis of my life. Maybe that's an illusion, but it feels that way.

JOAN
(smiles)
That's good.

Bernard cranes his neck slightly, trying to see over her shoulder and into the house.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Hey, I was thinking we should sit together at Walt's performance next month.

(continues)
(CONTINUED: (2)

BERNARD

(pause)
Okay.

JOAN
I think it'd be nice for him if we're both there together. Maybe we could all go out afterwards.

BERNARD
Mmm. I don't know. Maybe. Okay, maybe. I think he's getting quite good at guitar.

JOAN
I know. The stuff he's writing is really wonderful. Have you met his girlfriend?

BERNARD
No. He talks about her with me, though.

JOAN
Good. I'd appreciate it if you didn't tell him about things like Richard...

Silence.

BERNARD
My father told me you called him.

JOAN
(pause)
I did, yeah.

BERNARD
He said you...he said you were upset.

JOAN
Yeah. I wanted to...I like him. You know that. I just wanted to say...I don't know. I wanted to say, Hello.

BERNARD
He called me right after. He said, "Bernie, I think you can save your marriage."

Joan, uncomfortable, says nothing.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
I told him I didn't think there was anything else I could do. I did try everything.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (3)

Tears start to spill down Joan's face. A pause and Bernard turns and walks toward the car.

JOAN
Bye Bernard.

She shuts the door.

INT. BERNARD'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Lili approaches Bernard as he's packing up. Walt waits.

LILI
Bernard, I was wondering if you knew of any apartments. I'm being kicked out of my sub-let. Unless I, I don't know, blow the super, I'm out on my ass.

BERNARD
Oh...I don't...

LILI
(to Walt)
I guess you don't know either, huh?

WALT
(glad to be asked)
Oh...nope.

BERNARD
Actually, I have an extra room in my house. You could stay there till you find something. (pause)
And you wouldn't have to blow your super.

Walt's eyes widen. Lili smiles wryly.

LILI
Oh wow, I guess...I'd hate to put you out.

BERNARD
No, no.

LILI
Or your kids.

WALT
No, no.

INT. BERNARD'S FOYER - DAY

Bernard helps Lili carry her bags in. Walt, trails, his eyes on Lili's ass, packed into her tight jeans.
INT. GUEST ROOM - DAY

Lili enters. The "Blow Up" poster is now on her wall. She turns around. Bernard and Walt stand in the doorway, smiles plastered on their faces.

LILI
Blow Up. Looks like a cool movie.

WALT
It's a classic. I had it in my room.

BERNARD
The bathroom is right across the hall. You'll have to share with the kids, but they can come upstairs and use mine.

LILI
I don't care. As long as Walt remembers to put the seat down. Thank you, Bernard. Thank you, Walt.

Bernard and Walt just keep grinning.

INT. BERNARD'S ATTIC - NIGHT

Bernard plays ping pong with Frank.

BERNARD
Joan told me you don't like your sheets.

FRANK
They're fine.

BERNARD
And that you disapprove of the food I feed the cat. You should tell me these things, not her.

Bernard serves the ball off the table.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
FUCK!!

FRANK
15! 15/20.

He serves, they rally, both their faces tense. Frank wins again. Bernard slams his racquet onto the table.

BERNARD
Motherfucker! I can't believe this!

FRANK
My serve.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Frank quick-serves Bernard who hits it out.

BERNARD
I wasn’t ready.

FRANK
Yes, you were.

BERNARD  
(stern)
Frank, I was not ready.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

Lili, dressed to go out, looks in the fridge. Walt watches her. We can hear the ping pong from upstairs.

LILI
This is Mother Hubbard. There’s nothing to eat or drink. No soda.

WALT
We’re not allowed soda.

LILI
I guess there’s two kinds of parents, those who allow soda and sugar cereal and those who don’t.

We hear a “I can’t believe this shit!” from the attic. Lili wipes her hands with a paper towel and tosses it in the garbage.

WALT
We’re not supposed to use paper towels to wipe our hands. The cloth is for that.

LILI
You’re cute.

WALT
Thanks.

She touches his head, a kind of a gentle caress, and disappears into the other room. Walt goes into the garbage and finds the paper towel. He stuffs it in his pocket.

INT. BERNARD’S ATTIC - SAME

They rally. Tensions flaring. Bernard hits what looks like a winner, Frank dives and returns it. Bernard hits another shot which Frank lunges and gets back. A looper which Bernard slams for a winner. Frank, staggers back, hitting his head on the wall.

(Continued)
CONTINUED:

FRANK
Shit!!
Bernard instantly eases up, now that he's won.

BERNARD
Good game. It's hard to beat your father.

Frank chucks his paddle across the table, just missing Bernard and thudding into the wall.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Hey! Watch out.

Frank walks past his Dad and down the stairs.

FRANK
(under his breath)
Suck my dick, ass man.

72 INT. BERNARD'S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Bernard watches Lili, through the window, on the front porch. She's greeted by the burly, curly haired man from Bernard's class. They disappear out of his sight. Bernard looks annoyed and disappointed. A light clicks on. Walt walks by, his coat on.

BERNARD
Where you going?

WALT
The movies. And then to a party. With Sophie. What are you going to do?

BERNARD
Umm, I don't know. Frank won't leave his room. He's being difficult.

Walt looks at his Dad. He looks sad, vulnerable.

WALT
You wanna come to the movie?

BERNARD
Okay. Not the party, but the movie.

WALT
We were thinking "Short Circuit".

BERNARD
"Blue Velvet" is supposed to be quite interesting.

73 OMITTED
INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT

On screen, a naked and bruised Isabella Rossellini steps out on to her porch. Walt and Bernard, with Sophie between them, watch. Sophie glances over at Bernard for a second, then back to the movie. She looks horribly embarrassed.

INT. FRANK'S NEW ROOM - NIGHT

Frank, shirtless, a beer on his lefty desk, inspects himself in the mirror. He talks to his reflection in a loud whisper, acting out some imaginary scenario.

FRANK
No!...Stop!...Frank, No!...

He stops, looks around and starts packing his knapsack.

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Bernard, Walt and Sophie in a booth, eating burgers.

BERNARD
A student of mine writes very racy short stories you might like.

SOPHIE
Oh?

BERNARD
Yeah, she has one that chronicles her vagina.

WALT
(blushing)
Dad...

SOPHIE
Oh, that...that sounds interesting.

BERNARD
Very feminist, but very interesting.

SOPHIE
Uh huh.

Silence. The Waitress brings the check. Bernard goes for his wallet. Sophie, politely takes out a few bills and hands them to Bernard. He takes her money. Walt watches this interaction, embarrassed.

INT. BERNARD'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Bernard enters alone.

BERNARD
Frank, I'm back!

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

He walks upstairs and down the hall.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Frank?

He looks into Frank's room. It's empty. He looks in the bathroom, his room, Walt's room. He jogs down the stairs.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

Frank!

INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - NIGHT

Bernard drives through his neighborhood, scanning the street. He turns a corner. Frank, his knapsack on, lugging a duffle, is walking at a brisk pace toward the subway. Bernard speeds up and pulls along side of him. Frank turns, his face dropping when he sees his Dad.

MOMENTS LATER

Bernard drives. Frank next to him, quietly steaming.

BERNARD

What were you doing?

FRANK

I was going to Mom's.

BERNARD

You don't do that on my night. Ever. You hear me?

FRANK

Yes.

BERNARD

I'm your father, you listen to what I say.

FRANK

But you were out.

BERNARD

It's still my night, dammit!

FRANK

Okay, okay.

Bernard turns the corner, looks to park.

BERNARD


FRANK

Sorry.

( CONTINUED )
CONTINUED:

Bernard stops at a light. A moment. Frank unbuckles, and is out the door. Running.

BERNARD

Frank!

INT. MOM’S LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frank enters, the room is dim. A record plays on the stereo. The furniture has now been successfully rearranged.

FRANK

Hello! Hello!!

The sounds of footsteps. Joan, in a man’s oxford shirt and underwear, comes down the steps.

JOAN

Frank? What are you doing here? It’s not your night with me.

FRANK

I don’t wanna look like Dad.

JOAN

Looks aren’t everything. It’s not your night with me, Sweetie.

Frank notices an empty bottle of champagne on the coffee table.

FRANK

Did you have a party?

JOAN

I celebrated. Knopf is publishing my novel. Pickle, you should be at your Dad’s.

FRANK

Yeah?

JOAN

Yeah. I need some nights without you guys sometimes.

Frank nods, disappointed. His eyes settle on a second glass and plate. He looks up at his Mom.

JOAN (CONT’D)

I...someone’s here.

Heavier footsteps sound and a sheepish looking Ivan comes down the stairs in a t-shirt and jeans. Frank just stares.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

IVAN
What's up, brother?

FRANK
Nothing.

INT. LANCE'S PARENTS' LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Walt and Sophie, Lance and Lara, Jeffrey and Susan mingle like they're adults. Otto is alone. Everyone smokes.

LANCE
Jeffrey, what can I getcha?

JEFFREY
(suave)
Gin fizz. Bond's drink. Sophie?

SOPHIE
Umm, rum and tonic.

LANCE
(smooth)
A rum and tonic lady. And a Bartles and James and Coke for me.

The phone rings. Lance picks it up.

LANCE (CONT'D)
Hello?

He hands the receiver to Walt. Walt looks to Sophie, "Weird".

INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - NIGHT

Bernard drives. Walt next to him, a little buzzed.

BERNARD
He just took off and went to your mother's. It's my night, he knows that.

WALT
Do you ever think we could ease up on whose night is whose?

BERNARD
I wanna see you guys. I love you.

Silence.

WALT
Did you like Sophie?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD
Yeah. I think she’s fine. Is she a Knicks fan?

WALT
I don’t know. You think she’s pretty?

BERNARD
Sure, but she’s not the type I go for. You just have to decide if you want to be attached. It’s good to play the field at your age.

WALT
(offhand)
Lili is pretty.

They pull up in front of Joan’s place.

BERNARD
Mmm. Would you go ring the bell. I hate walking up those steps. It’s very uncomfortable for me. Very painful. I used to live in this house.

(off Walt’s look)
As you know.

Walt nods and climbs out of the car.

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Joan opens the bathroom door. The shower is running.

JOAN
Pickle, your Dad and Walt are here and they’re going to take you back to Bernard’s.

Frank casually responds from the other side of the curtain.

FRANK
I’ll be right out.

JOAN
I’m sorry about...about you seeing Ivan like this. I would’ve liked to have told you before you saw him.

EXT. JOAN’S HOUSE - NIGHT

From Frank’s window, Joan watches her sons walk to Bernard’s idling car. Walt and she meet eyes. He turns away and climbs in the car. Frank suddenly stops at the curb and doesn’t get in. He stands there. Everyone waits. CUT TO BLACK.
85 INT. WALT'S ROOM AT DAD'S - NIGHT

Walt, his homework spread on the floor, sings along to the lyrics of a record. Bernard enters holding the phone.

BERNARD
Your mother.

Walt hesitates. Bernard indicates that he should take it.

WALT
(pause)
Hello.

86 INT. JOAN'S ROOM - INTERCUT

Joan sits on the side of her bed, a glass of sherry on the end table. Her hand shakes slightly. She takes a deep breath.

JOAN
Hi. (trying to get it all out)
I wanted to tell you about Ivan so you didn't hear it from anyone else.
(pause)
Frank may've already said something.

WALT
He did.

JOAN
I've been seeing him a short time.
But I like him and I thought you guys should know that. And meet him. I mean, I know you know him, I mean meet him this way. And...do you have any questions?

WALT
No.

JOAN
Umm...there was something else I was going to say...Oh, I ran into Celia, Lance's mother, on the street and she was telling me how wonderful she thinks you are. How polite and funny you are...

WALT
Uh huh.

JOAN
She said there was something you did with the salt and pepper shakers, a little play or something.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
It was kind of stupid.

JOAN
I said, I know all those things about him already. But it's nice to hear it.
(pause)
I remember what else I was going to say. I wanted to know if you'd be interested in coming to dinner on Saturday because I'm having the Dicksteins over--

WALT
I'm going to a party on Saturday and I'm sleeping at Jeffrey's.

JOAN
(pause)
That's okay.

Silence.

WALT
I'm gonna go to bed.

JOAN
Okay. Goodnight, chicken.

WALT
Night.

He hangs up. So does she.

87 INT. HIGHSCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

Kids line up as MR. SIMIC, 40's, goes through the order of performers for the talent show. Walt sits on the edge of the stage with Lance, Jeffrey and Otto around him. Lance safety pins his jeans. A young GIRL practices her song.

LANCE
You think she likes you?

WALT
I get a feeling, yeah.

LANCE
What about Sophie?

WALT
If I can lose it to Lili, I'll do it. I mean, I bet she's great in bed.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JEFFREY
She can probably move her pussy
muscles just the right way so you blow
your load in like seconds.

WALT
It'd be pretty great.

LANCE
Maybe do 'em both. Why not?

They all nod in agreement.

OTTO
Oh, I jerked off. You're right. It's
good.

They all look at Otto.

INT. TENNIS COURTS - DUSK

Joan and Frank enter. Frank initially won't meet Ivan's
eye, but Ivan smiles warmly.

IVAN
Hey, brother. How's the grip?

FRANK
Fine.

(pause)
Do you think you and I are
philistines?

JOAN
Frank!

IVAN
What's a philistine?

FRANK
Someone who doesn't like books or
interesting movies and things.

Bernard enters, taken aback to see Joan with Ivan and
Frank.

BERNARD
Oh...you're still here. It's my night
with him.

JOAN
I know, I thought I'd watch him hit.

They stand in silence. Ivan gives Frank a kind of half
shrug. Frank gives him a half shrug back. Joan walks over
to a bench and takes a seat.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Ivan, Frank and Bernard stand there awkwardly. Bernard turns to Ivan.

**BERNARD**
You married?

**IVAN**
No.

**BERNARD**
The whole thing's very complicated.

89
**INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK**

Bernard starts the car. Frank shotgun, practicing his grip.

**FRANK**
Mom's dating Ivan.

Bernard turns the ignition off.

**BERNARD**
Really? Ivan, back there, Ivan?

**FRANK**
Yeah.

**BERNARD**
Are you sure? Why didn't you say something? Why is your mother dating all these jocks? Very uninteresting men.

**FRANK**
Ivan is very interesting.

**BERNARD**
Ivan's not a serious possibility for your mother.

**FRANK**
I think he is.

**BERNARD**
I'm telling you he isn't, Frank. You'll see. He won't last.

**FRANK**
I want him to last.

**BERNARD**
(thrown)
Why? You'll get over Ivan. As you get older, you'll get more interested in writing (or some art form). Tennis will get less important.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD (CONT'D)
(clearly upset)
I don't want to bad mouth Ivan. But I
don't know what Joan is thinking.

FRANK
I think Ivan is--

BERNARD

Frank!

Frank glances over at his Dad. Bernard brushes a tear from
his cheek. Frank turns away quickly. The car pulls into
traffic.

OMITTED

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

They both lie on the king size bed, kissing. Sophie has
her hand in his underwear and she moves it up and down.

WALT
Oww!

SOPHIE
Sorry. Was that too hard?

WALT
Yeah, a bit.

She readjusts her technique.

SOPHIE
Is that better?

WALT
Yeah...that's gooo--

Sophie is taken aback as Walt twitches and comes.

SOPHIE
Oh.

WALT
(trying to act cool)
I guess...I...I don't know what...why
that happened.

SOPHIE
It's okay. I mean, it's...okay.

She gets up and goes into the bathroom. Walt lies there,
for a moment, feeling exposed, yanks up his pants. Sophie
returns with a towel. She scrubs the wet spot on the
comforter.

WALT
Sorry.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

SOPHIE
Don't be sorry.

WALT
I don't know why I didn't last longer,
I usually go for much longer.

SOPHIE
It's okay. I guess I can take it as a
compliment.

WALT
Did you take your shirt off for Nelson
Barton?

SOPHIE
(silence)
I don't want to talk about it, Walt.

WALT
Please, it's important.

SOPHIE
Why is it important?

WALT
Cause I need to know what happened.

SOPHIE
Well...he felt me up and I touched
him.

WALT
Down his pants?

SOPHIE
Walt... Yeah.

WALT
I just...from what I can tell. Not an
intellectual.

SOPHIE
(pause)
I'm a virgin.

WALT
(pause)
So am I.

92 INT. BERNARD'S DINING ROOM - SAME
Bernard and Lili eat veal cutlets.

LILI
When is your next book coming out?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD
Soon, I hope. Soon.

LILI
Who's publishing it?

BERNARD
Well, I'm looking for a new agent first.

LILI
A friend of mine's an agent with Binky Urban. If you like, I'll show it to him.

BERNARD
(brightening)
That'd be great.

The phone rings. Bernard gets up to answer it.

INT. SOPHIE'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - INTERCUT

Walt sits on the edge of the bed, nervous about this conversation. Sophie is still scrubbing the comforter.

WALT
Would...would it be okay...could I stay the night at Sophie's?

Lili slides by Bernard with the plates.

BERNARD
Thanks for doing that.
(to Walt)
Okay, I'll see you tomorrow. Er, Tuesday, I'll see you Tuesday.

WALT
(surprised)
You don't need me home for anything?

BERNARD
No, everything's fine.

INT. BERNARD'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Bernard watches Lili do the dishes.

BERNARD
If you're interested, Walt and I are taking a road trip to Suny Binghampton in a couple of weekends. I'm giving a reading and an ex-student of mine, now friend, Jeb Gelber, is fete-ing me with a dinner.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

LILI
Excellent. You should read the cathedral scene from Under Water.

BERNARD
I've done that one a lot. I thought I'd do something new... But okay, maybe...

They meet eyes for a moment. And then their lips come together. Lili withdraws and wipes her nose. She laughs, slightly embarrassed.

LILI
Sorry, my nose is running.

She moves back in, Bernard pauses.

BERNARD
I'm your teacher.

LILI
I've wondered for a long time what it'd be like to fuck you.

95 INT. SOPHIE'S PARENTS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Walt's face, anxious, looks up at the ceiling almost as if he's reacting to Lili's previous remark. They lie on the bed.

WALT
Umm...I think we should wait.

Sophie rolls over on top of Walt.

SOPHIE
Really?

WALT
Yeah, let's wait.

Sophie rolls back over. Silence.

96 INT. JUNIOR HIGHSCHOOL BATHROOM - DAY

In a stall, Frank rubs up against the door. As he finishes, he reaches into his underpants and takes some semen in his hand.

97 INT. JUNIOR HIGHSCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Frank walks down the empty hallway. He comes up to a locker decorated by a girl. A sign reads, "Erica's locker, Keep Out". Frank very slowly kisses the metal door. Then smears his semen on the locker. We DISSOLVE TO:
INT. HIGHSCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DUSK

Packed with students, parents and teachers. Mr. Simic is the MC. Five TEACHERS sit at a table with a sign that reads “Judges” on it. They are all in their 60’s and 70’s. Tony, whom we met earlier, finishes an elaborate puppet show with big paper mache animals. Applause. He bows and walks off.

MR. SIMIC

(reading)
Okay, up next, Walt Berkman who is going to play us a song!


WALT

Thank you. I’m going to plead guitar...

(correcting himself)
...play lead guitar and do vocals on a song...I wrote.

His hands are shaking a bit. He starts to play and relax and sing “Hey You”. Frank’s smile drops as he realizes what song Walt’s doing. The crowd, both adults and kids, has a mixed reaction, some recognizing the song, others enjoying it as an original. Bernard looks proud, Lili with a sly smile. Ivan furrows his brow, knowing the song. Joan clearly does not. Sophie beams.

TIME CUT

A crowd is around Walt who holds a first place check and certificate. Bernard hugs him. Otto and Jeffrey slap him on the back. Lance can be heard saying to another STUDENT: "He could’ve written it". Sophie gives Walt a shy kiss on the cheek.

SOPHIE

That song was so good!

WALT

Oh, Dad, you remember Sophie.

BERNARD

Uh huh.

Sophie shakes Bernard’s hand. Walt turns to Lili, blushing.

WALT

And...Lili.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Sophie shakes Lili's hand as well. Lili raises an eyebrow to Walt regarding Sophie. Walt takes a step away, distancing himself from Sophie for Lili's benefit.

LILI
How much did you win?

WALT
Hundred bucks.

LILI
Come by my room tonight before you go to bed, I want to show you something.

WALT
(intrigued)
Okay.

Joan, Frank and Ivan approach.

WALT (CONT'D)
And this is my Mom and Frank and Ivan.

Sophie shakes their hands. Ivan looks at Walt, a knowing smile.

IVAN
Some song, brother.

WALT
Thanks.

Bernard gives Ivan a look. Ivan smiles, politely.

IVAN
Hi, Bernard.

Bernard grunts and turns away. Walt's attention turns to Kate Roache a few feet away, who eyes him back. Sophie's smile fades as she watches this.

100 EXT. MIDWOOD HIGHSCHOOL - NIGHT

They all spill out into the street. Joan approaches Walt, apprehensively. Ivan horses around with Frank.

JOAN
I thought we'd all have dinner. Ivan suggested Gage and Tollner. We could celebrate my book and your song.

WALT
Nah, I'm gonna go with Dad.

JOAN
Well, your Dad and I talked about all of us going.

{CONTINUED}
CONTINUED:

WALT
I don't want to do that. See ya.

JOAN
Ivan and I came to see your show,
don't treat us that way.

WALT
(sarcastic)
Oh, thanks for coming to see my show.
How nice of you.

Joan grabs both of Walt's arms and pulls him toward her.

JOAN
You think you hate me, but I know you
don't.

Walt yanks free and starts to walk away. Over his
shoulder, he flips her the finger. Joan grabs his arm,
whips him around and slaps him across the face.

Frank is startled, but sneaks out a smile. Other students
and parents watch this. Walt looks at her stunned and
humiliated. After a beat, he turns and walks away toward
Bernard and Lili, passing a kid who says to another kid:
"That's a Floyd song".

101 INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT
Bernard, Walt, Sophie and Lili look at their menus.

SOPHIE
Where did you come up with some of
those lyrics?

BERNARD
They were very dreamlike. Reminds me
of my second novel, End of The Line.
There's a rock star character in that.

LILI
I love that novel.

WALT
A classic. The scenes with the baby
in the middle are based on me as a
baby.

BERNARD
That's right. It's Mailer's favorite
of my books.

LILI
And I loved your wife's piece in the
New Yorker.

(CONTINUED)
BERNARD
Really? In The New Yorker?
(to Walt)
Did you know about that?

WALT
I guess I did.

BERNARD
How’d that happen?

LILI
It’s an excerpt.

WALT
She’s getting a novel published.

BERNARD
Really?

Bernard’s face starts to drain of color.

SOPHIE
Walt showed it to me. It was kind of sad, but really good.

Silence at the table. Bernard turns to his menu.

BERNARD
The portions are very big here, you only need a half order.

WALT
Okay.

Walt and Lili meet eyes.

102 EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Bernard still looks disturbed as he hands his ticket to the ATTENDENT. Walt stands with him. Lili and Sophie smoke in the background, talking.

BERNARD
Jesus, fifteen dollars for parking.

WALT
What do you think I should do about Sophie?

BERNARD
You’ll make the right decision. I regret sometimes I wasn’t more of a free agent when I was younger. There was a woman who approached me at a party at George Plimpton’s after my first book. She was very sexy. I could’ve gone home with her.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
Why didn't you?

BERNARD
I was with your mother.

WALT
Oh, right, of course. You should've probably done it. It didn't stop her.

They both soak in this remark.

BERNARD
Well, maybe you should sleep with her once and see if you like it. It doesn't mean you can't see other women too.

WALT
(looking over at the girls)
I don't know if Sophie will go for that.

BERNARD
Well... after your performance tonight, things might change for you.

WALT
Don't you think the first girl you sleep with should be perfect?

BERNARD
You've never made love with one of your girlfriends?

WALT
No. I've done other things. I've never really had many girlfriends. This is the first one, really.

103 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - NIGHT

Walt and Sophie walk together.

SOPHIE
Should we go to my house? I thought we could--

WALT
Jesus, you really want to do it, don't you.

SOPHIE
(embarrassed)
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
What's the obsession with sex?

SOPHIE
It's not an obsession. I'm not so sure I want to do it either. I'm scared too.

WALT
Scared is not the issue. It's just that everything is so serious suddenly. We're not getting married. You're going to Italy anyway for the summer and then to college. I just...we're young, we shouldn't tie each other down.

SOPHIE
What are you saying?

WALT
Nothing, it's just I don't want to feel pressure from you.

SOPHIE
Do you like someone else? Your Dad's girlfriend?

WALT
No...why...no! And she's not his girlfriend.

SOPHIE
(she holds back tears)
My father said you have a weak handshake which is a sign of indecision.

WALT
(defensive)
His hands are so huge, I can't get a good grip.

SOPHIE
And my mother said that you don't have a very good model for relationships because of your parents.

WALT
What? Your mother doesn't know anything.

(thrown)
I thought it went well. You told me she said I was hilarious.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

She bursts into tears. Walt stands there, completely unprepared for her reaction. She just gets worse and worse, crying harder and harder.

WALT (CONT'D)
Stop it. Sophie. Stop it. Don't be difficult. Please.

Her crying stops. She looks at Walt. Silence.

SOPHIE
I'm not being difficult.

INT. LILI'S ROOM - NIGHT

Walt sits on the bed next to Lili who's in shorts, crosslegged. He looks depressed.

LILI
You want a beer?

She rises and grabs two from a little fridge which is stocked with stuff.

LILI (CONT'D)
I couldn't take relying on your Dad's shopping habits anymore. You can have anything you want whenever.

WALT
Thanks.

LILI
I'm going to read you a draft of my new story. I want your thoughts first. Then I'm gonna show it to your Dad.

Lili lights up a cigarette.

LILI (CONT'D)
You like Pink Floyd, huh?

WALT
What?

Walt tenses up, but she smiles warmly, indicating it's okay.

LILI
Don't worry, I used to hand in Lou Reed lyrics in my poetry class and pass them off as my own. Although I hope you don't get caught. I always did.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

She touches his arm. He and she lock eyes for a moment. Walt bows his head, his eyes on her bare thigh. The crease in her knee. He focuses in on this. The silence seems to go on forever.

    LILI (CONT'D)
    Do you--?

Walt nervously swings his head up, clocking her in the nose.

    LILI (CONT'D)
    Oww! Fuck.

    WALT
    Sorry!

Her nose is bleeding.

    WALT (CONT'D)
    Lili, sorry.

She gets up and looks in the mirror.

    LILI

    WALT
    I'm sorry.

She goes into the bathroom. A moment. She comes out, her head tilted back, tissues soaking up the blood.

    LILI
    I think I might take a bath. Okay?

    WALT
    Oh...okay.

A pause. He realizes he's supposed to go.

    WALT (CONT'D)
    Okay...

    LILI
    Night.

He leaves the room.

105 INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Walt shuffles toward his room, his Dad comes up the stairs. Stops in his tracks.

    WALT
    Hey.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD

Hey.

Walt continues into his room and shuts the door. Bernard goes into Lili's room.

106 EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - MORNING

Joan and Ivan pack up Ivan's car. Frank stands on the stoop.

JOAN

When's Bernard coming to get you?

FRANK

In an hour.

JOAN

Plan on thirty minutes. He's always early to get you. And late to bring you back.

FRANK

I wish I could come with you guys.

IVAN

I heard that, brother.

JOAN

I know. But Dad's got you on Saturday.

(pause)

Do you like his girlfriend?

FRANK

Is she his girlfriend?

JOAN

I thought so. She lives with you. He doesn't say?

FRANK

No. I think Walt loves her.

JOAN

So, they like the same women now too.

FRANK

What?

JOAN

Nothing. You got our number in Maine. Remember to lock up.

FRANK

I will.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
See you next week, Pickle-oo.

FRANK
Just "Pickle" please.

JOAN
See you next week Just Pickle.

They hug. He and Ivan shake hands.

IVAN
Good grip, brother. Just like Vitas.

FRANK
You too, brother.

Frank watches, anxiously, as they start the car and drive away.

107 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - MORNING
Frank waits at the window, looking out at the street. Checks his watch. Goes to the phone and dials. Machine.

FRANK
Dad, it's me. Are you there?

He waits and hangs up. Goes to the fridge and takes out a beer.

108 EXT. UPSTATE NEW YORK - MORNING
A crisp spring day. Bernard's Peugeot passes by.

109 INT/EXT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - MORNING
Bernard drives, Lili shotgun, Walt in back. Spirits are high.

110 EXT. BINGHAMPTON UNIVERSITY - DAY
Bernard, Walt and Lili are welcomed by JEB GELBER, who wears a sweater vest and bolo.

111 INT. COLLEGE AUDITORIUM - DUSK
Bernard reads from Under Water at a podium. Not a well attended event. Lili and Walt sit next to each other. His arm brushes hers on the arm rest.

Bernard finishes. Applause. He grins. Gelber comes out and shakes his hand.

GELBER
(under his breath)
Sorry about the turnout, lots of the kids go home early for Passover.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

BERNARD
(pleased anyway)
They seem to like it.

112 INT. JOAN’S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Tangerine Dream’s E1 theme from Risky Business plays on the stereo. Frank, nude, drinking whiskey, stands at his mother’s dresser going through old photos and jewelry. He finds some condoms. Takes one out of its wrapper, looks at it, smells it. And puts it on his penis. He walks over to a mirror and looks at himself. The condom slips off his penis and lands on the floor. He retrieves it and tries to put it back on. On the bed, we now see, he’s laid out his mother’s underwear and bra and stockings on the comforter.

Leaning in to the mirror, he moves his nose around. Swigs from his whiskey glass. Suddenly he doesn’t feel so great. He spits on the floor. Waits. He vomits. He runs to the bathroom.

113 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS

He throws up into the toilet. Tears stream down his face. He rolls over onto the tile. A moment. He sneezes. He looks into his hand and finds a cashew. CUT TO BLACK.

114 INT/EXT. FRANK’S SCHOOL - DAY

Bernard and Joan stare at MS. LEMON, Frank’s principal.

BERNARD
This seems quite impossible.

Joan, stunned, says as if it’s happening to someone else:

JOAN
The poor boy.

MS. LEMON
I mean, masturbating is his own issue. But Hector witnessed the locker incident and then later semen was found in the library...

BERNARD
Who’s Hector?

Ms. Lemon indicates a CUSTODIAN over to the side, who nods politely.

BERNARD (CONT’D)
How do you know they were both Frank’s.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

MS. LEMON

Well, I suppose it's possible other kids are masturbating and spreading their semen around the school as well...possible, yes, but also somewhat unlikely.

BERNARD

Oh, it happens I'm sure much more than we know.

JOAN

Bernard, have you ever done something like this?

Bernard looks at Ms. Lemon, who nervously looks away, then back at Joan. He says indignantly:

BERNARD

I'm not going to answer that.

MS. LEMON

Has anything been going on at home that might've provoked this behavior?

JOAN

Well, Bernard left him behind for three days last week.

BERNARD

(pause)

And, of course, Frank's mother divorced me earlier this year, which might also have something to do with it.

(suddenly, to Joan)

Did you tell Frank I'm unattractive?

JOAN

No. He just doesn't want your bone structure.

They all stare at each other uncomfortably.

115 EXT. FRANK'S SCHOOL - DAY

Ms. Lemon holds the front door for Bernard and Joan.

MS. LEMON

Ms. Berkman, I read your story in The New Yorker. I thought it was quite moving.

JOAN

Oh, thanks. Thanks a lot.
Bernard's expression is completely blank. Bernard and Joan start down the steps to the sidewalk.

JOAN (CONT'D)
You're living with a twenty year old.

BERNARD
It's none of your business, Joan.
She's older than twenty.

JOAN
It's my business when you have our kids. It's confusing for them. Frank says Walt's in love with her.

BERNARD
(hesitates)
Walt has a girlfriend.
(suddenly angry)
Fuck off, Joan. I don't ask about you and Ivan. Stay out of my life. I can't believe you'd talk to me like this. You left all those fucking ticket stubs and letters lying around. You wanted me to know. It was fucking torture, Joan. Fucking torture.

Pink Floyd's version of "Hey You".

He walks to his car. He gets in, puts the key in the ignition, but doesn't turn it. He sinks down slightly in his chair.

116 INT. IVAN'S CAR - DAY

We FOLLOW Joan as she gets in. Frank sits in the passenger seat, staring at the floor. She looks at him. Takes a deep breath. Reaches over and touches his head.

117 INT. HIGHSCHOOL CLASSROOM - DUSK

Mr. Simic is now playing the Pink Floyd song for Bernard and Joan on a tape deck. Bernard reads the liner notes. They sit at desks across the aisle from each other and listen in silence. Simic turns it off. Joan absent mindedly peels skin off her lip.

BERNARD
He made his own interpretation.

MR. SIMIC
Well, he's still going to have to give the prize money back. But obviously it's a bigger problem. He isn't doing any of his school work either.
CONTINUED:

BERNARD
His paper on Gatsby was quite brilliant, I thought. It's one of his favorite books.

MR. SIMIC
That may be, but I don't believe he's read it.
(pause)
You both should talk to him.

Bernard turns to Joan. She's already looking at him. She flicks some skin off her finger and says sadly:

JOAN
I think Bernard has to do it.

118 INT. WALT'S ROOM AT DAD'S - EVENING

Bernard stands in the doorway, Walt is on the floor with his guitar in his lap.

BERNARD
He wants you to see a therapist.

WALT
I don't need that.

BERNARD
That's what I said. Does Simic know both your parents have Ph.D.'s in literature?

WALT
I've mentioned it.

BERNARD
I think he's full of shit. These public schools tend to hire well meaning, but ultimately unsophisticated bureaucrats.

WALT
Yeah. I don't like him.

BERNARD
But you might have to do it. Just to please the school.

WALT
I don't need it.

BERNARD
I know. And unfortunately probably a guy with a BA in psychology. Not a real shrink.
Walt sits across from the therapist, MR. WADDLES, 30's, who is already answering a question of Walt's.

MR. WADDLES
I have an MA in Developmental Psychology from the Yale Child Studies Program.

WALT
Did you get a PhD?

MR. WADDLES
No, an MA is a masters.

WALT
Uh huh. Right.

MR. WADDLES
Do you have any thoughts about why you're here, Walt?

WALT
Not really.

MR. WADDLES
Nothing?

WALT
No.

Waddles waits a moment, consults his notes.

MR. WADDLES
You said you wrote the song you played in assembly.

WALT
Uh huh.

MR. WADDLES
Why?

WALT
I don't know.

MR. WADDLES
Did you have a reason?

WALT
I felt I could've written it.

MR. WADDLES
Okay. But you didn't. It was written by Roger Waters of Pink Floyd. I think you know that.
CONTINUED:

WALT
Yes, but I felt I could’ve so the fact
that it was already written was kind
of a technicality.

MR. WADDLES
I see.
(pause)
I can imagine this is a little
uncomfortable for you to talk about.

WALT
I guess. It’s hard to explain.

Silence.

MR. WADDLES
I wonder how you’re feeling right now.

WALT
I don’t know.

MR. WADDLES
I’d like to know more about you. Why
don’t you tell me about something less
uncomfortable. A nice memory maybe.

WALT
Isn’t that kind of a stock question
for a shrink?

MR. WADDLES
Yes, that’s more or less how this
works.

WALT
I can’t think of anything right now.

MR. WADDLES
Just think.

WALT
Come on...

MR. WADDLES
Just something. Meet me half way
here.

A silence as Walt thinks.

WALT
Umm... let’s see... okay, when I was
around six, my Mom and I... she and I
ducked out of Julie Glynn’s birthday
party to watch “Robin Hood” together
on our TV.
MR. WADDLES
That sounds like a nice memory.

WALT
I liked Errol Flynn.

MR. WADDLES
Errol Flynn. That’s all?

WALT
And I was glad she let me leave the party early to watch the movie. She and I loved that movie. It’s like...we were pals then...we’d do things together...we’d look at the knight armor at the Met. The scary fish at the Natural History Museum. I was always afraid of the squid and whale fighting. I can only look at it with my hands in front of my face. When we’d get home, after my bath, she’d go through all the different things we saw that day in the museum. And then we’d get to the squid and whale and she’d describe it for me which was still scary, but less scary and it was fun. It was fun to hear about it.

MR. WADDLES
Did your Dad live at home back then?

WALT
Yeah, why?

MR. WADDLES
You didn’t mention him. Where was he during all of this?

WALT
He was...I don’t know exactly. Downstairs maybe. He didn’t ever come to the museum...This was...It was before my brother was born...before...it was earlier...

Walt stops for a moment, choked up. He looks at Waddles with a surprised expression on his face. Waddles gives him a “Not bad, eh?” shrug.

120 INT. BERNARD’S HOUSE - DAY

Walt opens the front door, drops his bookbag on the floor.

WALT
Hello?

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

No answer. He goes up stairs. Looks in his Dad's room. It's empty. Walks over to his room, throws his jacket on the bed. Goes over to Lili's room. The door's ajar. He hears:

LILI'S VOICE
I'm not...not now, Bernard. I'm not feeling like it.

BERNARD'S VOICE
Why not?

LILI'S VOICE
I'm just not, okay?

Walt peers in.

121 INT. LILI'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bernard has his hand up Lili's shirt, kneading her breast.

BERNARD
Put me in your mouth.

Lili's eyes meet Walt's over Bernard's shoulder.

LILI
Walt...hi.

WALT
Hi.

Bernard turns around to see his son. Walt just stares.

BERNARD
Hey, Walt.

WALT
Hi.

BERNARD
I'll be right there, we can...hang out.

Walt leaves. Lili takes Bernard's hands off her.

LILI
I don't want to do this anymore.

Lili walks to the other side of the cramped room. Bernard says nothing, looking both hurt and angry. He walks past her and down the stairs.

122 INT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT - DUSK

Bernard pulls up to Joan's house.
123 EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Bernard rings the bell. Frank opens the door.

BERNARD
Hi. Is Walt here?

FRANK
No.

BERNARD
Oh. I'd like you to come to my house.

FRANK
Isn't it Mom's night?

BERNARD
Yeah, but I'd like you to come over.

FRANK
Umm, I have to put on my shoes. Come in, I guess.

Bernard slowly follows him in.

124 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Bernard reluctantly enters. Frank sits on the floor and starts putting on his sneakers.

BERNARD
Place looks different.

FRANK
She got some new furniture in Maine.

BERNARD
That was my TV. I bought that TV.

FRANK
Mmm hmm.

Bernard looks at the bookshelf.

BERNARD
That's my Jude The Obscure.

FRANK
You wanna take it?

BERNARD
Nah.

FRANK
She still has some of the books you wrote.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

Bernard turns to the ceiling high shelves full of books. His eyes scan the titles. He finds the books with his name on the spines. He can’t move. His face grows suddenly emotional.

FRANK (CONT’D)
Dad, why are you taking me to your house on Mom’s night?

BERNARD
Just a minute.

He stands there, motionless, soaking in the place. For a brief moment, everything softens. His eyes grow watery. He takes a deep breath. All the change of the last few months seems to register. Joan enters from the kitchen.

JOAN
Oh...

BERNARD
Hi. Frank let me in. I didn’t realize you were here.

JOAN
I’m here. It’s Monday.

BERNARD
I’d like to take him for just tonight. I’ll give you two Thursdays in a row or something.

FRANK
Mom...

JOAN
It’s my night. He wants to stay.

Bernard picks up a little toy soldier off an end table. Inspects it.

JOAN (CONT’D)
Be careful, that’s an antique.

BERNARD
Where’s Walt?

JOAN
I don’t know where Walt is.

Bernard suddenly starts up the stairs. Joan tenses.

JOAN (CONT’D)
He’s not up there, Bernard. He doesn’t come here.

He stops, remains there for a moment.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN (CONT'D)
You should go. You'll see them tomorrow.

BERNARD
(to Frank)
Tell Walt to call me.

He comes down the stairs and goes to the door.

125 EXT. HUNAN PALACE - DUSK

Walt looks in the window. His gaze goes from family to family, sharing plates, kids trying to eat with chopsticks. He finds Sophie and her parents at a table in the back. He watches for a beat. She suddenly looks up and spots him. He awkwardly ducks behind a menu that's pasted to the glass. He waits a moment and peers back out. She's still staring. He stares back too. Her parents turn and look at him. A moment. Walt ducks back. He waits. He peeks back out, but they're not paying attention. He walks away.

126 EXT. PROSPECT PARK - DUSK

It's getting darker. Walt runs along the path. He suddenly darts into the brush, pushing his way through the trees.

He emerges to a pond. No one is around. He walks toward it and stops. He stares out over the water.

127 INT. BERNARD'S PEUGEOT/EXT. JOAN'S HOUSE - DUSK

Bernard sits in his car which is double parked. Starts it up, changes his mind, and puts it in park. He sees Walt running up the block. Walt, whose head is soaking wet, doesn't see Bernard watching.

Bernard waits for Walt to go inside Joan's, gets out of the car and approaches the house. He wades through the front garden and crouches down to the basement window. Inside, Frank, shirtless, sits on his bed with a beer. Bernard taps on the window. Frank looks up, startled.

128 INT. JOAN'S LIVING ROOM - DUSK

Walt walks in, his hair and face wet. Joan enters from the kitchen. Her face lights up and she goes to hug him, but backs off just before reaching him, afraid of scaring him off.

JOAN
Chicken, what happened?

WALT
I dunked my head in that pond in the park.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

JOAN
The one near the zoo?
(he nods)
Sweety, that’s filthy. I hope you didn’t drink any of it.

Joan retrieves a towel from the bathroom and hands it to Walt.

WALT
Some may have got in my mouth. I tried not to swallow.
(pause)
I shouldn’t’ve broken up with Sophie.

JOAN
Why did you?

WALT
I thought I could do better.

JOAN
Better how?

Walt gives this some thought. His answer comes as a surprise to him.

WALT
I don’t know.

JOAN
That’s good you miss her.

WALT
Yeah, but I don’t see myself as a person who is in this situation. I just don’t.
You know, I thought this could’ve been a real thing. A real love affair. I don’t see myself this way.

JOAN
Well, this is how it is.

WALT
Did you ever love Dad? Cause if you didn’t, why did you ever marry him? If you were going to leave him, why did you put us all through this.

JOAN
It wasn’t planned. When we first met, he was unlike anyone. In Columbus there was no one like your Dad. We were on the Ohio State campus and we’d take our sandals off to the green and picnic together.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

JOAN (CONT'D)
He asked me who I preferred: Antonioni or Fellini. I said Antonioni which was the right answer, I guess, at the time.

WALT
Is it Fellini now?

JOAN
I don't know. I think it's whoever you like better.

They make eye contact for a second.

JOAN (CONT'D)
I had had an affair with a man before your father. He worked in the college bookstore. We used to make love in the stock room. It got so that the smell of text books made me think of him.

WALT
Mom, I don't want to hear about your affairs, please.

JOAN
I'm sorry. I think I don't know what I can say to you.

WALT
You have a way of saying things sometimes that are a way I don't want to hear them. Children shouldn't hear these things from their Moms. You should particularly watch it around Frank.

JOAN
I know, chicken, it's something I do. It's a bad habit.

WALT
Do you...do you remember when we watched "Robin Hood"?

A moment, Joan jumps. Walt, startled, turns. Frank and Bernard stand in the doorway.

FRANK
He knocked on my window.

JOAN
Bernard, what are you doing?
BERNARD
Joan, let me ask you something. All that work I did at the end of our marriage, making dinners, cleaning up, being more attentive. It never was going to make a difference, was it? You were leaving no matter what...

JOAN
You never made a dinner.

BERNARD
I made burgers the time you had pneumonia.

JOAN
Only after I insisted!

BERNARD
Well, if I had made more dinners would that've made a difference?

JOAN
I was ready to leave a long time ago. I just didn’t know it then.

BERNARD (hesitates)
I’ve been giving it some thought. I mean, you called my father at the last minute. You said something. Whatever you said, he thought I could save the marriage.

Bernard and Walt quickly meet eyes.

BERNARD (CONT’D)
You felt I wasn’t aggressive enough. I’ll make more of an effort to do stuff. I’ve been cooking and doing chores at my house. I make veal cutlets which the boys love.

Frank looks at his father as if to say, “What are you talking about?”

BERNARD (CONT’D)
Why don’t we all have dinner and talk more about this.

Joan starts to laugh. It catches her off guard. It’s clearly out of her control. She tries to stop, she sucks it in, but it erupts to a hysterical level. The two boys and Bernard watch her as she continues to shake and laugh. Nobody says anything. Finally it dies down. She wipes the tears from her eyes. Coughs. She’s exhausted.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (4)

JOAN
I'm sorry... It's just...burgers...once.

Joan loses it again, laughing, but struggles to control herself. Bernard sighs, saddened by this. But as it sinks in, he just grows angry.

BERNARD
I'll sue you, Joan. You know I will. You had an affair for four years with that fucking shrink that ruined our marriage and I can get the kids. I talked to Eddie Goodman, who works on these cases all the time and I have an open and shut case.

(pause)
Frank, Walt, get in the car.

A pause.

JOAN
Sue me? That's so...I can't... You only wanted joint custody cause you pay less child support that way. Because it was cheaper for you.

Joan stops herself. She pounds the top of the TV with her fist, upset she said what she did. Walt looks at his Dad, "Is this true?". Bernard goes to the front door and opens it. Street noise enters the house.

BERNARD
Walt, Frank!

FRANK
I don't want to go.

BERNARD
I don't give a shit. Frank, get in the car.

Frank doesn't move.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Frank!

Bernard grabs Frank's arm. Frank bursts into tears. Walt steps between them.

WALT
Let him stay.

BERNARD
I'm just asking this one thing.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (5)

WALT
He wants to stay. Let him. I’ll go.

Frank and Walt meet eyes. Frank’s nose is running, tears streaming down his face. Bernard turns to Walt.

BERNARD
Fine.

Frank and Walt stare at one another for an extended moment.

FRANK
Hold on...

Frank kneels down, picks up the CAT and hands him to Walt.

FRANK (CONT’D)
You want him tonight?

WALT
Okay. Thanks.

FRANK
That’s alright, my brother.

Bernard and Walt walk out the front door.

129 EXT. JOAN’S HOUSE - DUSK

Just as they step outside, the cat leaps out of Walt’s arms and into the street. Joan screams.

JOAN
The cat!

It runs under a parked car. Bernard and Walt go after it, surrounding the car, Bernard taking the street side and Walt the curb. They both kneel down and look under the vehicle. The cat mews from beneath it. Bernard reaches under and grabs its tail. He and Walt meet eyes underneath the car.

BERNARD
I got him. Joan, I got him! I got him!

He turns to Joan and Frank who watch from the stoop. His attention goes to a COP next to his double parked car, writing a ticket.

BERNARD (CONT’D)
Goddammit!

Bernard releases the cat who darts down the block and out of sight.
CONTINUED:

WALT
Dad!

Bernard rises and starts toward the Cop.

BERNARD
I'm moving it!

A car SCREECHES on the breaks and swerves just avoiding Bernard. The Cop looks up. The DRIVER yells, furious.

DRIVER
What's your problem?

BERNARD
(under his breath)
Fuck off.

Ivan walks down the block toward them. He starts to pick up the pace. Walt turns to Frank who has wandered closer.

WALT
Did you see him go?

Frank shakes his head. No and bursts into more tears.

JOAN
Frank, go inside. Where is he?

WALT
I don't know where he went.

Bernard reaches the Cop. His face red, he's panting. The Driver continues to shout at him. Ivan jogs over to the scene.

IVAN
What's going on?

BERNARD
I had him.

Bernard's breaths are audible, deep. He looks at the Cop. The Driver curses. Ivan next to him. Joan and his kids. He suddenly clutches his arm. And falls. Ivan drops to his side.

IVAN
Bernard? Are you okay, man?
(pause)
Joan, call an ambulance!

Joan runs inside. Frank stares at Bernard. Walt races over and kneels down to his father. Bernard squints at Walt.

(CONTINUED)
BERNARD

Walt, get in the car.

130 EXT. BROOKLYN STREET - NIGHT

Bernard, awake, on a stretcher, is about to be loaded onto the back of an ambulance. Joan and Frank wait on the corner. Bernard says something to the PARAMEDICS and they stop for a moment as Bernard waves for Joan to come over. She approaches and leans down to him. He runs his thumb over his lips and looks at her.

BERNARD

"Oegeulasse".

JOAN

What?

He starts to repeat the gesture, but stops self-consciously.

BERNARD

It means, "Bitch". Don't you remember?

JOAN

You're calling me a bitch?

BERNARD

No, don't you remember the last line in Godard's "A Bout de Soufie". Belmondo calls Seberg a bitch. "Oegeulasse". We saw it at the Thalia with the Dicksteins. I got you in for a children's price. You were pregnant with Walt.

JOAN

(long pause)

Like six weeks.

BERNARD

I still got you in for a children's ticket. You told me you didn't like Godard. You thought the jump cuts--

Bernard is suddenly thrust up in the air on the gurney and rolled inside.

BERNARD (CONT'D)

I'd check for the cat behind the ashcans under the Golodner's stoop!

JOAN

Okay.

(continued)
They meet eyes briefly. He gives a "Who would've thought" kind of shrug. She nods. Ivan and Walt climb into the back with Bernard and the door is shut.

The ambulance pulls away. Silence. Joan and Frank start walking, surveying the block for the missing cat. Frank is a bit stunned, his face smeared from crying.

FRANK
Do you think we'll find him?

JOAN
I hope so.

FRANK
Do you think one day we could go to the Galapagos?

JOAN
I don’t know, Pickle.
   (pause)
Ivan and I could take you to the country on Saturday to see some real turtles.

FRANK
Saturday's Dad's day.

We see them from a distance, alone on an empty street.

131 INT. AMBULANCE - NIGHT

The siren wails. Walt and Ivan sit in silence. Bernard is sedated in the back, a paramedic at his side.

WALT
I didn’t write it.

IVAN
I know.

WALT
Pink Floyd did.

IVAN
It’s okay, brother.

132 INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - MORNING

Walt peers in. His Dad lies on a bed, looking pale and thin, reading a detective novel. Bernard looks up, sees Walt and smiles sheepishly.

BERNARD
There’s my son.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED:

WALT
Hey. Are you okay?

BERNARD
I'm fine. Thought it was a heart attack, but I think I'm just exhausted. Doctor said I'm exhausted.

WALT
Too many veal cutlets?

BERNARD
(smiles)
Maybe.

WALT
Is that a good book?

BERNARD
Oh...this is pulp...it's not serious...it's...you know it's hard to read a good book in the hospital. But this isn't bad of its kind. Leonard is the filet of the crime genre.

Walt is silent.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
I'd like you to stay here for the day. I need the company.

WALT
(pause)
Okay.

BERNARD
Lili moved out.

Bernard gives a "What can you do?" raise of his eyebrows. Walt nods.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Do me a favor, go out in the hall and get me another pillow, my neck is hurting.

Walt doesn't move. Silence.

WALT
Dad, you know how for my birthday you gave me Nikes.

BERNARD
What?

{CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (2)

WALT
How you gave me my Nikes as a birthday gift?

BERNARD
I wanted to get you something you could use.

WALT
I know, but you know, since Mom gets me winter coats and you get me sneakers as part of your divorce... anyway...

BERNARD
In our separation agreement, it says I'm responsible for sneakers up to fifty dollars, those Nikes were over eighty.

WALT
Uh huh.

BERNARD
And I don't think you told me anything else specific that you wanted.

WALT
I know, I should've thought of some things.

BERNARD
You actually get more presents now since you get them from both your mother and me. When we were together we gave them jointly.

WALT
I know.
(flustered)
And I like the sneakers so it doesn't really matter. I'm not really angry anymore. It's just... what bothers me is you didn't... You didn't try to...

He trails off. A moment as Bernard takes this in.

BERNARD
I got you the sneakers.

WALT
(takes a deep breath)
Maybe we could even things out a bit and I could stay at Mom's a few extra days since I've been staying more at yours...

(Continued)
BERNARD
It's not a good time right now, I'm not going to be a hundred percent for a while. I'd like you around.

WALT
I don't think I want to come for a while.

BERNARD
It's not up to you, Walt. You're a minor. You're in my custody. My home is your home too.

WALT
I'm not coming.

BERNARD
Why?

Walt is about to say something. He doesn't.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
That hurts my feelings.

Walt looks surprised.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Don't be difficult. If you like, we can get you some more posters or make your room better, paint it a different color. I got Frank a turtle.
(indicating his blazer on the back of the chair)
Look in the pocket of my jacket.

Walt walks over to the coat, he feels in the pockets. He removes a few little pieces of broken green clay.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
The guy said that was the best one. It's got a blue dot on it or something that makes it worth more.

Walt holds it out to Bernard.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Mmm. I guess it didn't survive the fall.

Walt looks at the shards and dust in his hand.

BERNARD (CONT'D)
We won't tell Frank.

WALT
No.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (4)

Tears suddenly stream down Walt’s face.

WALT (CONT’D)
He would’ve liked it.

BERNARD
I could lend you my first edition of
The Naked and The Dead.
(pause)
As a present.

WALT
Let me get you a pillow.

Walt goes out the door in the hallway. He pauses for a
moment, removes a pillow off a gurney and brings it back
into the room. Bernard awkwardly lifts his head and Walt
jams the pillow under his Dad’s neck. Bernard tries not to
look at his son’s crying, he presses the nurse button a few
times, but doesn’t seem convinced it’s working. He finally
looks at Walt, moved himself. Bernard’s voice cracks as he
says:

BERNARD
You used to be very emotional when you
were younger.

Walt nods.

BERNARD (CONT’D)
Did I look pretty silly out there,
falling on the concrete?

WALT
(pause)
Yeah.

Bernard bursts into laughter. Walt watches him curiously.

WALT (CONT’D)
What are you laughing at?

BERNARD
That was funny how you said, “Yeah”.
Good comic timing.

WALT
Thanks.

Bernard smiles at him warmly. He reaches out his hand.
Walt takes it. Bernard squeezes it.

BERNARD
Why don’t we get some breakfast. See
if you can find the nurse out there.

Walt starts for the door.

(CONTINUED)
CONTINUED: (5)

BERNARD (CONT'D)
Try to get the blonde, she looks like a young Monica Vitti.

Walt nods, turns and goes out the door.

133 INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS
Walt walks down the hall a bit. A Chinese NURSE approaches. He stops in front of her. She looks at him. Silence. She waits for him to say something.

WALT
Excuse me. The man in that room wants to order some breakfast.

NURSE
Okay.

Walt watches her disappear into Bernard's room. Pause. He walks in the other direction. We FOLLOW him as he passes a blonde Italian-looking nurse, goes by Ivan in the waiting room, reaches the elevators, presses the button. He goes for the stairs.

134 INT. HOSPITAL STAIRWELL - CONTINUOUS
He jogs down the stairs, clutching the rail.

135 EXT. HOSPITAL - MORNING
And now he's outside. Morning rush. A crowded sidewalk. He walks briskly for a bit. Turns a corner, keeps going.

136 EXT. CENTRAL PARK WEST - MORNING
He walks, head down. He looks up. The Museum of Natural History. It's just opening for the day.

137 INT. MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY - MOMENTS LATER
Walt enters the room with the big whale hanging from the ceiling. He looks at the dioramas. Finding the one with the squid and the whale he mentioned to the shrink earlier. He approaches it a bit warily. It's dark and scary. He gazes into the black, finding the squid and then the whale. We STAY on his face as he takes this in. Very slowly, he leans his head against the glass. And rests.

CUT TO BLACK