

FISHBOWL
A SCREENPLAY

by
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A THESIS

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Craig Johnson is stuck at the bottom of the high school caste system. When his eye falls on Maike Yoshida, the brainy girl from his math class, he decides that an exotic Asian girlfriend is the ticket out of his dreary adolescent ennui. To his surprise, Craig soon discovers that Maike is just as German as she is Japanese, and more American than anything else. Meanwhile, Craig's friends draw him into a series of petty revenge schemes against a group of white jocks who see themselves as black gangstas. The only non-Caucasian member of the group is Mark, who turns out to be Maike's younger brother. Craig must decide between his lust for revenge and his desire to pursue a developing relationship. Craig sets his anger aside, but he still needs to outgrow his Asian fetish to win Maike over in the long run.

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INTRODUCTION

A good portion of my personality is attributable to a simple realization that hit me sometime in my childhood: There just aren't many other Japanese-American/German-Canadians out there. Not that I feel alienated or anything—I just don't know what the hell I'm supposed to be half the time. I honestly cannot predict, for example, if a new acquaintance will instantly recognize my Asian features, or if months will go by before he wonders if "Yamada" is a Japanese name. Oddly enough, this phenomenon does not apply to my German side—no one ever asks me if I am part European. What am I supposed to make of all this when my second language is German, and my Japanese is limited to the sushi menu? I could go on ad nauseum about the little idiosyncrasies and cultural ambiguities that permeate my life, but I'd probably lose sight of the original purpose of this introduction—that is, to discuss the inspiration and creative process behind Fishbowl, my second feature-length screenplay. Suffice it to say that my variegated background has produced a host of charming little neuroses that I yearn to give vent to.

Another veritable gold mine of neuroses has been my middle school and high school experiences. I still don't

exactly know what made me a favorite target for the “popular” kids. I suppose it had something to do with my awkward bearing, utter lack of a fashion sense, and, yeah, maybe having a funny name didn’t help. In any case, adolescence left me with deep scars that still open into wounds when I think about the merciless taunting that I endured. Ever since they were inflicted, I have felt a strong need to treat those wounds through some kind of artistic medium. By manipulating my old enemies as characters in a world of my creation, I have sought to extract the revenge that eluded me as a teenager. Sure, it may sound a little pathetic, but it beats going postal in the cafeteria.

So I have had two major sources of angst ready to fuel the creative fires. The only problem was, for years I lacked a clear idea of the form my creative endeavor would take. The one thing I was sure of was that it would be a movie. I would be a liar if I said that the potency of film was not part of its appeal. They say a picture’s worth a thousand words, so try multiplying that factor by film’s twenty-four pictures per second; each minute yields over 1.4 million words. And the pen is mightier than the sword. Film has certainly lived up to this lofty projection through its use in political propaganda, news (often the same thing), advertising and, of course, art. Theater also puts live action in front of an audience, but it can’t rival

cinema's instantaneous scene and costume changes, flexible points of view, utterly realistic locations and mass distribution (if one can get a distributor). Besides, how many people still go to the theater on Saturday night?

Film's potency may have been seductive, but it was not the only thing that inspired me to make a feature of my own. Simply growing up in the age of video explains a large part of my obsession with the moving image. My dad bought a Betamax video camera somewhere around the time the original Macintosh came out, and I've been hooked ever since. The technology changes (thank god), but the drive remains. The tricky part is that as a project increases in length, the difficulty and cost of putting it together increase exponentially. With my thesis looming in the not-so-distant future, I realized a little over a year ago that I had neither the time nor the resources to produce an entire film. Instead, I chose to focus on the very first step in the process: writing a screenplay. I still had not channeled my inspiration into a workable idea, but I needed to at least decide on a format. Writing a screenplay was both logical and practical. I had to start somewhere, and I could author a script without actors, a crew or money. Maybe that's why every busboy in L.A. has a script.

Logistically, screenwriting may be easier than actually making an entire film, but there are also challenges inherent in writing a feature-length, character-driven

script that are not so prominent when shooting a five-minute short. The most dangerous trap a beginning screenwriter can fall into is forgetting that his words get translated into images. What works on the printed page doesn't necessarily cut it on the screen—that's why the movie is never faithful to the book. In order to reduce the risk of writing a visually drab script, my advisor, Julia Lesage, recommended that I specify the camera angle for each individual shot. This explains my script's unusual format. Normally, the screenwriter uses virtually no camera direction—calling the shots is the director's job. Thinking about the individual shots has been useful for me, however, since it has forced me to evaluate the visual elements of each scene. When I submit Fishbowl to screenwriting contests, I will naturally excise nearly all references to the camera, but the contest version will still have benefited from my early focus on individual shots.

Another obstacle for the beginning screenwriter is the daunting length of feature films. Aside from my first feature, which I wrote last year, every piece I had written before Fishbowl was less than fifteen minutes long. As I quickly discovered, the abovementioned rule about added length increasing the difficulty of a production exponentially also applies to writing. Greater length generally means a more complex plot, more characters and more locations. Keeping all of the elements balanced

becomes vastly more complicated in a feature than in a five-minute short.

One convention that helped me bring some order to the madness was the traditional three-act structure. Most features are organized around this template, since it gives the screenwriter an idea of where to put the climaxes and the lulls in the action. Dividing the script into three main parts also breaks a seemingly endless narrative into more manageable chunks. The downside of the three-act structure is that it can lead to predictable, formulaic scripts. If the couple is together by the end of the first act, something's bound to tear the lovebirds apart by the end of the second, and the third act will bring them back together. Okay, so I just gave away the whole story to Fishbowl. I don't think adhering to a certain structure is necessarily detrimental, however—just look at the Canterbury Tales, all in iambic pentameter (my honors college education has been useful for something!). I would like go beyond the three-act structure in future scripts, but as a beginner, it has given me something to lean on. If the content is fresh, a conventional, even predictable structure needn't make for an unoriginal film.

Finding that fresh content is easier said than done; it was undoubtedly the biggest challenge I encountered in the writing process. I had plenty of inspiration and angst to work with, but I wasn't quite sure how to tap my creative

juices. I toyed with a couple of different teen revenge ideas—one about a group of high school nerds who save the world from evil jocks that transform into flesh-eating monsters, another about a Kip Kinkel-esque kid who blows away a random group of his peers—but neither story really materialized. Dealing with ambiguous identity in a script hardly even occurred to me because I felt too close to the topic to write about it objectively. I was worried that the film would run like a bad autobiography starring me as the all-important hero, and that all the other characters would come off as cardboard cut-outs set up only to support my own ego. I finally resorted to revising my first script, a comedy about college freshmen living in a dorm, but I was already burnt out from working on it for so long, and I was also having serious problems making the female characters believable. I was all but set on revising that first feature for my thesis when a new possibility arose.

My epiphany came after a session of Julia Lesage's screenwriting class. Professor Lesage suggested that when drawing on personal experience, my classmates and I use characters of the opposite gender in order create a little distance. That advice was the catalyst I had been awaiting for months. The next class assignment was to write a single scene involving conflict, so I wrote a date between a half Japanese-, half German-American girl and a nerdy white guy. I had effectively killed two birds with one stone; I felt

distanced enough from Maike, the heroine, to write about her objectively, but her familiar ethnic composition made it easy for me to relate to her, enabling me to paint a realistic female character. Craig was also easy, since I could relate to his nerdiness yet distance myself through his single-parent upbringing and his exclusively European background. With the two key characters in place, the floodgates containing my creativity finally burst. I expanded the original diner scene into a thirty-minute short script for final project of my screenwriting class, and the story mushroomed from there into the following feature-length comedy. Along with further developing the love story, I introduced the conflict between Craig's friends and the jocks in the feature version, giving me an outlet for the anger that I had been seeking to express for so long. I had found a way to weave two important themes in my life into one cohesive narrative.

I finally had both the inspiration and the idea I needed to write my script, but with will and concept alone I would have gotten about as far as Bob Dole without Viagra. The truth is, Fishbowl would not have been possible without the innumerable films that have shaped the way I think about cinema. The ever-popular teen genre is particularly heavy on conventions that I have probably adopted wholesale without even thinking about it. Works like John Hughes' eighties classics The Breakfast Club, Sixteen Candles and

Some Kind of Wonderful set the standard for romantic teen comedies and were certainly lingering somewhere in the back of my mind as I wrote Fishbowl. Hughes' skillful manipulation of teen stereotypes and his predilection for pairing unlikely lovers are just a couple of the hallmarks that I aspired to in my own script. The darker side of my psyche drew from Michael Lehmann's Heathers (written by Daniel Waters). The idea of teenagers who kill the snobs and bullies of their school was the inspiration behind Carson and Doug's petty revenge schemes. Both Hughes' films and Heathers are decidedly lacking in one area, however; they seem to take place in some kind of hermetically sealed Biosphere II or Truman Show dome built exclusively for white people. When minorities do stumble into Hughes' WASP nest, it is almost invariably as stereotypes in insignificant roles (take the tough black kids from Some Kind of Wonderful, or the bar full of Amoses and Andys in Weird Science). Clearly, I could not look to my favorite high school films for models of multicultural interaction.

Fortunately, there were a number of movies I could turn to to see intelligent representations of cross-cultural interaction. I like to call features like Double Happiness, Bagdad Cafe, Mississippi Masala and Tokyo Cowboy "ethnic blender" films because they basically throw ethnically disparate characters into a vegematic and hit purée. The resulting concoction is often peculiar, but never boring. I

particularly enjoy watching characters squirm through myriad faux pas as they stumble down the road to mutual understanding (a reaction my German half would identify as Schadenfreude—pleasure derived from witnessing someone else's pain). Having seen ethnically diverse characters interact on screen was encouraging when I wrote Fishbowl because I knew that what I was attempting could be done. Had I never seen an ethnic blender film, it might have never occurred to me to write one of my own. At the same time, the relative scarcity of such films was also encouraging—I didn't feel like I was retreading old ground. I have yet to see a film with a character quite like Maïke—I've struck on an ethnic composition so unique, I could probably patent it. Between putting a multicultural twist on the teen comedy and forging a new vein in the hardly-tapped ethnic blender genre, I feel that I have created something truly novel. Even if Fishbowl isn't entirely original, I am confident that it takes a fresh approach to both genres that it borrows from.

The ultimate test, however, is what audiences think of Fishbowl. Until it is up on screens, that means readers like you. Demographically speaking, you are probably a white, middle to upper-middle class university student. I am not describing my target audience, merely the average person who passes time in the honors college library. Regardless of background, you should be able to relate to

(or at least visualize) many of the situations I deal with in Fishbowl. I'd like to know what you think of my work, so in order to gauge reader reaction, I have designed a handy little test. I'll probably drop by the honors college now and then to see what people have been marking. So here goes:

1. If you willingly read to the end (and don't just skim), then I have succeeded, in at least some small way, as a screenwriter. Put a smiley face on the blank back page.

2. If you laugh out loud, even just once, I get to add a notch to my belt. You also add another smiley. (I reserve the right to add a notch for each additional laugh.)

3. If the characters seem real and the story is gripping, add yet another smiley. You just gave me a high-octane ego boost.

4. If you read the character biographies at the end (tools I used in the writing process), give me a fourth and final grin. You certainly have a lot of free time, don't you?

Sign your name if you like. Also, feel free to insert any comments on a separate piece of paper. I'll get the picture if I see a bunch of Mr. Yucks. Or death threats.

But enough rambling—see for yourself what I've been rambling about. I sincerely hope you enjoy reading Fishbowl as much as I enjoyed writing it.

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FISHBOWL

FADE IN:

1 MS - A TROPICAL FISH

with colorful fins and body swims against the current. The sound of an ENGINE becomes audible somewhere in the distance before it suddenly cuts out.

A school of identical, monochrome minnows drifts on screen from the opposite direction, making the original fish stick out like a deadhead at Michael Bolton concert. A door SLAMS in the background followed by a WOMAN's voice.

WOMAN

Craig...Craig! Are you up yet?
You're going to sleep right
through your math test.

The CAMERA PULLS BACK to reveal that the fish are actually part of a computer screen saver. As more of the surroundings become visible, we begin to realize where we are:

INT. TEENAGER'S BEDROOM - DAY

The walls display posters for obscure bands and irreverent slogans clipped from ads, like "think different." Without these clues, it would be impossible to place the inhabitant's age--the room is unnaturally immaculate for a teenage lair. What kind of kid is so tidy?

Whoever he is, he stubbornly hides himself from the world under his covers, ignoring his mother's pestering.

2 MS - DOORWAY

The woman, DENISE JOHNSON, bursts into the room. She is in her late thirties and wears a nurse's uniform.

DENISE

Did you hear me? You're going to
be late for school.

3 CU - BED

No longer able to ignore his mother, the slumbering teen finally throws the covers from his head. It's CRAIG JOHNSON, a white sixteen-year-old with a few zits and relatively short hair. He really wanted that beauty sleep.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
Don't worry about it--there's
plenty of time to drive.

4 MS - DENISE

DENISE
I need the car this afternoon.

5 MS - CRAIG

He suddenly raises himself to a sitting position.

CRAIG
Shit mom, why didn't you tell me
last night?

6 SERIES OF SHOTS - CRAIG'S MORNING ROUTINE

- A) A dirty shirt hits the laundry basket.
- B) Craig's head pops through a fresh shirt.
- C) Craig wets down his hair in the bathroom.
- D) He rolls on deodorant under his shirt.

7 INT. KITCHENETTE - DAY
MS - DENISE

Craig darts around her to grab a banana and a root beer as
she removes an instant dinner from the microwave.

CRAIG
How was your day?

DENISE
Great--no one died.

Craig rushes off to make his test.

DENISE
Good luck.

8 EXT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DAY
MS - CRAIG

He closes the door behind him and looks over to see

9 LS - A GIRL

standing in the driveway by the car.

10 ANGLE - CRAIG

as he approaches her.

CRAIG
Hey, Samantha.

11 MS - CRAIG AND GIRL

SAMANTHA, sixteen, is a tall girl who wears almost all black. Her punk, dyed hair practically screams at us, as does the ring through her nose. She leans on an oversized instrument case--she plays the cello.

CRAIG
Looks like a bus day.

SAMANTHA
Shit, we've gotta move!

12 EXT. STREET - DAY
MS - CRAIG AND SAMANTHA

in profile. Although weighted down with her instrument, Samantha keeps a few paces ahead of her neighbor, who puffs until he finally catches up.

SAMANTHA
Like my new ring?

She gestures at a band through her nose.

CRAIG
(noticing for the first time)
Oh...neat.

SAMANTHA
Birthday present from my parents.

13 EXT. BUS STOP - DAY
XLS - BUS

pulling into the street. Samantha and Craig just manage to flag it down before it escapes.

14 INT. BUS -
DAY MS -
ENTRANCE

The DRIVER, a burly-looking fellow with a beard, watches Samantha lug her cello aboard.

(CONTINUED)

DRIVER
Mornin' Samantha.

SAMANTHA
Hey, Floyd.

Craig hops on once the way is clear.

15 LS - AISLE

The bus is practically full, but Samantha spots one seat near the front. She stops next to it and gestures to Craig.

SAMANTHA
After you.

16 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
That's all right--I see one down there.

17 LS - AISLE

Samantha takes the seat, and Craig squirms around the instrument protruding into the aisle.

18 MCU - CRAIG

with his eyes fixed ahead of him as he makes his way toward his seat. A VOICE from the back grabs his attention.

VOICE
Craig-fag!

19 CRAIG'S POV - PASSENGERS

Craig scans row upon row of oblivious students engaged in conversation or just staring blankly ahead. His gaze rests on a group of white jocks in the back wearing baseball caps and name-brand athletic wear. A couple of them SNIGGER.

BACK TO SHOT

Craig looks away and moves on.

20 MS - SCRAWNY KID

sitting next to the empty seat. It's Craig's friend DOUG, fifteen.

(CONTINUED)

DOUG
Whoa, Look who decided to show
up today.

Craig sits down next to him.

CRAIG
Hey, Doug. What's up?

The bus starts to roll.

21 OVER THE SHOULDER - DOUG

DOUG
Man, I totally scored last night.

CRAIG
Yeah?

DOUG
I was on pound-warez--swapped a
cracked copy Death Quest Four for
a pre-beta version of Blood Lust.

22 REVERSE SHOT - CRAIG

Doug waves a high-capacity disk in his friend's face.

CRAIG
You're shitting me.

DOUG
Dream on. This won't be in
stores for another year.

CRAIG
Can I copy it?

23 MS - CRAIG AND DOUG

DOUG
Beg.

CRAIG
(sarcastically)
Oh, most elite hacker, willst
thou bestow the fruits of thy
conquest on thy most humble
servant?

Doug strikes a Napoleonic pose and contemplates Craig's
request. A spitwad strikes him down at the height of his
glory.

24 MCU - DOUG

as he picks the saliva-soaked paper out of his hair to examine it.

 DOUG
 What the fuck?

A SNIGGER comes from the back of the bus.

25 MS - CRAIG AND DOUG

Doug shoots an indignant glance over the back of his seat.

 CRAIG
 Just ignore them.

 DOUG
 (to himself)
 Fucking assholes.

Doug spits into his hand, leans over the seat and sends the present back, freshly moistened, before settling back down in his seat.

A moment passes, then a veritable hailstorm of spitwads lands on Doug, Craig and the people around them. Doug silently seethes; Craig looks resigned to another day in hell.

26 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY

Samantha reads into a microphone with not a little sarcasm.

 SAMANTHA
 And finally, the Young
 Republicans meet tomorrow morning
 at the flagpole, seven-thirty
 sharp...

27 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

It is empty except for a few STRAGGLERS heading off to class.

 SAMANTHA (v.o.)
 to recite the pledge of
 allegiance....

28 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

A TEACHER hands tests to the first student in each row.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA (v.o.)
This is not a school-sponsored
event. And don't forget...

29 MS - CRAIG

as he receives a copy of the test and passes the rest
back.

SAMANTHA (v.o.)
about Tuesday's locker
inspection. Have a great day!

Craig flips through the test a bit, assessing the
difficulty. He lets out a sigh, then digs in.

DISSOLVE TO:

30 MS - CRAIG

still at the desk, staring at a problem with
consternation. He looks up to re-focus, then notices
something out of the corner of his eye.

31 CRAIG'S POV - ASIAN GIRL

dressed conservatively. She hands in her test while
everyone else still slaves away.

32 BACK TO SHOT

Craig watches her for a moment, bewildered, before getting
back to work.

33 INT. CAFETERIA - DAY
MS - JOCKS

It is the same group of bullies from the bus--JOE, JIM,
JOHN, JOSH and MARK. They are large for their ages--all
between fifteen and sixteen--and look as white as Wonder
Bread. Only Mark stands out with his Asian features.

JOSH
That chick is fresh, man.

JOE
I'd let her suck my dick, but she
too skanky to screw.

JIM
You homos talk all you want--I'm
gettin' my woody waxed tonight.

(CONTINUED)

ZIP PAN into an MCU of Mark.

MARK

By who, your mamma?

The other guys SNICKER.

ZIP PAN into an MCU of Jim.

JIM

No, with Lisa! I'm gonna fuck
her so smooth and sensual, she'll
be screamin' for more. She'll be
all...

ZIP PAN back to Mark.

MARK

Woof?

34 MS - JOCKS

The other guys burst into LAUGHTER; Joe gives Mark a high
five.

JOHN

(to Jim)

Dude, you should dump that ho.

JOSH

Moooooo! Moooooooooo!

JIM

Hey, fuck all you queers.

(to Mark)

I oughta fuckin' kick your ass.

35 CU - MARK

MARK

Try me, asshole.

ZIP PAN into a CU of Josh.

JOSH

(to Jim)

Watch out for Mark's Kung-Fu
kick!

ZIP PAN back to Mark

(CONTINUED)

MARK
(to Josh)
What the fuck? I ain't no
fuckin' Chink.

ZIP PAN into a CU of Jim

JIM
Well then, what the fuck are you,
bitch?

36 CU - MARK

He ponders the question a moment before responding.

MARK
I'm black.

37 INT. CAFETERIA/CRAIG'S TABLE - DAY - SAME TIME
MS - CRAIG AND FRIENDS

CARSON, seventeen, is a portly fellow with a bit of an
acne problem. He and Doug gaze past Craig at some off-
screen beauties.

DOUG
I talked to her the other day.

CARSON
Yeah, right.

38 MCU - DOUG

nibbling on a cinnamon roll.

DOUG
It's true--I said "hi," and she
said "hi" back--real nice, too.

39 MCU - CARSON

He looks genuinely impressed.

CARSON
I'm gonna talk to Jessica.
Working my way up to it.

40 INT. CAFETERIA/JOCKS' TABLE - DAY
MCU - MARK

weathering the storm as his friends LAUGH at him.

(CONTINUED)

JOE (o.s.)
Dude, you are so not black.

41 MCU - JOE

Josh SNEEZES at his side.

JOE
You got like two degrees of
separation in your way--the
plastic surgery and the tanning
salon.

42 MCU - MARK

MARK
Like you're so African.

43 MCU - JOE

JOE
More African than you, bitch.

JIM (o.s.)
Word up, G.

44 CU - MARK

His friends' remarks don't sit well with him, but he knows
he can't win.

MARK
Hey, what the fuck's goin' on
over there?

45 MS - JOCKS

They look over their shoulders.

46 JOCKS' POV - CRAIG, CARSON AND DOUG

The latter two have their gazes fixed to something off
screen. ZIP PAN to a table of PREPPY GIRLS.

47 CU - JOE

JOE
They're ogling our women.

48 INT. CAFETERIA/CRAIG'S TABLE - DAY
MCU - CARSON

CARSON
How 'bout you, Craig? Which one
would you pick?

49 MCU - CRAIG

He looks over his shoulder.

CRAIG
Of those girls? Oh god, I don't
know.

50 FLASHBACK - PREPPY GIRLS

CRAIG'S POV - VICKI

A girl with straight, blond hair wearing way too much
makeup shakes her head in disbelief. SUPER the name
"Vicki" at the bottom of the screen.

VICKI
You are soooooo weird.

51 CRAIG'S POV - SHANNON

Similar in looks to the previous girl, she slams shut a
copy of Jane Austen's Emma. SUPER "Shannon" at the bottom
of the screen.

SHANNON
I hate this book. It totally
rips off Clueless.

52 CRAIG'S POV - PEPPER

SUPER the name "Pepper" at the bottom of the screen. She
doesn't look quite as plastic, but from her expression
it's obvious that she's trying to break some bad news.

PEPPER
Craig, you're a really nice
guy...

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

53 MS - CRAIG

CRAIG
They all seem the same to me. I
want something...I dunno...
different.

54 MCU - CARSON

CARSON
(paternalistically)
You'll find one.

JOE (o.s.)
Yo...

55 MLS - JOCKS

advancing in a line with Joe at the head.

JOE
punks! Whachya doin' lookin' at
our bitches?

56 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Relax, we weren't looking at your
"bitches."

57 MLS - MARK, JOE AND JIM

Jim steps forward.

JIM
Yeah, why would a bunch of
faggots be looking at girls,
anyway?

The jocks CHORTLE, accompanied by a SITCOM LAUGH TRACK.

58 CU - JOSH

maliciously LAUGHING at the geeks. The LAUGH TRACK
continues.

59 MS - JOHN

as he gives Jim a high five.

60 MCU - CARSON

looking on in disgust. The monstrous LAUGHTER persists--

(CONTINUED)

until...

CARSON
Maybe you should see a shrink
about that homophobia--

61 MS - JOE, JIM AND JOHN

JIM
What?

62 MCU - CARSON

CARSON
You could be repressing
something.

63 MS - JOE, JIM AND JOHN

Jim takes another step forward.

64 MCU - CARSON

in profile. Jim slams his hands on the table and sticks
his face within an inch of Carson's.

JIM
If you ever talk to me like that
again, I'll smear your ass all
over the fucking pavement.

65 LOW ANGLE - JIM

with every intention of making good on his threat. His
friends stand in the background, ready to back him up.
Josh SNEEZES.

66 MCU - CRAIG

as he watches this bully intimidate his friend, not sure
what to do.

67 MCU - CARSON

visibly shaken.

CARSON
I--I'm sorry.

68 LOW ANGLE - JIM

He holds his hand to his ear.

(CONTINUED)

JIM

What?

69 MCU - CARSON

CARSON

I said I'm sorry for looking at
your fucking bitches!

70 XLS - CAFETERIA

STUDENTS all around the lunchroom turn to see the imbecile
who made the offensive remark.

71 EXT. STREET - DAY

THREE FIGHTERS ravage their hapless enemy--an army of
NINJA CLONES.

CRAIG (o.s.)

Take that, you piece of shit!

The sleek, Asian MARTIAL ARTS MASTER executes a roundhouse
kick that sends her opponent flying.

72 INT. DOUG'S BASEMENT - DAY
MS - CRAIG, DOUG AND CARSON

in profile, staring at the screen in front of them with
rage, pounding on their video game controllers.

DOUG

(mimicking Joe)

You lookin' at my bitches? You
lookin' at my bitches?

73 CU - VIDEO SCREEN

The SWORDSMAN decapitates one of the ninjas.

DOUG

(as himself)

No, I'm lookin' at you choke on
my longsword, asshole.

74 CU - CARSON

CARSON

Die!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

75 CU - VIDEO SCREEN

A ROBOT clasps one of the ninjas, feet in the air, and repeatedly smashes his head into the ground.

76 INT. DOUG'S BASEMENT - NIGHT
LS - DOUG, CRAIG AND CARSON

The boys lie flat on their backs, tangled in the controller cables. The CAMERA looks down on them from above and slowly PUSHES IN while ROTATING.

CRAIG
My eyes have never been this
sore.

CARSON
But it's a good kind of sore.

DOUG
Revenge kicks ass.

77 MCU - CRAIG

still from above.

CRAIG
I wonder why those guys pick on
us.

DOUG (o.s.)
Because they have a death wish?

CRAIG
Seriously. I mean, Carson and I
are juniors--it's not like a
seniority thing.

CARSON (o.s.)
It's 'cause we stick out, Craig.

CRAIG
Well, what makes us so different?
I mean, do we smell? Is it our
hair? Do we look like giant
insects with hideous mandibles--

78 MCU - CARSON

CARSON
Do we babble about stupid
bullshit and play video games on
a Friday night?

79 MS - CRAIG

The CAMERA is horizontal now as he sits up.

CRAIG
You know, that's it.

CARSON (o.s.)
Ding!

CRAIG
I mean, shit, we're not even
trying. We've gotta, like, reach
out or something, you know?

Carson comes into view as he props himself up on his
elbows.

CARSON
What the hell are you talking
about?

80 INT. DOUG'S BASEMENT - LATER THAT NIGHT
MS - DOUG, CARSON AND CRAIG

sitting in front of a phone that they've dragged into the
middle of the floor. Doug flips through their school's
student directory.

CARSON
I'm not touching the goddamn
receiver.

DOUG
All right, then I'll go.

Doug slaps down the directory, picks up the receiver and
starts dialing.

81 MCU - DOUG

DOUG
Watch and learn.

82 MS - CARSON AND CRAIG

They roll their eyes.

83 MCU - DOUG

DOUG
(on the phone)
Hi, Christy?
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

DOUG (cont'd)
This is Doug...from school.
(pause)
Oh, okay. Bye.

He replaces the receiver to the cradle.

DOUG
She was on the other line. Said
she'd call back.

84 MS - CARSON AND CRAIG

CARSON
And did she get your number?

85 MCU - DOUG

stymied.

86 MCU - CRAIG

holding the receiver. It's time to live up to his dare,
and he looks about as calm as someone awaiting surgery.

CRAIG
Hello? Uh, I'd like to speak
with Maike, please.

87 OVER THE SHOULDER - DOUG AND CARSON

DOUG
Who the hell is Maike?

88 MCU - CRAIG

He covers the receiver with his palm.

CRAIG
(smug)
Asian girl.

89 OVER THE SHOULDER - DOUG AND CARSON

DOUG
Aw-yeah!

Carson gives him a disparaging look.

90 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
(on phone)
Oh, hi, Maike? My name is Craig.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG (cont'd)
 I'm in your trig class.
 (pause)
 What's that? Oh, pretty good--
 how about you?

91 MS - DOUG AND CARSON

listening to Craig's conversation like it's the most vapid
 crap they've ever heard.

CRAIG (o.s.)
 Wow, that's great.
 (pause)
 Oh, well, um, I just thought I'd
 call....

92 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
 I kind of wanted to ask you--I
 know this sounds stupid, but....

The invitation hangs on the tip of his tongue.

CRAIG
 Do you know if the test is
 curved?

93 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY
 MCU - STONER

SHELBY, seventeen, the school's aspiring dealer, makes a
 hard sell for his wares. He sports disheveled threads
 (including a faded DARE T-shirt) and numerous piercings.

SHELBY
 Uppers, downers, inners, outers,
 a whole rainbow of fruit flavor!
 I got shit you won't believe.

94 OVER THE SHOULDER - SAMANTHA

does her best to dispose of the irritating apothecary as
 her best friend, sixteen-year-old MAIKE YOSHIDA (the Asian
 girl from Craig's math class), does her locker combo in
 the background.

SAMANTHA
 You're right Shelby, I don't
 believe it. You don't even know
 where to get any of that stuff.

Maike cracks open her locker, obscuring her face behind
 its door. She starts unloading books from her backpack.

95 OVER THE SHOULDER - SHELBY

SHELBY
Hey, I met this guy the other day
who said he knows someone who
could hook me up with some weed.

96 OVER THE SHOULDER - SAMANTHA

She gives him an incredulous look.

97 OVER THE SHOULDER - SHELBY

SHELBY
Check this shit out...

He takes a bottle of Tylenol III out of his open locker.

SHELBY
That's with codeine--illegal
without a prescription!

There is only one vice principal in the world--it just has different faces. One of them appears on VICE PRINCIPAL DONALDSON as he approaches from down the hall in the background. The only thing that separates this man from the archetype is his shoulder-length hair, a remnant of a bygone era.

MR. DONALDSON
Hey, Shelby, what's happening?

98 MLS - MAIKE, SAMANTHA AND SHELBY

The dealer tosses the pills in his locker and slams the door as he turns to face the disciplinarian. Donaldson walks into view.

SHELBY
Nothin', Mister D.

99 MS - SAMANTHA AND SHELBY

SHELBY
(to Samantha)
I gotta jet. Don't wanna be late
for personal finance.

MR. DONALDSON (o.s.)
Wait a moment...

100 MCU - MR. DONALDSON

MR. DONALDSON
Where's your hall pass?

101 ANGLE - SHELBY AND MR. DONALDSON.

SHELBY
But class hasn't started yet.

The bell RINGS. Donaldson looks like the master detective who just solved the big case. Samantha looks on in the background with malice in her eyes while Shelby gapes at the vice principal's duplicity.

MR. DONALDSON
See you in detention.

Shelby gestures to Samantha and Maike.

SHELBY
What about them?

102 MCU - MR. DONALDSON

MR. DONALDSON
They're honor students.

103 MCU - SHELBY

SHELBY
That's whack.

104 ANGLE - SAMANTHA AND MR. DONALDSON

look on as Shelby retreats down the hall. He doesn't notice the jocks and bumps into Joe.

JOE
Fucking stoner!

105 MS - SAMANTHA AND MR. DONALDSON

Donaldson turns his attention to the student in front of him.

MR. DONALDSON
I like that nose ring, Samantha.

SAMANTHA
Um, thanks.

(CONTINUED)

He gives her an approving nod. PAN with Donaldson as he walks off, crossing in front of Samantha, into an MS of Maike and Samantha.

Maike shuts her locker, notebook in hand, as her friend watches the vice principal leave. Once he's out of earshot...

SAMANTHA

Why's it that the scarier I look,
the more those fascists love me?

Maike shrugs.

MAIKE

Grabs their attention?

SAMANTHA

Why doesn't it work with guys?

MAIKE

Shelby seemed interested.

106 MCU - SAMANTHA

She rolls her eyes.

SAMANTHA

Please.

107 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

(hopping slightly)
We'll talk about it later, okay?
I've gotta get to the bathroom.

108 MCU - SAMANTHA

nodding.

SAMANTHA

All right, see you, Maike.

109 INT. HALLWAY - DAY
MS - MAIKE

PAN with her as she approaches the women's room. Just before she can duck in, Craig pops into view opposite her.

CRAIG

Hi, Maike.

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE
Oh, hi, uh...

CRAIG
Craig.

MAIKE
Right. Did you get your test grade?

CRAIG
Oh, no--um, but that's not really why I called.

Maike darts a glance at the bathroom.

MAIKE
Oh, really?

110 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Um, yeah--see, I wanted to ask you something else, but I was kind of embarrassed, and my friends were there, and it wasn't really my phone in the first place--

111 MCU - MAIKE

She squirms with physical discomfort.

MAIKE
So...

112 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
So I wanted to kind of invite you to, like, maybe dinner and a movie?

113 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
Sounds good.

114 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Really?

115 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

When?

116 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Tonight at seven.

117 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

On a school night?

118 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Well, I guess there's a lot of
different times we could...

119 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

MAIKE

(jumping up and down)
Seven it is! Bye.

She disappears into the bathroom, leaving Craig to wonder
at his luck.

120 INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE/BATHROOM -
DAY MS - CRAIG

SINGING over the HISS of the shower behind the frosted
plastic door.

121 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

Denise lies asleep on the couch, still in her nurse's
uniform. Across the room, the cordless phone RINGS.

122 INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Craig continues his VICTORY BALLAD, unaware that the phone
is ringing.

123 INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

The phone RINGS again. Denise stirs, still half asleep.

DENISE

Craig! Get the phone!

124 INT. CRAIG'S BATHROOM - DAY

Craig keeps SINGING as a hand reaches for the shower door.

125 MS - CRAIG

inside the shower. The door slides open to reveal Denise on the other side.

126 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

as he turns away.

CRAIG
Aaagghhh!!!

He shuts off the water.

CRAIG
Shit, Mom, give me some privacy.

127 OVER THE SHOULDER - DENISE

She holds out the phone.

DENISE
It's for you.

128 MS - CRAIG

Denise leaves the bathroom as her son brings the receiver to his ear.

CRAIG
Hello?

129 INT. DOUG'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME

The place is a pit--dirty underwear, comic books and soda cans lie strewn all over the floor. The walls are plastered with posters of sports cars, models and video games. Doug sits on his bed next to Carson holding a crumpled piece of paper.

DOUG
Dude, we just scored!

130 INT. CRAIG'S BATHROOM - DAY
MCU - CRAIG

Disappointment spreads across Craig's face as he recognizes the voice.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
Really? Who with?

DOUG (v.o.)
Not like that. I saw that
asshole jock stuff a note in
someone's locker. It was
sticking out, so I swiped it.

CRAIG
(drying himself)
Doug, You never fail to amaze me.

131 INT. DOUG'S ROOM - DAY
MS - DOUG AND CARSON

CARSON
(to Doug)
Read him the note.

DOUG
Listen:

132 INT. CRAIG'S BATHROOM - DAY
MCU - CRAIG

DOUG (v.o.)
"Dear Lisa, you're a real cool
person.

133 INT. DOUG'S ROOM - DAY - LATER
MCU - CRAIG

He sits on a chair, reading the note.

CRAIG
"I think you are real great,

134 MCU - CARSON

seated on the bed, squinting at the handwriting.

CARSON
"so please don't take this
personally.

FLASHBACK - JOCKS

135 INT. CAFETERIA - DAY
MLS - JOCKS

laughing maliciously, MOS.

(CONTINUED)

DOUG (v.o.)
"My friends can be real hard.

136 MS - CARSON, DOUG AND CRAIG
sitting at their table looking apprehensive.

CRAIG (v.o.)
"They don't like some people.

137 LOW ANGLE - JIM
delivering a silent harangue.

CARSON (v.o.)
"And if I like these people, they
won't like me.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

138 INT. DOUG'S BASEMENT - NIGHT
The friends are comfortably seated on the shag carpet.

139 MCU - DOUG
reading the note.

DOUG
"Therefore, it's best for both of
us to break up.

140 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
"No hard feelings, Jim."

Craig rests his chin on his hand for a moment and starts dictating.

CRAIG
Dear Lisa, you're a real cool
person.

141 MCU - CARSON
writing on a fresh piece of paper. A two-liter bottle of
soda, plastic cups and fresh bag of chips rest beside him.

CARSON
But puberty can be real hard.

142 MCU - DOUG

dictating over a hand of cards.

DOUG

Many guys develop slower than girls.

143 MCU - CRAIG

Doug and Carson play a video game in the background.

CRAIG

These guys can't satisfy girls physically.

144 MCU - CARSON

Doug and Craig's fists thumb wrestle in front of him.

CARSON

Therefore, it's best for both of us to break up.

145 MCU - DOUG

He reveals his cards--a full house.

DOUG

No hard feelings,

146 MCU - CRAIG

The soda and chips are nearly exhausted.

CRAIG

Jim.

A door CREAKS; Craig looks up to see who it is.

147 LS - DOUG'S MOM

stands at the top of the stairs wearing an apron worthy of Donna Reed.

DOUG'S MOM

Are Craig and Carson staying for dinner?

148 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Oh, shit!

149 INT./EXT. MAIKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT
MS - CRAIG

through the eye-hole of a door. He brings his face close to the hole for a moment, then looks at a crumbled piece of paper--presumably an address--to verify his location.

150 MCU - CRAIG

He looks nervous. He glances at his watch to delay a moment longer, then reaches for the doorbell.

151 XCU - DOORBELL

Craig pushes down on the button but doesn't release his finger. It makes a crisp DING.

152 MCU - CRAIG

anticipating the DONG. But as he withdraws his hand, he hears a DING-DING-DONG instead--BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH. Craig looks a little thrown.

153 MCU - DOOR

A figure appears in the frosted glass.

154 CU - CRAIG

straining to see who it is.

155 CU - DOOR

It swings open to reveal a CAUCASIAN MAN. A smattering of gray hairs in his beard place him in his forties. He addresses Craig with a German accent just strong enough to hint at his foreign birth.

MAN

Ah, good evening.

156 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Uh, I think I have the wrong address.

157 CU - MAN

MAN

Nonsense. Maike's been waiting for you.

158 CU - CRAIG

absorbing this information.

159 INT. BILL'S DINER - NIGHT
MCU - CRAIG

Sitting in a booth at this greasy spoon restaurant.

CRAIG

So what kind of accent is it?

160 CU - TABLE

It is bare except for the silverware and two glasses of ice water. One of the glasses is practically drained--someone's been waiting a while.

A girl's hand reaches in and grabs the near-empty glass. PAN with the hand into an MCU of Maike. She takes the last sip and rolls her eyes as she sets down the empty vessel.

MAIKE

German.

161 EXT. DINER - NIGHT
MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

through the window. He looks at her with flighty but penetrating eyes.

CRAIG

Look, I'm killing myself for getting there so late.

Maike's calmer than her date, and better dressed too, though far from formal.

MAIKE

You made it in the end.

CRAIG

So...

162 INT. DINER - NIGHT
MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

is he like, a stepfather or something?

163 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
What? No, he's my real dad.

164 MCU - CRAIG

He looks a bit confused.

CRAIG
What's with the service in this
place, anyway? We're gonna miss
the movie.

165 MCU - MAIKE

She plops an ice cube from her glass into her mouth and
pushes it around with her tongue.

CRAIG (o.s.)
Maike...

She looks up.

166 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
if your dad's German, why do you
have a Japanese name?

167 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
Well, it's kinda complicated...

She crushes the ice cube.

168 MCU - CRAIG

listening intently.

169 OVER THE SHOULDER - MAIKE

MAIKE
It's like this. Hyphenation's a
pain, right? I mean, who wants
to go by like, "Maike Yoshida-
Hüttner?"

170 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

CRAIG
So you just took your mom's name.

171 MS - MAIKE AND CRAIG

sitting opposite each other in a booth.

MAIKE

And my brothers got my dad's.

Craig thinks he's finally got it.

CRAIG

And that goes for your first names too.

MAIKE

What?

172 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Your first name. It's Japanese.

173 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

Oh no, 'Maike''s German.

174 MCU - CRAIG

now thoroughly bewildered. Fortunately, the WAITRESS spares him further embarrassment.

175 MS - CRAIG, MAIKE AND THE WAITRESS

WAITRESS

I got two Bill-burgers and a diet Doctor Skipper.

Craig and Maike's expressions sour as they watch the waitress hastily plop down the food, drop the bill face up on the table and leave. Craig waits until she is out of earshot.

CRAIG

What was with that?

MAIKE

She could have at least refilled the water.

176 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Yeah, well.

(CONTINUED)

He takes a bite from his burger, chewing a couple times before his face involuntarily contorts in disgust.

177 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
That good?

178 MCU - CRAIG

contemplating what to do with the stuff in his mouth. Finally, he reaches for his napkin and spits out the offensive morsel.

179 MCU - MAIKE

offering him her soft drink.

MAIKE
Here...

180 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

He douses his mouth with a liberal swig.

CRAIG
Thanks. Still hungry?

Maiké looks down at her plate, then back up at Craig with a fearful expression.

CRAIG
I'll get you something after the flick.

MAIKE
You okay with paying twice?

He leans forward.

181 CU - CRAIG

wearing a seditious smirk.

CRAIG
Who says we're gonna pay?

182 CU - MAIKE

sharing his naughty smirk. From off screen comes the sound of an ENGINE picking up speed.

183 EXT. DINER - NIGHT

The waitress flips the bird as Craig's car ROARS off into the night.

WAITRESS

Goddamn yuppie brats!

184 EXT. MOVIE THEATER PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Craig's car SCREECHES into an open parking spot. Maike brims with energy as she and Craig disembark.

MAIKE

I just feel so...mischievous.

CRAIG

Welcome to the exciting world of juvenile delinquency.

They take a few steps, then stop, dumbfounded.

185 OVER THE SHOULDER - MOVIE THEATER

The ticket line stretches around the block.

CRAIG

Oh, shit.

186 EXT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT
MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

waiting to get their tickets. Craig tries to think of something--anything--to spark conversation.

CRAIG

I don't think I've ever known someone like you.

MAIKE

What do you mean?

CRAIG

You represent both major axis powers.

187 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE

(sarcastically)

Gee, I haven't heard that one before--besides, I was born in the U.S.

(CONTINUED)

188 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
I'm sorry. Sometimes my mouth
gets ahead of my brain.

189 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE
It's okay.

190 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

CRAIG
No, it's not okay. I was totally
out of line, and the last thing I
want you to think of me's as some
stupid jerk who has no concept of
sensitivity for other people's
ethnicity. I'm really, really
sorry--

191 REVERSE SHOT - MAIKE

MAIKE
(giggling)
It's okay, really. Just...be
quiet.

Craig nods.

192 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

Maike glimpses around the line, then turns back to Craig.

MAIKE
(confidentially)
You know, I think I did have a
great uncle who was a member of
the party.

CRAIG
(loudly)
What party?

Maike cringes in embarrassment and glances from side to
side.

MAIKE
The Nazi party.

(CONTINUED)

This unexpected twist has a momentary sobering effect on Craig.

CRAIG
Oh.

MAIKE
I just hope no one overheard that.

CRAIG
Relax. Nobody listens to anyone these days but themselves.

Behind them, an OLD LADY pipes up.

OLD LADY
My brother was a member of the Communist party. Boy did McCarthy have his ass!

193 INT. MOVIE THEATER - NIGHT
MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

reclining in their seats. The flicker of the screen dances across their faces as EPIC-STYLE MUSIC resonates in the theater. The couple shares a large tub of popcorn.

MAIKE
I'm sorry we missed the previews.

CRAIG
To hell with the previews. I wanted to see those slides that tell you to clap if you're "jiggy wid' it."

A PATRON sitting behind them gets fed up with their chatter.

PATRON
Sssshhhh!

CRAIG
Know what? This movie sucks.

MAIKE
It's not Citizen Kane.

Craig roots around for something in his pockets.

MAIKE
What are you doing?

(CONTINUED)

He produces a small box.

CRAIG
Whipper snappers. Left over from
the Fourth of July.

MAIKE
You're not.

PATRON
Sssssssshhhhhh!

Craig shrugs and throws a whipper snapper at the screen;
it makes a loud POP. Maike cringes in embarrassment.

Viewers around them begin to MUMBLE.

MAIKE
What the heck are you trying to
do?

CRAIG
I'm trying to give these people
their money's worth.

He throws another whipper snapper, and...

194 EXT. BACK OF THEATER - NIGHT
LS - BACK DOOR

The sound of the POP matches to the back door slamming
open. Maike walks out. From off screen, Craig is thrown
out after her.

CRAIG
I want my money back!

The door closes.

Maike sits down on the curb.

195 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

Craig joins Maike on the curb at a measured distance.

196 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
What was that?

She can't decide if she's drawn in or put off by Craig's
juvenile pranks.

197 MCU - CRAIG

 CRAIG
 Maiké, I, uh...don't know what
 came over me.

198 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

 She turns to him with a matter-of-fact expression.

 MAIKE
 Craig, you are the weirdest guy I
 have ever met.

 Craig self-consciously puts his hand to his head.

 CRAIG
 It's my hair, isn't it?

 His hair is disheveled, but thoroughly normal.

199 EXT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - NIGHT

 Craig's car pulls up in front.

200 INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - NIGHT
 MS - FRONT DOOR

 Craig comes in and shuts the door behind him. He looks up
 into

201 LS - THE KITCHENETTE

 where he sees Denise at the table. She wears her nurse's
 uniform and munches on sugar coated breakfast cereal. A
 TV in the adjoining living room DRONES on in the
 background.

 DENISE
 Where were you? I gotta leave
 for work!

 Craig makes his way into the kitchenette and drops his
 jacket over the top of a chair.

 CRAIG
 Out robbing convenience stores.
 Anything new around here?

202 MS - DENISE

 She gestures to a stack of opened envelopes strewn across
 the table.

(CONTINUED)

DENISE
That check from your father
finally came. Thought we'd have
'nother hassle with the lawyer.

Craig passes in front of his mother on his way to grab a
root beer from the fridge.

DENISE
What's that smell?

203 MS - CRAIG

CRAIG
My deodorant.

He pulls back the tab on the can.

204 MLS - DENISE AND CRAIG

Denise gets up to take her finished bowl of cereal to the
sink.

DENISE
That's perfume. There something
you wanna tell me?

205 MS - CRAIG

as he takes a sip, his eyes following his mother as she
walks by.

CRAIG
It's true--I'm a closet
homosexual.

206 MS - DENISE

standing at the sink.

DENISE
You were on a date!

207 ANGLE - CRAIG AND DENISE

Craig begins to pace around the kitchen. Denise rinses
out the bowl and places it with the spoon in the
dishwasher.

CRAIG
I wouldn't exactly call it date.

(CONTINUED)

DENISE
Who was it with?

CRAIG
You wouldn't know her.

DENISE
Try me.

Craig stops pacing.

208 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Her name's Maike...Yoshida.

209 MCU - DENISE

DENISE
That cute little Asian girl!

210 ANGLE - DENISE AND CRAIG

She starts making her way back to the table with Craig following her.

CRAIG
How do you know--

DENISE
Her mother's a doctor at the hospital...

She snatches her purse and keys off the table.

DENISE
She played violin for the
geriatrics when I was on swing
last week.
(shaking Craig by the ears)
I'm so excited for you.

CRAIG
Ow. It's not that big a deal.

211 ANGLE - DENISE

as she makes her way to the door.

DENISE
You'll have to tell me all about
it in the morning. I'm running
late as it is. Sweet dreams...

212 MS - CRAIG

CRAIG

Bye.

The sound of the DOOR CLOSING signals that Craig is finally alone. He shuts off the TV and takes his soda into...

213 INT. CRAIG'S ROOM -
NIGHT MS - COMPUTER
DESK

He sits down and flips on the machine.

VOICE (v.o.)

D'ya hear 'bout "gumby dick?"

214 INT. SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY

The voice comes from one of TWO FRESHMAN BOYS indulging in some juicy gossip over the DIN of other STUDENTS.

215 MS - FRESHMEN

with Maike and Samantha in the background.

FRESHMAN #2

(wiggling his little finger)

You mean "little Jimmy"

McCormack?

FRESHMAN #1

Dumped his woman 'cause he
couldn't get it up!

They LAUGH their way off screen.

216 MS - MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

MAIKE

Thank god we're not freshmen
anymore.

SAMANTHA

Amen. You, however, are avoiding
my question.

217 OVER THE SHOULDER - MAIKE

She pulls her notebook from her locker, avoiding eye contact with Samantha.

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE
What question?

218 OVER THE SHOULDER - SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA
About my neighbor...

219 OVER THE SHOULDER - MAIKE

She shuts her locker door and starts walking away.

MAIKE
Oh, that.

220 MCU - SAMANTHA

as she starts to follow.

SAMANTHA
Yes, that.

221 MS - MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

TRUCK with the girls as Samantha pursues her line of questioning.

MAIKE
Well, by conventional standards... between the third and fourth rings of hell.

SAMANTHA
So we're moving up in the world.

MAIKE
But somehow...

222 CU - MAIKE

as she stops and turns to face her friend.

MAIKE
Craig isn't quite conventional.

223 OVER THE SHOULDER - SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA
Try "freak."

Maiké turns away again.

224 MS - MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

TRUCK to follow them.

SAMANTHA

When we were kids, he used to
build contraceptives out of
legos.

MAIKE

Relax, I'm not really attracted
to him or anything...

SAMANTHA

For years I thought IUD stood for
"inert uranium device."

Maike stops again.

MAIKE

It's just...

225 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

maybe in some weird kind of
way...

226 MCU - SAMANTHA

MAIKE (o.s.)

he could almost be...

227 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE

kinda cute?

228 INT. CARSON'S CAR - DAY
CU - CRAIG

sitting in the back seat.

CARSON (o.s.)

So did ya nail her?

229 MS - CARSON AND DOUG

through the windshield. Carson drives and Doug rides
shotgun as they eye Craig through the rear view mirror.
Tinny electronic music plays on the tape deck.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
Ah, I get it--you take me to
lunch so you can pry into my
personal life.

Carson and Doug look at each other and nod.

DOUG
Yeah, pretty much.

230 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
All right then; the date was a
total disaster, and she'll
probably never speak to me again.

231 MCU - CARSON

from behind his seat.

CARSON
That's a start.

232 MS - CARSON AND DOUG

with Craig in the background.

CRAIG
I feel like a fucking idiot.

CARSON
No, I think you're a celibate
idiot.

They pull up at a stop light.

233 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
She's really intelligent, too.
You know she aced the last trig
test?

234 MCU - DOUG

from the back seat; he twists around to face Craig.

DOUG
All Asians are good at math--
it's, like, genetic.

235 MCU - CRAIG

in profile. He winces at this generalization but doesn't respond. Just then, a slow, heavy BASS BEAT wells up from the car pulling up in the background. Craig turns his head.

236 EXT. STREET - DAY
MLS - CAR

It's the jocks.

237 CARSON'S POV - DOUG

watching Mark roll down the window of his father's BMW, a smug grin on the jock's face.

Doug starts to manually roll down his own window.

DOUG
Those fucks!

CARSON
Don't do it.

But Doug does it anyway.

238 MCU - MARK

his left arm resting on the door frame.

MARK
You boys cold chillin' to the full effect?

239 MCU - DOUG

DOUG
Sorry, can't have our mustard.

240 CARSON'S POV - DOUG

rolling up the window with the jocks in the background.

MARK
Yeah, you need it to lick off your asses!

Doug stops closing the window.

241 MCU - DOUG

at a loss for words.

(CONTINUED)

DOUG

Fuck all you...fucking...fucks!

242 MS - JOCKS

LAUGHING and exchanging high fives.

JIM

I'm tellin' you, these are the
ass weasels that wrote that note!

JOE

Shut up, gumby-dick.

Josh SNEEZES.

243 CU - MARK

He glares at Carson and starts REVVING his engine.

244 CU - CARSON

glances back apprehensively and starts REVVING himself.

245 CU - TRAFFIC LIGHT

It changes from red to green.

246 CRAIG'S POV - CARSON AND DOUG

Carson pulls into the intersection at the speed of a
sedate grandmother while the jocks tear up the street
ahead of him.

247 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

(to Carson)

What the hell?

248 CRAIG'S POV - CARSON

CARSON

There's no way we'd beat a beamer
in this heap.

249 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

But they had five people in their
car.

250 CRAIG'S POV - CARSON

in profile.

CARSON

Don't worry, we got it figured out.

(to Doug)

Tell Craig about the plan.

251 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

What plan?

252 MCU - DOUG

He twists to face Craig.

DOUG

You know the locker inspection today?

253 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Yeah?

254 CU - DOUG

DOUG

Well...have you ever met Shelby?

255 INT. SCHOOL/BATHROOM - DAY
MS - CRAIG AND SHELBY

standing in a toilet stall. Craig hands the dealer a wad of cash and gets a small package in return. Craig emerges from the john, cool as can be, into...

256 INT. HALLWAY - DAY

The place is bustling with STUDENTS.

257 MS - CRAIG

with the sound of a toilet FLUSHING behind him. Doug swings in from around a corner; they make the handoff without a hitch.

258 MCU - DOUG

DOLLY backwards as he advances, locked on his target.

259 MS - JOE

opening his locker. Josh cracks a joke, and the two of them laugh MOS. ZIP PAN and ZOOM into a CU of CARSON, waiting for his signal.

260 CU - DOUG

He gives Carson a nod.

261 MLS - JOE

Carson "accidentally" bumps into him as he walks by. ZIP PAN as Joe and Josh chase Carson down. They harangue the geek as he apologizes, all MOS.

262 MCU - DOUG

watching the whole affair. PAN with him as he makes a beeline for the unattended locker. He stuffs the contraband into the top rack and takes off.

SAMANTHA (v.o.)

So if anyone knows who set the
Home Ec room on fire...

263 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY
MCU - SAMANTHA

She sits at a table and reads into a microphone.

SAMANTHA

please report to Mr. Donaldson
immediately.

264 LOW ANGLE - MR. DONALDSON

He CLEARS HIS THROAT.

265 MCU - SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA

And now--speak of the devil--Vice
Principal Donaldson has an
announcement to make.

266 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - SAME TIME
LS - STUDENTS

Maike is near the front of the class, Craig near the back. The class GIGGLES at the sound of someone FUMBLING with the microphone. Donaldson addresses them in a machine-like monotone.

MR. DONALDSON (v.o.)
Good morning, Warthogs.

267 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY
MCU - MR. DONALDSON

MR. DONALDSON
Drugs are dangerous. Even
prescription drugs.

268 INT. CARSON'S CLASSROOM - DAY
MCU - CARSON

wearing a naughty smirk of anticipation.

MR. DONALDSON (v.o.)
Yesterday I found a bottle of
pain killers containing codeine,
a relative of heroin.

269 INT. FACULTY LOUNGE - DAY
MS - TWO TEACHERS

sitting there smoking.

MR. DONALDSON (v.o.)
As you know, we have a zero-
tolerance drug policy here at
Grover Cleveland.

270 INT. JOE'S CLASSROOM - DAY
MCU - JOE

sitting alone in the back corner, brooding.

MR. DONALDSON (v.o.)
I won't name any names, but a
certain student has been
suspended from the junior varsity
basketball team...

271 INT. CLASSROOM - DAY
MCU - CRAIG

MR. DONALDSON (v.o.)
for the rest of the season.

Craig CHUCKLES to himself.

272 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE - DAY
CU - MR. DONALDSON

MR. DONALDSON
You know the consequences. Just
say--

273 INT. SCHOOL GYM - DAY
MS - MARK

as he shoots a basketball.

MARK
No, Joe, I had nothin' to do with
it.

274 LS - BASKETBALL COURT

The JV basketball team shoots warm-up shots. Mark's ball
describes an elegant arc but bounces off the rim.

275 MS - JOE

He rebounds Mark's missed shot and passes it off screen.

JOE
Then who the fuck was it?

Jim rushes on screen to retrieve a ball.

JIM
I'm tellin' ya, it was those
faggot geeks.

JOE
Shut up, gumby dick.

A WHISTLE blows.

276 MCU - COACH

COACH JAMESON is a weathered but sprightly woman in her
early forties. She's been coaching boys for years and
knows how to deal with them.

(CONTINUED)

COACH JAMESON
All right, guys. Warm-up's over.
We're doing layup drills.

The team GROANS.

COACH JAMESON
Hey, no complaining. And Joe,
you know you can't be here.

277 MCU - JOE

JOE
I didn't do nuthin'.

278 MCU - COACH JAMESON

COACH JAMESON
I can't argue with Donaldson,
even if you are my best forward.
You try out for varsity next
year?

279 MS - MARK

He takes one last practice shot with the Coach in the background. PAN to Joe under the basket as he catches the air ball. He puts his frustration into a pass back to Mark and starts to walk off.

JOE
Mark, you can't shoot worth shit.

280 MCU - MARK

MARK
Won't matter after my growth
spurt--I'll just dunk over your
cracker ass.

281 CU - JOE

turning around.

JOE
Dream on, Hootner. How many Japs
you seen in the NBA?

282 EXT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DAY
MS - CRAIG'S CAR

as it pulls up and Craig steps out.

283 MS - DOORSTEP

Craig pops into view, stoops down to pick up the morning paper and opens the door.

284 INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DAY
CU - CRAIG

carefully poking his head through the door. He looks over to see...

285 MS - DENISE

asleep on the couch, still in uniform. The TV RAMBLES on in the background.

286 MS - CRAIG

He quietly closes the door. PAN as he walks over to the TV. TILT as he crouches; he twists the volume knob all the way down and switches off the set. Still crouched, he turns to look at his mother. He then looks back at the newspaper in his hand and slowly opens it to the center.

287 INSERT - CLOTHING AD

featuring an Asian woman model.

288 BACK TO CRAIG

He keeps the ad and places the rest of the paper on the coffee table with yesterday's news.

289 XCU - CORDLESS RECEIVER

The phone RINGS.

290 MCU - CRAIG

popping into frame as he stands. The first RING stops as his eyes scan the room.

291 CRAIG'S POV - LIVING ROOM

in disarray. No sign of the phone.

292 XCU - CORDLESS RECEIVER

RINGING again.

293 MCU - DENISE

stirring from the NOISE.

294 XCU - CORDLESS RECEIVER

still RINGING. A hand swoops in and snatches it up.

295 CU - CRAIG

holding the receiver to his ear.

CRAIG

Hello?

A VOICE from the other end comes through the receiver, but what it says is not clear.

CRAIG

Hi!

(whispering)

Just a sec, let me take this to my room.

296 INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY
MCU - CRAIG

reclining on his bed, phone to his ear.

CRAIG

Whoa, I didn't even think you'd want to talk to me after last night.

(pause)

Of course, I'd love to.

(pause)

Friday's great. Have anything in mind?

297 INT. MAIKE'S ROOM - DAY - SAME TIME
MCU - MAIKE

She sits in a wooden chair next to a music stand and talks on a phone with a transparent case.

MAIKE

Anything but a movie.

(nodding)

Yeah, sure--that sounds like fun.

(pause)

That late?

(pause)

No, it's okay. I'm looking forward to it.

(smiling)

Bye.

(CONTINUED)

She sets the receiver back in the cradle and looks off screen for approval.

MAIKE

How was I?

298 MCU - SAMANTHA

She nods approvingly.

SAMANTHA

Brazen.

299 EXT. CITY PARK - DAY
LS - MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

The girls stand at an intersection of walking paths.
PEOPLE jog, stroll and roller-blade by in front of them.

MAIKE

It just feels good to finally be
breaking out of my shell.

300 MS - MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

Samantha sips on a drink while MAIKE rants.

MAIKE

I mean, the last time I held
hands with a boy was probably
"ring around the rosie."

Samantha notices someone out of view.

SAMANTHA

(radiantly)

Hi, Jeremy.

JEREMY, an acquaintance from school, passes by in front of
Maike and Samantha.

JEREMY

Hey.

Samantha looks disappointed as he walks on without
stopping. Maike is oblivious to the whole exchange.

MAIKE

Craig is pretty weird...but
that's good, right? He's not
like everybody else.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE (cont'd)
 Less intimidating too. I mean,
 how could I possibly freak him
 out? And I know this sounds kind
 of stupid, but he has this little
 twinkle in his eyes, like this
 mischievous energy, and you never
 know what he's going to do next.

Samantha looks away, inadvertently catching the attention
 of MR. DAVIES, her English teacher.

MR. DAVIES (o.s.)
 Samantha!

301 ANGLE - SAMANTHA AND MR. DAVIES

He pulls up on a bicycle.

SAMANTHA
 Hi, Mr. Davies.

MR. DAVIES
 Finished grading your paper...
 (shaking his head)
 amazing. The way you compared
 pep rallies to the Nuremberg
 rallies....
 (nodding)
 You really have something there.

302 OVER THE SHOULDER - SAMANTHA

incredulous at this compliment for her attack on the
 school. The DING-DING-DING-DONG of BEETHOVEN'S FIFTH
 underscores her surprise.

303 INT./EXT. MAIKE'S HOUSE - NIGHT
 MCU - DOOR

as it swings open. Standing in the doorway is Maike's
 father, GÜNTHER, the Caucasian man from earlier. He wears
 faded blue jeans and a button-down shirt.

GÜNTHER
 Ah, hello again. Why don't you
 come inside?

304 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
 Uh, thanks Mister Hootner.

He steps into...

305 INT. MAIKE'S HOUSE'S/ENTRYWAY -
NIGHT MS - CRAIG

as he surveys the interior.

GÜNTHER
Please, call me Günther.

306 CRAIG'S POV - THE HOUSE

A slow PAN reveals the prodigious size of Maike's home. The entryway alone rivals Craig's living room in terms of square footage. Reproductions of Japanese wood block prints hang from the walls, and a SOOTHING TUNE from a well-known German composer emanates from the stereo.

The CAMERA stops on Günther standing under an ox scull hung on the wall. He looks up the staircase.

GÜNTHER
Maike, dein Prinz ist gekommen!

MAIKE (o.s.)
I'll be down in a moment!

Günther turns to the CAMERA and smiles.

307 MCU - CRAIG

He nods, acknowledging that he heard. A WOMAN addresses him from off screen.

WOMAN (o.s.)
Craig Johnson.

Craig turns to see who it is.

308 MS - WOMAN

It is Maike's mother, SACHIKO, also in her forties, emerging from the living room. She holds her place in a paperback with her index finger.

SACHIKO
You were in such a hurry last
time, I didn't get to meet you.

Her accent, like her husband's, is noticeable but faint.

309 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Oh, hi Missus Yoshida.

310 OVER THE SHOULDER - SACHIKO AND GÜNTHER

SACHIKO
Please--Sachiko. Your mother
says a lot of good things about
you.

311 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Those odd hours mess with her
judgment.

312 OVER THE SHOULDER - SACHIKO AND GÜNTHER

He CHUCKLES.

GÜNTHER
Believe me, we know all about
that.

He puts his arm around his wife's waist; she bats at his
shoulder.

SACHIKO
(to Craig)
He thinks he's so level-headed.

GÜNTHER
An engineer must be level-headed.

313 MCU - CRAIG

listening.

314 BACK TO SHOT

GÜNTHER
How else could I help Maike with
her math?

SACHIKO
(to Craig)
You should see him drive. He
gets so impatient--he still
thinks it's the autobahn.

GÜNTHER
Some things you can never get
used to.

The sound of FOOTSTEPS on the stairs draws everyone's
attention.

315 MS - STAIRCASE

Maike comes barreling down in a stylish dress pursued by her blond, eight-year-old BROTHER.

BROTHER

Maike has a boy-friend! Maike
has a boy-friend!

MAIKE

Go back to your cage.

BROTHER

He's gonna kiss you!

She stops near the base of the stairs and tries to push her petulant sibling behind her as she greets her date.

MAIKE

Hi, Craig.

316 CU - CRAIG

He likes what he sees. WE HEAR the opening chords of some TECHNO MUSIC.

CRAIG

Hi!

317 INT. WAREHOUSE - NIGHT

The TECHNO BEAT kicks in over visuals that would make Timothy Leary proud; a bank of lasers and gels produces every color in the visible spectrum and then some, all flashing at seizure-inducing pace. A few hundred RAVERS groove to the ethereal, sci-fi sound that the deejay throws at them.

318 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

making their way through the crowd. They shout to hear each other over the MUSIC.

MAIKE

You ever been to one of these
things before?

CRAIG

No, but I've read about 'em on
usenet.

Maike looks around, a little uneasy.

319 SERIES OF SHOTS - WHAT SHE SEES

A) A couple of hipper-than-thou-dressed KIDS her age practically fornicating as they dance.

B) TWO GUYS exchanging a wad of cash for a small bag.

C) A RAVER COUPLE applying little white tabs to each other's tongues.

320 MCU - MAIKE

looking more distressed than before.

321 MLS - CRAIG

starting to dance. He motions for Maike to join him.

322 MCU - MAIKE

She raises an eyebrow at him.

323 MS - CRAIG

Spoken GERMAN LYRICS accompany the MUSIC as he moves his arms and head with short, jerky mechanical motions. He becomes a living parody of himself with his ridiculous little Kraftwerk/Sprockets-style robot dance.

324 CU - MAIKE

She can't keep a straight face any longer. A smile cracks across her face as she laughs.

325 MCU - CRAIG

He smiles back and settles into a more conservative dance pattern as she approaches.

326 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

She watches him for a moment to learn his moves, then makes a few tentative movements of her own. She trips on something, however, and falls straight to the floor.

327 LOW ANGLE - CRAIG

offering a hand.

328 HIGH ANGLE - MAIKE

TILT UP as she raises herself without Craig's help.

329 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

Her ego a little bruised, Maike sets out to prove that she's cool by flailing around like a madwoman.

Craig starts at her sudden change but quickly catches up to speed.

330 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

dancing like a maniac, an idiot or both. The CAMERA TRUCKS in a 180 degree arc, giving us a REVERSE SHOT of Maike continuing her own dance floor rampage. Continue TRUCKING and TILT UP to the flashing lights on the ceiling.

DISSOLVE TO:

331 EXT. PANCAKE RESTAURANT - DAWN
MLS - MAIKE AND CRAIG

through the window, eating breakfast at a small table. He says something, but she can't hear--she leans forward, cupping her hand to her ear; Craig leans forward too and repeats himself.

332 INT. PANCAKE RESTAURANT - DAWN
CU - MAIKE

over Craig's shoulder.

MAIKE

(loudly)

Oh yeah, one of those songs was in German.

She starts to lean back.

333 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

with the window behind them.

MAIKE

Something about the last people on earth escaping into space after some huge catastrophe--

334 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

(quoting the song)

"without regard to race, class, nationality or religion."

335 MCU - CRAIG

He contemplates the lyrics as he takes a sip of coffee, then holds the cup by his mouth.

CRAIG

Maike...how did your parents get together?

336 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

(chewing on pancake)

You want the long answer or the short answer?

337 MCU - CRAIG

He sets his coffee down.

CRAIG

How 'bout the short answer for starters.

338 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

Well...Germans and Japanese both have this really weird obsession with the Old West. It's like, they all wanna be cowboys or something. I mean, we totally export Manifest Destiny.

339 MCU - CRAIG

not sure what Maike's talking about.

CRAIG

And your parents...

340 MCU - MAIKE

CAMERA ZOOMS slowly into a CU as she speaks.

MAIKE

Well, they were both on vacation in the U.S. They were doing this Route 66 bus tour. Really cheesy touristy stuff, you know? Thing was, the German tourists were all on one bus, and the Japanese were all on another.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE (cont'd)
They made eye contact at
landmarks in, like, three states
before they finally started
talking. They were waiting in
line to buy film, and my dad said
something about how overpriced
everything was.

341 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
And?

342 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
And things took off from there.
She bites into an orange wedge.

MAIKE
That's the short answer.

343 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
And the long answer?

344 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
A bunch of complicated family
stuff.

345 INT. CRAIG'S CAR - DAY
MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

They both look pretty tired. They drive along in silence
for a while, until...

MAIKE
Craig, what's your family
background?

CRAIG
My family background? God...
(thinks about it)
I don't really have one.

MAIKE
Whadaya mean you "don't have
one?"

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
I mean, I'm just plain white.

MAIKE
But you had to come from
somewhere.

CRAIG
Well...my mom's grandmother might
have been Scottish...or maybe it
was Irish.

346 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
And your dad?

347 MCU - CRAIG

He shrugs.

CRAIG
Don't really know much about him.

348 EXT. MAIKE'S HOUSE - DAY

Craig's car rolls past the BMW in the driveway and pulls
up to the curb.

349 INT./EXT. CRAIG'S CAR - DAY
MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

from behind their seats. Craig doesn't really know what
to say.

CRAIG
Here we are.

MAIKE
Yeah.

CRAIG
Your parents gonna be okay?

MAIKE
My brother's gotten away with a
lot worse.

CRAIG
That little guy? -

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE
No, my other brother. He's a
year behind me.

CRAIG
Oh.

Maike gets out of the car.

350 LOW ANGLE - MAIKE

holding the door open.

MAIKE
I had a really good time.

351 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Yeah, me too.

352 LOW ANGLE - MAIKE

not really sure what to do. She smiles awkwardly for a
moment, then leans back into the vehicle.

353 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

She gives him a quick peck on the lips.

MAIKE
Bye.

She closes the door behind her.

354 CU - CRAIG

A smile breaks across his face as he sits there in
disbelief--his very first kiss.

355 LS - MAIKE

through the passenger window, skipping up to her house.
She turns to give Craig one last look from the doorstep.

356 CU - CRAIG

He waves.

357 LS - MAIKE

She smiles, then disappears through the door.

358 CU - CRAIG

He sits there for a moment watching the spot where she had stood and starts HUMMING the bassline to the German techno music.

359 INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DAY
MCU - CRAIG

closing the door behind him, still smiling and HUMMING away.

360 INT. KITCHENETTE - DAY
MS - DENISE

in a bathrobe eating her sugar cereal.

DENISE
Craig! Back from your sleepover already?

361 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
I can only stand Doug for so long.

362 MS - DENISE

DENISE
Uh, I think we need some more milk. You mind running to the store?

363 MS - CRAIG

He walks over to the fridge and takes a look inside.

CRAIG
We got two gallons.

364 MS - DENISE

looking defeated.

CRAIG (o.s.)
Mom...

She looks up.

365 MCU - CRAIG

He cracks open a cola from the fridge.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
What's my family background?

366 MS - DENISE

DENISE
Oh--well, my Granny McAllister
was Scottish, and Grandpa
Johnson--

367 MS - CRAIG
stepping forward into an MCU.

CRAIG
I know all that. What about the
other side?

368 OVER THE SHOULDER - DENISE

DENISE
You mean my mom's parents--

369 REVERSE SHOT - CRAIG

CRAIG
No.

370 OVER THE SHOULDER - DENISE

DENISE
I really don't know, Craig. Your
father was just some white guy.

371 CU - CRAIG
He notices something odd as the information sinks in.

CRAIG
Mom...who's in the shower?

372 INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DAY - LATER
MS - MR. DONALDSON

awkwardly making his way out the door, his shirt not
completely buttoned.

373 MS - CRAIG
looking on with contempt as Denise watches from the
background.

374 MCU - CRAIG

turning to face his mother.

CRAIG
Hope you enjoyed your little PTA
meeting.

375 HIGH ANGLE - DENISE

DENISE
I didn't know he was married.

376 LOW ANGLE - CRAIG

CRAIG
That's not even the issue. If
you had any idea how sordid and
wrong this man is...

377 OVER THE SHOULDER - DENISE

DENISE
I'm a grown woman. I can do what
I want.

378 REVERSE SHOT - CRAIG

CRAIG
Under this roof?

379 OVER THE SHOULDER - DENISE

DENISE
You'll understand once you become
sexually active.

380 CU - CRAIG

He didn't want to hear that.

381 INT. SCHOOL MUSIC ROOM - DAY
MS - CONDUCTOR

MRS. GOSBORTH, a middle-aged, conservatively-dressed music
instructor, conducts the closing measures from a piece of
CLASSICAL MUSIC.

MRS. GOSBORTH
All right, that will have to do
for now.

382 LS - SYMPHONY

The TEENAGE MUSICIANS make a BUSTLE as they put away their instruments and start up conversations.

383 MS - MRS. GOSBORTH

MRS. GOSBORTH

But before you go, I'd like to congratulate those of you headed to the state soloist competition this Saturday. I cannot emphasize enough how great an honor this is.

She seems to address those who aren't going more than those who are.

384 MS - SAMANTHA

She has little patience for this elitist bullshit, and it shows. Behind her, Maike puts away her violin.

SAMANTHA

She makes us sound like superior beings.

MRS. GOSBORTH (o.s.)

This is something you should all strive for during your high school careers.

MAIKE

(to Samantha)

We'll prove her wrong on Saturday.

385 MCU - MRS. GOSBORTH

MRS. GOSBORTH

So remember to keep practicing!

Finished with her spiel, she turns her attention to a specific student and makes a move in her direction.

386 LOW ANGLE - MRS. GOSBORTH

wearing a very stern expression.

MRS. GOSBORTH

Samantha...

387 CU - SAMANTHA

a little nervous.

388 LOW ANGLE - MRS. GOSBORTH

 MRS. GOSBORTH
 I read your article in the school
 paper...

389 CU - SAMANTHA

 enjoying a sense of wry satisfaction.

 MRS. GOSBORTH (o.s.)
 comparing public schools to
 prisons....

390 CU - MRS. GOSBORTH

 stone cold.

 MRS. GOSBORTH
 Very insightful.

391 CU - SAMANTHA

 The compliment catches her off guard.

 SAMANTHA
 Uh...thanks.

392 CU - MRS. GOSBORTH

 She nods to acknowledge Samantha's gratitude, then turns
 away.

393 OVER THE SHOULDER - MRS. GOSBORTH

 walking away.

 MAIKE (o.s.)
 I hope my hearing clears up soon.

394 ANGLE - SAMANTHA AND MAIKE

 SAMANTHA
 D'that rave fry a few cilia?

 MAIKE
 Yeah, but it was worth it.
 Craig's a lot of fun to be
 around. I really feel like
 myself around him, you know?

395 MCU - SAMANTHA

She shrugs as she puts away her cello.

396 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE

I can't really say that about a lot of guys.

397 INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY
LOW ANGLE - JOCKS

unleashing a chorus of PROFANITY on someone off screen.

JOSH

Goddamn buttmunchers! I'll kick your ass so hard, you'll fuckin' taste it!

398 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG, DOUG AND CARSON

Doug sits in the middle, flanked by his friends.

DOUG

Whoa, relax man....What's your problem?

Josh prepares to retort but succumbs to a SNEEZE. Mark shoves a piece of paper in his Doug's face.

MARK

This is our fucking problem, smart ass!

399 MS - CRAIG, DOUG AND CARSON

Doug smirks. Carson looks over his shoulder.

CARSON

(suppressing laughter)
Damn Josh, when did you get implants?

400 MCU - JOSH

with Jim and John restraining him.

JOSH

Fuck you, motherfuckers!

401 MCU - CARSON

in profile. Joe pokes his head into view as he SLAMS his hand down on the table.

JOE

You think this' funny? A lotta bad shit's been goin' down. It's gonna come down on you if you keep fuckin' with us.

DOUG (o.s.)

Look...

402 MCU - DOUG

DOUG

(pointing at the paper)
I don't know who's been fucking with you, but my Photoshop skills are way better than this.

403 LOW ANGLE - JOE

backed up by his "homies." He looks down at the picture and contemplates Doug's boast.

JOE

You best watch your ass.

He turns to leave, but Mark has to get in one last threat.

MARK

If you even think about fuckin' with us...

404 MS - CRAIG, DOUG AND CARSON

They watch their adversaries go.

CRAIG

I'm not that bad with Photoshop.

405 INT. VIDEO ARCADE - DAY
MS - CRAIG, CARSON AND DOUG

Doug fires a MACHINE GUN at a screen while Carson slides a crumpled bill into the change machine. Craig stands in the middle.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG

All I'm saying is that we've got
our revenge. Why can't we move
on?

The machine rejects Carson's bill--the motor WHIRLS as he
slides it in again.

CARSON

I'm not letting them threaten me
like that.

CRAIG

So you're just gonna pester 'em
with anonymous little pranks?

406 CU - DOUG

FIRING away.

DOUG

I'd kick their ass if it weren't
for Donaldson. Suspension's a
bitch.

407 MS - CARSON AND CRAIG

Carson retrieves his crumpled bill yet again and tries to
re-insert it.

CARSON

Look Craig, just help us break
into the database. We'll mess up
their grades from there.

Craig snatches the rejected bill from his friend.

408 XCU - DOLLAR BILL

Craig flips it around and inserts it in the right
direction.

409 MS - CARSON AND CRAIG

CRAIG

Can't. I'm meeting Maike after
this.

CARSON

Again?

The quarters CHINK as the machine spits them out. Craig
scoops them up and puts a hand on Carson's shoulder.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
I happen to like her.

Craig drops the coins into his friend's palm.

410 MCU - CRAIG AND CARSON

CARSON
(confidentially)
Craig, are you gettin' anything
out of this?

411 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
I'm not answering this bullshit.

412 CU - CARSON

CARSON
Aw, come on! We've listened to
you pine about your "Asian dream"
for weeks now.

413 ANGLE - DOUG

SHOOTING at the video screen with Craig and Carson in the
background.

CRAIG
Does anyone see the irony here?

CARSON
Whadaya mean?

414 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
You're trying to dig up
information about my non-existent
sex life. What does that say
about you?

415 CU - CARSON

CARSON
That we're loser virgins?

416 CU - DOUG

DOUG
I had sex once.

417 ANGLE - DOUG

Craig and Carson glare at him contemptuously in the background.

DOUG
Cybersex.

The glares do not relent.

418 CU - DOUG

DOUG
All right, so I programmed the
computer to talk dirty to me--but
I know what it's like!

419 OVER THE SHOULDER - CARSON

from Craig's perspective with Doug in the background.

CARSON
See Craig, we lead sad, miserable
lives.

420 REVERSE SHOT - CRAIG

CRAIG
Speak for yourself.

421 OVER THE SHOULDER - CARSON

CARSON
I am. But now you could actually
get some.

422 REVERSE SHOT - CRAIG

CRAIG
Did I say that?

423 OVER THE SHOULDER - CARSON

CARSON
I'm serious. Think of what it'd
mean for Doug and me.

424 CU - CRAIG

not believing what he hears.

425 CU - CARSON

with Doug in the background.

CARSON
The only way we'll ever score is
vicariously.

DOUG
It's all on you, bro.

426 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
You guys are pathetic.

427 CU - CARSON

looking very pathetic. Doug pops another quarter into the
game in the background.

DOUG
I got this killer app on my hard
drive--generates great come-on
lines.

428 INT. COLLEGE MEMORIAL UNION - DAY

A NERDY MALE COLLEGE STUDENT proudly demonstrates a toy
spaceship.

STUDENT #1
It's one of only ten-thousand
ever produced!

429 MCU - MAIKE

feigning to be impressed.

MAIKE
Wow.

A SECOND NERDY MALE COLLEGE STUDENT looks on eagerly from
behind her holding a plastic robot. A banner proclaiming
the "toy convention" hangs in the background.

430 MCU - STUDENT #1

STUDENT #1
Most of them were recalled...

431 MS - MAIKE AND STUDENTS

STUDENT #1
Buncha kids poked their eyes out.

A pilot figurine ejects from the cockpit and hits Maike on the forehead.

MAIKE
(more surprised than hurt)
Ow!

STUDENT #1
Personally, I think they should have recalled it 'cause the whole idea of an ejection seat in space is ludicrous. I mean, where you gonna parachute to?

Maike picks up the projectile.

MAIKE
Here's your spaceman.

432 MCU - MAIKE
with the second student behind her shoulder.

STUDENT #2
You speak English really good.

Maike's face hardens. The PSYCHO THEME kicks in.

433 INSERT - MAIKE
in a blackened room, looking evil as she plays the staccato THEME on her violin.

434 BACK TO SHOT

MAIKE
I hope so--I was born here.

435 ANGLE - MAIKE AND STUDENT #2

STUDENT #2
(disappointed)
So...you're not Japanese?

MAIKE
Well...I am kinda--my mom's from Japan.

(CONTINUED)

STUDENT #2

Cool!--

436 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG
from Maike's perspective.

CRAIG

Sorry I'm late.

437 MS - MAIKE AND STUDENTS

MAIKE

It's okay. Just hanging out.

STUDENT #2

So can you translate this for me?
(hands her a piece of paper)
It's the instructions for my
robot.

438 MCU - CRAIG

He gives Maike a "Who are these guys?" look.

439 MS - MAIKE AND STUDENT #2

Her expression says, "How the hell should I know?"

MAIKE

Um, sure, but my reading skills
aren't that good.

She turns the paper over and scrutinizes it for a moment.

MAIKE

Oh...see, now you want to want to
twist the arms around and then
take off the head.

STUDENT #2

Wow....You're awesome!

MAIKE

(shaking her head)
The English is on the back.

440 EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

TRUCK sideways with Maike and Craig as they walk down the
street. PASSERSBY occasionally cross their path as Craig
carries the recalled spaceship under his arm.

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE

It's like I'm screwed wherever I go. I look normal in Japan, but they think I'm retarded 'cause I can't say anything. And in Germany they all ask if I'm Chinese or something.

CRAIG

How 'bout here?

441 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

MAIKE

(mimicking Student #2)
You speak English real good!

CRAIG

(nodding)
Yeah.

MAIKE

It must be so nice to just blend in.

CRAIG

Yeah, must be.

Maike gives him a curious look.

442 EXT. CITY PARK - DAY
MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

sitting on a bench. Some PEOPLE play basketball in the background.

CRAIG

I don't know why they do it.
Maybe I look funny, dress wrong--
maybe 'cause I'm into computers.

MAIKE

That's so wrong.

Craig stands up.

443 MLS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

CRAIG

Just 'cause you're white doesn't mean you can't stick out.

444 INT./EXT. MAIKE'S HOUSE - DAY
MCU - CRAIG AND MAIKE

looking into each other's eyes, nervously glancing away, then re-establishing their gaze as they stand on the doorstep.

They kiss rather awkwardly, then slowly draw back, LAUGHING at their own inexperience.

MAIKE
Craig...are you free tomorrow?

CRAIG
Definitely.

MAIKE
I'm playing my violin for a panel of judges.

CRAIG
I'm there.

They kiss again, this time a little more relaxed.

A FIGURE appears in the frosted glass of the door. The door swings open--

Craig and Maike quickly part their lips and turn their heads in surprise.

445 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG AND MAIKE

The back of the FIGURE's head separates the lovers on the screen. Both Craig and Maike look startled and embarrassed, but Craig's expression quickly turns to one of shocked disbelief.

446 CU - MARK

returning Craig's look.

447 MS - MAIKE, MARK AND CRAIG

CRAIG
(to Maike)
I'll see you tonight, okay?

MAIKE
All right.

448 INT. MARK'S BMW - NIGHT
MS - MARK AND JOE

occupy the front seats. Josh, Jim and John are squeezed into the back. Everyone has to shout over the BASS BEAT.

JIM
That fucking freak!

JOE
You just jealous 'cos she turned you down.

449 MCU - JIM

JIM
Doob, I tell you what I'd do if it was my sister--I'd whip out my nine and splatter his brains all over the fuckin' pavement.

PAN over to John.

JOHN
You ain't got no nine.

PAN back to Jim.

JIM
Got a nine-inch dick!

450 MS - JOE AND MARK

MARK
More like nine millimeters.

Everyone LAUGHS except Jim; Josh SNEEZES.

JIM
Yeah, go on laughin', fool.
Betcha Craig and his faggot friends are laughing at you right now.

451 INT. DOUG'S BASEMENT - NIGHT
LOW ANGLE - CARSON

CARSON
You have to be proactive, man.
Those assholes are probably plotting something this very moment.

452 MCU - CRAIG

seated on the couch.

CRAIG

I am not egging Maike's house.

453 LOW ANGLE - DOUG

DOUG

There's lotsa of ways to do it--
we could slip cheese packets into
Mark's locker next Friday.

454 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Why not just confront them
directly?

455 LOW ANGLE - DOUG

shaking his head.

DOUG

Dude...

PAN over to Carson.

CARSON

They just plain outnumber us.

PAN back to Doug.

DOUG

And we'd get suspended.

PAN to Carson

CARSON

Come one, we'll track 'em down,
slash their tires or something.

456 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

I've got a date.

457 INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT
MS - LANE

A bowling ball narrowly misses a lone pin.

458 MCU - CRAIG

with Maike in the background. He looks frustrated.

459 ANGLE - CRAIG

as he turns to face Maike.

CRAIG

Why didn't you tell me you were
related to that...jerk?

460 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE

What jerk?

461 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Mark.

462 MCU - MAIKE

She stands. PAN with her as she walks in front on Craig.

MAIKE

You mean Hiro?

CRAIG

What?

463 ANGLE - MAIKE

picking up her ball.

MAIKE

That's his real name.

464 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

He doesn't seem to like it much.

465 MCU - MAIKE

She readies herself to throw as Craig looks on from
behind.

MAIKE

The gangsta fantasy's just a
phase. He'll grow out of it.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG

And offend a lot of people in the meantime.

Maike throws.

466 INSERT - PINS

A perfect strike.

467 BACK TO SHOT

CRAIG

Whoa, I've never seen a girl throw like that.

468 ANGLE - MAIKE

She makes a violin-playing motion as she passes Craig on her way back to the bench.

MAIKE

I wield a bow. Why are you so obsessed with Mark anyhow?

469 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Well, for starters, he's--

He freezes, then slowly turns his head.

470 CU - CRAIG

staring in disbelief at something that's caught his eye. ZOOM into an XCU of his eyes.

MAIKE (o.s.)

What?

471 LS - CARSON AND DOUG

bowling a few lanes down.

472 MS - CRAIG

PAN as he urgently shuffles over to Maike and scoops up his street shoes.

CRAIG

Grab your shoes.

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE
What's going on?

Craig is reticent; he just keeps moving. Maike picks up her shoes and chases after him.

MAIKE
Wait!

473 LS - CARSON AND DOUG

Doug points in Craig and Maike's direction. Carson turns his head.

474 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

practically running.

MAIKE
Shouldn't we pay first?

475 EXT. CITY STREETS - NIGHT
ANGLE - CRAIG'S CAR

The engine ROARS as Craig pushes his vehicle to obscene speeds. Maike looks over her shoulder, gripping her armrest with white knuckles.

476 MS - CARSON'S CAR

Through the windshield, Maike sees Carson driving with mad intensity while Doug giddily jumps up and down in the passenger seat.

477 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

MAIKE
Those assholes are your friends?

CRAIG
Were my friends.

He vehemently waves his middle finger over his shoulder.

CRAIG
Fucking losers!

Carson flashes his brights and HONKS repeatedly in reply.

478 CU - CRAIG

noticing something up ahead.

479 CU - LEFT TURN SIGNAL
changing from green to yellow.

480 ANGLE - CRAIG'S CAR
swerving into the left turn lane.

481 CU - CRAIG'S STEERING WHEEL
as he wrenches it violently to the left.

482 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE
Her SCREAM nearly drowns out the SCREECHING tires as the
city spins around behind them.

CRAIG
I'm really sorry about this.

483 CU - LEFT TURN SIGNAL
changing from yellow to red.

484 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE
The background stabilizes.

CRAIG
I'll slow down right now if you
want.

Behind them, Carson's car pops into view.

MAIKE
Are you crazy? Punch it!

485 CU - CRAIG
A smile cracks across his face as he glances at Maike,
then back at the road. The pitch of the engine's ROAR
increases.

486 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE
with a little more distance on Craig's friends.

MAIKE
Quick--the side street!

487 OVER THE SHOULDER - ROAD
Craig darts right, following Maike's suggestion.

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE
Now cut the lights!

BLACK SCREEN

FADE TO:

488 EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT
ESTABLISHING SHOT - CRAIG'S HOUSE

Craig's darkened car quietly rolls into an MS.

489 INT./EXT. CRAIG'S CAR/STREET - NIGHT
MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

from behind their heads.

CRAIG
This is it.

He cuts the engine.

490 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE
Where are we?

491 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
My house.

492 CU - MAIKE

She looks around and suddenly finds her bearings.

MAIKE
Oh, right. Samantha's
neighborhood. What about your
friends?

493 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
What about 'em? They'll scour
the whole earth before they look
here.

494 CU - MAIKE

She starts to lean forward.

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE

Good...

495 MCU - MAIKE AND CRAIG

leaning toward each other.

MAIKE

because I wouldn't want them to
interrupt anything.

CRAIG

My mom won't be home till
morning.

496 CU - MAIKE

She recoils slightly.

MAIKE

That's not exactly what I meant.

497 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Don't worry. This isn't some one-
night-stand.

498 CU - MAIKE

wondering what he's going to say.

499 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG

It's like, the more I watch you,
the more I realize how amazing
you are.

500 CU - MAIKE

She softens a bit.

501 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

slowly leaning toward the object of his affection.

CRAIG

You are so attractive. Your
eyes, your cheekbones....They're
so...unique.

502 CU - MAIKE

looking uncomfortable.

MAIKE

What are you talking about?

503 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

He calmly reaches out to her.

CRAIG

Please, don't be afraid of your own beauty.

504 MCU - MAIKE

leaning away from him.

MAIKE

I really need to get home.

505 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Maiké...

506 MCU - MAIKE

Her expression says, "This better be good."

507 CU - CRAIG

He clears his throat and tries to look earnest.

CRAIG

You are such a special girl; I can't deny, you rock my world.

508 MCU - MAIKE

looking at him like a stranger. How could someone she thought was cool say something so insultingly inane? She CHUCKLES in disbelief.

509 MCU - CRAIG

mistaking her chuckling for flattery.

CRAIG

You like it?

510 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE
That is the most trite bullshit I
have ever heard.

She unlatches the door.

511 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Maike, I--

512 OVER THE SHOULDER - MAIKE

getting out of the car. She holds the door open from her
position in the street.

MAIKE
A computer could have done better
than that.

She CLOSES the door.

513 CU - CRAIG

flinching at his own idiocy.

514 CRAIG'S POV - MAIKE

PAN to follow Craig's gaze as Maike walks around the front
of the car and across the street. She knocks on
Samantha's door and disappears inside.

515 CU - CRAIG

in a moment of frustrated self-reflection.

He BANGS his forehead against the steering wheel--once,
twice, then leans back to bang it again.

A bright light illuminates the inside of the car.

516 MCU - CRAIG

from behind. He looks over his shoulder and squints at
the light's source.

The light goes out, followed by the sound of SHUTTING
DOORS. Craig wears a "Why me?" expression on his face
before turning his head forward again.

517 CU - CRAIG

in profile with the driver's side window behind him. Doug and Carson appear in the window and start POUNDING on it. Craig continues to look straight ahead.

Finally, he glances at his friends for a moment and reluctantly rolls down the window.

DOUG

How'd it go?

CRAIG

Your "love sonnet" really did the trick.

DOUG

Really?

518 ANGLE - CRAIG

from outside the car. He turns his head to give Doug an evil glare.

519 INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - DAY
MS - CRAIG

reclined on his bed, holding the cordless phone to his ear. The RING comes through the receiver.

Craig waits. The phone RINGS again, followed by the CLICK of someone picking up on the other end. Craig sits up.

CRAIG

Hello?

GÜNTHER (v.o.)

Ohaiyo. You have reached the
Yoshida-Hüttner residence.

Craig's head sinks.

SACHIKO (v.o.)

Please leave a message. Tschüss!

The answering machine BEEPS.

520 ANGLE - CRAIG

He stands up and starts to pace.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG

Hey, it's me again. I'm really
sorry about Friday. Really,
really, really sorry.

521 CU - CRAIG

He stops pacing.

CRAIG

My brain just wasn't the part of
my body doing the thinking, and I
know I was way to forward, but
just please, please, please
forgive me, Maiké.

522 MS - CRAIG

pacing again.

CRAIG

I swear to god I've been dousing
the culprit in ice water ever
since; I promise I'll never do
anything like that again. I am
sooooo sorry.

The machine BEEPS again; Craig hangs up. He looks at the
phone, frustrated with himself.

523 EXT. DESERT SKY - NIGHT

An animated spacecraft CRASHES to the ground and explodes
into flame.

524 INT. CRAIG'S ROOM - NIGHT
MS - CRAIG

in front of his computer. He drops his joystick to the
floor.

525 INT. CRAIG'S HOUSE - DAY
MCU - DOOR

Craig enters with the newspaper, his backpack slung around
one shoulder. He looks toward the living room.

526 INSERT - DENISE

asleep on the couch again.

527 BACK TO SHOT

Craig closes the door behind him and makes his way into...

528 INT. KITCHENETTE - DAY
MS - CRAIG

He drops his backpack onto one of the chairs and sets down the paper on the cluttered table.

529 LOW ANGLE - CRAIG

as he opens the paper. Something catches his eye.

530 INSERT - ARTICLE

Small pictures of Maike, Samantha and a few other teenagers lie beside the headline, "Young talent shines at soloist competition."

531 BACK TO SHOT

Craig looks a little sad. A KNOCK on the door grabs his attention.

532 OVER THE SHOULDER - DOOR

Craig opens it to see Doug and Carson.

533 EXT. CONVENIENCE STORE - DAY
MS - DOUG, CRAIG AND CARSON

They sit on the curb sipping on slushees.

CRAIG
Am I hearing this right?

DOUG
Would we shit you?

CRAIG
I just never thought of you guys
as altruists.

CARSON
Your depression's contagious. We
had to do something.

DOUG
Thought of gettin' you a copy of
Final Exit.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG

So wait a sec, you say you'll do
anything to help me get her back?

CARSON

Anything within reason.

534 INT. DOUG'S BASEMENT - DAY
MCU - CARSON

He looks at the phone in his hand like it's a bomb.

CARSON

I said anything within reason.

DOUG (o.s.)

Just make the damn call!

Carson glares off screen in Doug's direction, then dials
with a hint of trepidation.

WE HEAR the RING through the receiver.

MAIKE (v.o.)

Hello?

Carson looks towards his friends, lost.

535 MS - DOUG AND CRAIG

They silently implore him to say something.

536 MCU - CARSON

CARSON

Hi....My name is Carson.

He pauses, expecting to hear a click.

CARSON

I go to your school.

MAIKE (v.o.)

Have we met?

CARSON

You probably don't remember, but
I was in math club for a while.

MAIKE (v.o.)

Oh, Carson! Yeah, how are you?

(CONTINUED)

CARSON

Pretty good. Haven't done many proofs lately.

MAIKE (v.o.)

Don't blame you. I hate those things.

CARSON

At least I know my asymptote from a hole in the graph.

537 MS - DOUG AND CRAIG

They cringe at Carson's lame joke. Maike LAUGHS.

538 MCU - CARSON

MAIKE (v.o.)

Yeah, you were good with those functions.

CARSON

(blushing)

Oh, well...

539 MS - DOUG AND CRAIG

Craig impatiently motions for Carson to cut to the chase.

540 MCU - CARSON

CARSON

Um, there was actually a point to this call. See, I'm a friend of Craig's

MAIKE (v.o.)

Oh.

CARSON

He's very distraught about what happened.

(pause)

He wants to know what he did wrong so he can make it up to you.

MAIKE (v.o.)

Well...tell your friend that if he can't figure it out, I don't really want to be with him.

(CONTINUED)

Carson gives Craig a "bad news" look.

MAIKE

And did it ever occur to him that
my family might hear his
messages?

The CLICK comes from Maike's end; Carson looks hurt.

541 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG

Well, if she won't tell me what's
up, I guess we'll have to get
creative.

542 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY
MLS - DOUG

seated by a classroom door wearing shades and reading a
comic book.

The bell RINGS; STUDENTS filter out the door.

Maike walks into the hall. A female CLASSMATE calls to
her.

CLASSMATE

Maike!

Maike stops right next to Doug.

543 INSERT - DOUG

He glances up over his shades.

544 BACK TO SHOT

CLASSMATE

Congratulations on the soloist
contest.

MAIKE

Thanks.

Maike starts walking off with the classmate.

CLASSMATE

Was it hard?

MAIKE

Not really. I just pretended it
was another practice.

(CONTINUED)

The girls drift out of earshot.

545 INT. CAFETERIA - DAY
MS - CARSON

TRUCK backwards with him as he ambles along, tray in hand. He stops at a garbage can conveniently near Maike's table and disposes of his leftovers, bit by bit.

546 MCU - SAMANTHA

with Carson's back in the background.

SAMANTHA
Fourteen's not so late. I wasn't
much younger when I lost mine.

547 MCU - CARSON

His eyes perk up at this scandalous bit of information.

548 MCU - GIRLFRIEND

Maike and Samantha's GIRLFRIEND is a young freshman, probably some child prodigy who skipped a grade.

GIRLFRIEND
That's a relief. I was feeling
so...immature.

549 MCU - SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA
How old were you, Maike?

550 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
Oh, I don't know...ten or eleven?

Something CRASHES in the background.

551 MCU - SAMANTHA

She looks over her shoulder to see Carson stooping over the trash can.

552 MS - CARSON

pulling his tray out of the garbage. He places it on the dirty tray table next to him and walks off in a hurry.

553 MCU - GIRLFRIEND

GIRLFRIEND

I'm just glad it's gone. What's worse than being in high school and still having a baby tooth?

554 INT. SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY
MS - MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

Maike opens her locker as the bell RINGS.

MAIKE

I know I've been rough on him, but I don't see what else I can do.

SAMANTHA

Why not just tell him?

555 MS -- MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

Maike drops one book in her locker and retrieves another.

MAIKE

'Cause then I'd never know if he really understood, or if he were just telling me what I wanted to hear.

Samantha doesn't quite get it.

MAIKE

When he looks into my eyes, I want to be sure he sees me--not some fetishized Asian temptress.

556 MLS - MAIKE AND SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA

Do you think he'll figure it out?

Maike closes her locker.

MAIKE

I dunno. I hope so.

Maike and Samantha walk off, though other STUDENTS still populate the hall. The sound of someone DIALING a touch-tone phone comes from one of the lockers.

557 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY
MLS - HACK CIRCLE

A group of GUYS plays hackey sack; someone's BEEPER goes off.

558 MS - SHELBY

kicking the footbag for all he's worth. His BEEPER finally distracts him, and he drops the ball.

SHELBY

Shit!

He reaches into his pocket, pulls out the beeper and reads the message.

SHELBY

Looks like I have some business to attend to, gentlemen.

559 INT. SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY
MS - SHELBY

opening his locker to let Doug out, cellular phone in hand.

560 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY
MS - CRAIG, DOUG AND CARSON

School's out; TEENAGERS filter out of the building. TRACK with the guys as they make their way to the parking lot.

CRAIG

Nothing?

CARSON

Nothing about you.

CRAIG

Doug, you were right there!

DOUG

They just talked about...girl stuff.

561 MCU - CRAIG

stops. He looks off for a moment, frustrated and disheartened, then collects himself and walks off.

562 MS - CARSON AND DOUG

DOUG
Hey, where you goin'?

563 INT. SCHOOL/HALLWAY - DAY

Maike hangs around with Samantha and three other GIRLFRIENDS, including the late-blooming child prodigy.

SAMANTHA
I swear, I thought she was going to burst.

The girls LAUGH.

564 ANGLE - CRAIG

approaching the girls, ignorant of what they find so funny.

565 CRAIG'S POV - GIRLFRIENDS

PAN across their now stoic faces. We stop on Maike in the center. She makes only fleeting eye contact.

566 MCU - CRAIG

He has the look of a soldier on enemy turf.

CRAIG
Hi.

567 MS - MAIKE

flanked by her friends.

MAIKE
Hey.

568 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Maike, I--

569 MCU - MAIKE

MAIKE
This isn't really a good time.

570 CU - JOSH

PAN with him as he walks past Craig and the girls.

(CONTINUED)

CRAIG
This afternoon?

Josh stops as he recognizes Craig's voice.

571 MS - MAIKE AND FRIENDS

Samantha and the girls listen, transfixed

MAIKE
I'm busy.

572 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
What's wrong with now?

573 CU - JOSH

looking away, but listening intently.

MAIKE (o.s.)
There are people around.

574 MCU - CRAIG

absorbing this blow. Josh lingers behind him.

CRAIG
What am I supposed to do?

575 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE
Leave me alone?

576 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Meet me tomorrow at the flag
pole.

577 CU - JOSH

CRAIG (o.s.)
Morning break.

578 CU - MAIKE

looking for an excuse.

579 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
I'll be waiting.

Someone SNEEZES in the background.

580 EXT. SCHOOL - DAY
CU - AMERICAN FLAG

hanging limp in the mild breeze. TILT down, down into an
MLS of CRAIG.

581 MCU - CRAIG

He surveys the scene, looking very forlorn. But something
catches his attention...

582 XLS - JOCKS

approaching in the distance.

583 MCU - CRAIG

A "Why me?" expression passes across his face.

JIM (o.s.)
Hey, dickweed!

584 MLS - JOCKS

much closer now.

JIM
Mark's got something to say to
you.

585 MCU - CRAIG

His eyes dart from side to side as his adversaries
surround him.

586 MLS - SPECTATORS

They point out the impending conflict and chat MOS.

587 MCU - CRAIG

He focuses his attention on the jock in front of him.

588 MCU - MARK

looking just as nervous as Craig.

(CONTINUED)

MARK
Stay the fuck away from my
sister.

589 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
That won't be hard.

590 MCU - MARK

MARK
And apologize for ever having
touched her.

591 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
What?

Joe gives him a shove from behind, causing him to stumble
to his knees.

JOE
You heard him, fudgepacker.

592 HIGH ANGLE - CRAIG

CRAIG
I can't do that.

593 LOW ANGLE - MARK

MARK
Only you would actually enjoy
touching a skanky-ass ho like
that.

594 CU - CRAIG

His face fills with indignation and rage.

595 MCU - MARK

as Craig flies into him.

CRAIG
Fuckin' Nazi!

596 ANGLE - CRAIG AND MARK

Craig brings his enemy to the ground with a resounding
THUD.

597 MLS - SPECTATORS

now larger in numbers. Mr. Donaldson and Mr. Davies arrive among them and make a beeline for the action.

598 LOW ANGLE - CRAIG

He brings his fist back to strike, but Joe and John grab him from behind and drag him off Mark.

599 MLS - CRAIG AND JOCKS

with Craig's arms held tight. Jim tries to go in for a blow, but he's driven back by his adversary's flailing legs. Mr. Donaldson arrives and starts to pry the fighters apart.

600 MCU - MR. DONALDSON

MR. DONALDSON

What the hell's going on here?

His eyes meet Craig's.

601 CU - MR. DONALDSON

His anger evaporates into fear as he recognizes the kid.

602 INT. CAFETERIA - CRAIG'S TABLE -
DAY MCU - DOUG

DOUG

Dude, you got off easy!

603 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

CRAIG

Two weeks of detention is easy?

604 REVERSE SHOT - DOUG

DOUG

You didn't get suspended. Brian Ferguson got expelled for like the same fuckin' thing.

605 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

CRAIG

He had a gun in his locker.

606 MCU - CARSON

CARSON
Well, I hope you realize we're in
for a major ass-kicking.

607 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Whataya mean?

608 MCU - CARSON

CARSON
I thought the whole point of our
vengeance plan was to keep things
anonymous.

609 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
Funny, I thought it was to get
even.

610 CU - DOUG

DOUG
Oh, shit.

611 MLS - JOCKS

advancing en masse.

612 CU - CRAIG

wearing a beleaguered expression. Doug and Carson look
scared shitless in the background.

613 LOW ANGLE - JOE

He steps forward from the pack with a stern look on his
face. He extends his hand out to Craig.

614 CU - CRAIG

looking at the hand, bewildered.

615 LOW ANGLE - JOE

JOE
Truce?

616 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
What?

617 MCU - JOHN

JOHN
We don't want shit to get out of
hand, man.

618 LOW ANGLE - JOE

JOE
You guys might get hurt.

619 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

from Joe's perspective. The peace offer finally registers
with Craig; he starts to offer his hand, but pulls away
for a moment.

CRAIG
One condition.

620 LOW ANGLE - JOE

listening.

621 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

He stands.

CRAIG
You don't give me or my friends
any more shit.

622 REVERSE SHOT - JOE AND JOCKS

They all exchange looks, not sure what to make of this
steep demand. All of them, that is, except for...

623 CU - MARK

MARK
It's a deal.

624 CU - CRAIG

surprised.

625 CU - MARK

MARK
And I'm sorry about the shit.

He exchanges a look with

626 CU - CRAIG

that shows the two of them have an understanding.

CRAIG
Me too.

He extends his hand towards Mark.

627 XCU - HANDS

shaking.

628 MS - CRAIG AND JOCKS

Joe and Josh give Craig five as they amble off.

JOE
Later, man.

CRAIG
See ya.

629 MS - CRAIG, CARSON AND DOUG

Craig sits down. His friends check their emotions while they watch the jocks drift away, then break into celebration.

CARSON
Holy shit.

Doug raises his hand to give Craig a high five.

DOUG
Fuckin' A!

Craig tepidly reciprocates.

DOUG
Dude, you are the man!

630 CU - CRAIG

He lets his despondent gaze fall on...

631 CRAIG'S POV - MAIKE

eating and chatting with Samantha and her girlfriends,
MOS. Maike notices Craig, then looks away.

CARSON (o.s.)
Forget about her, man.

632 MCU - CARSON

CARSON
There're other fish in the sea.

633 MCU - CRAIG

CRAIG
But she was unique.

634 CU - DOUG

He sees his chance to communicate something, but he
doesn't want to give away too much.

DOUG
Craig...there are other Asian
fish too.

635 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
What? You think--

Craig looks lost for a moment, like he's trying to
remember something he said.

636 MS - CARSON AND DOUG

wearing very different expressions; Carson wonders what
dimension his friend has disappeared to, but Doug seems to
have an idea.

637 MCU - CRAIG

staring through his lunch tray.

CRAIG
Fuck.

He slowly looks up again and addresses himself almost as
much as his friends.

CRAIG
Maike is not sushi.

(CONTINUED)

SAMANTHA (o.s.)
Charming, Lancelot.

Craig turns his head.

638 LOW ANGLE - SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA
Maike wanted me to tell you to
stop bothering her.

639 MCU - CARSON

CARSON
That's pretty cold.

640 LOW ANGLE - SAMANTHA

SAMANTHA
Hey, I'm just the messenger.

641 MS - CRAIG

He gets up and walks off, leaving his friends and Samantha behind.

SAMANTHA
Where's he going?

642 INT. CAFETERIA - MAIKE'S TABLE - DAY
MCU - MAIKE

She looks up just as Craig's shoulder occupies part of the foreground.

643 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

CRAIG
Before you say anything, I know
you don't want to see me anymore,
and I can respect that, but don't
just brush me off. I need to
talk to you, even if it's just to
hear it's over from your own
lips.

644 INT. CAFETERIA - CRAIG'S TABLE - DAY
CU - CARSON

watching Craig and Maike across the cafeteria. Maike
folds up her lunch bag and leaves.

645 MS - CARSON, DOUG AND SAMANTHA

CARSON
That can't be a good sign.

646 MLS - CRAIG

He smiles as he skips back towards his table.

647 MS - CARSON, DOUG AND SAMANTHA

Their expressions beg an explanation as Craig arrives.

CRAIG
She's meeting me at her locker.

He disappears as quickly as he came; they cock their heads to watch him go.

648 CU - SAMANTHA

smiling. In the background, Doug and Carson turn their gazes on her--they have that look in their eyes.

649 MS - CARSON, DOUG AND SAMANTHA

Samantha glances at the boys; they look down at their lunches. She starts to walk away.

650 CU - CARSON

CARSON
Wait!

651 CU - SAMANTHA

turning to face him.

652 CU - CARSON

CARSON
I...really like your nose ring.

PAN over to DOUG.

DOUG
Yeah, me too.

653 CU - SAMANTHA

slowly absorbing the unexpected compliments. Someone finally noticed!

654 INT. HALLWAY - MAIKE'S LOCKER - DAY
MLS - MAIKE AND SHELBY

Maike leans with her back against the locker as the dealer dances to an acappella HIP-HOP beat.

655 MCU - MAIKE

She SIGHS, irritated by Shelby's presence. Craig pokes his head around the corner behind her.

656 MCU - CRAIG

He gathers his thoughts for a moment, then steps into the open.

CRAIG
(to Maike)

Hi.

657 MCU - SHELBY

SHELBY
What up bro? Nice work at the
flagpole.

He punctuates his comment with a kung-fu chop.

SHELBY
Hwaaah!

658 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

from Maike's perspective. His expression asks, "What's with him?"

659 REVERSE SHOT - MAIKE

MAIKE
Said he had a date with Mary
Jane.

660 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

CRAIG
From trig?

SHELBY (o.s.)
Hey...

661 MCU - SHELBY

SHELBY
I can hear you guys!

662 MS - CRAIG AND MAIKE

CRAIG
You wanna take this somewhere
more private?

MAIKE
I'm fine right here.

663 MCU - SHELBY

He jumps in the air and points emphatically at Craig.

SHELBY
Denied!

664 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

He glares at Shelby, then turns back to Maike.

CRAIG
Look, I'm really sorry about that
thing with Mark--

665 REVERSE SHOT - MAIKE

MAIKE
Don't be--he deserved it.

666 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

hoping for a two-fer.

CRAIG
and for the other night.

667 REVERSE SHOT - MAIKE

This one's not so easy; she's clearly unimpressed.

668 MCU - SHELBY

SHELBY
Sorry ain't good enough, choada-
boy!

669 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
I was forward...
(anticipating Shelby's
response)
sexually...but I don't think
that's the real issue.

670 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE
And what is?

671 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

He speaks quickly, defensively.

CRAIG
Well, it's kinda complicated. I
mean, I guess it just comes down
to these natural urges and the
feeling you get from seeing
something new and different...

672 REVERSE SHOT - MAIKE

rolling her eyes.

CRAIG
and just how it overwhelms you...

673 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG

CRAIG
and you just can't think
straight, and--

674 MS - SHELBY

SHELBY
Get to the goddamn point already!

675 CU - CRAIG

He suddenly stops his rambling and pauses for a moment to
collect himself. Then, much slower, he tries again.

CRAIG
Maiké, most of the girls at this
school talk the same, dress the
same, think the same--hell, they
even smell the same....

676 CU - MAIKE

listening intently.

CRAIG (o.s.)
When I first noticed you,
something changed.

677 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
I knew you weren't like them, and
I liked you for it. Of course,
it was for all the wrong reasons;
I mean, I went crazy for you
'cause you looked different--

678 CU - MAIKE

trying to keep up with Craig's train of thought.

CRAIG (o.s.)
I still like how you look--but
there's more to it than that.

679 CU - CRAIG

CRAIG
See, the more we were together,
the more I saw how intelligent,
funny, and just how cool you
were. It took me till now to
realize it, but that's what I
love about you...not how your
eyes look.

680 CU - SHELBY

He looks on with watery eyes.

681 CU - MAIKE

She's moved, but something still nags at her.

682 MCU - CRAIG AND MAIKE

slowly leaning towards each other.

SHELBY (o.s.)
Do it! Do it!

Maike stops.

(CONTINUED)

MAIKE
Did Samantha tell you anything?

CRAIG
(genuinely innocent)
What?

683 CU - MAIKE

MAIKE
You finally figured it out.

684 OVER THE SHOULDER - CRAIG
a little apprehensive.

MAIKE
Do you know how much I wanted you
to like me for me? How
disappointed I was that night
when you said those godawful
things?

685 MCU - CRAIG AND MAIKE

MAIKE
(practically accusing him)
But you finally figured it out.

SHELBY (o.s.)
Just fucking kiss already!

Craig nervously glances away at Shelby's interruption. No
sooner does he turn back than does Maike catch him off
guard with a full-on kiss to the lips.

CRAIG
Mmmph!

Craig's a little awkward at first, but he quickly gets
into the action.

686 MS - SHELBY

He jumps up and down, WHOOPING like a rabid sports fan.

SHELBY
Yeah, baby!

687 XLS - HALLWAY

A few people down the hall turn their heads.

688 MS - SHELBY

SHELBY
What the fuck you lookin' at?

689 MCU - CRAIG AND MAIKE

They part momentarily to gaze into each other's eyes.

MAIKE
You have the most beautiful pair
of round eyes I have ever seen.

He LAUGHS self-consciously, but she promptly cuts him off
with a second, deeper kiss.

690 LS - CRAIG, MAIKE AND SHELBY

The couple remains inseparable as Shelby does Kung-Fu
moves.

SHELBY
Hungh! Ha-waaah!

FADE OUT.

THE END

APPENDIX

CHARACTER BIOGRAPHIES

Mark

Mark Hüttner is a confused kid. His mother is Japanese, his father is German and he's lived his entire fifteen years in the U.S. He sees himself as purely American and easily passes as white, but he's constantly reminded of his Otherness – when he looks into his parents' faces or listens to them speak, when he visits relatives across vast oceans, when he hears his last name on a role call, when he sees "Hiro," his real first name, on official documents. He wants nothing more than to shed his peculiar ethnicity, and in hopes of doing so, he attaches himself to the elements of pop culture that seem farthest from his Japanese-Teutonic background.

This thirst for self-denial partially explains why Mark has never really gotten along with his older sister, Maike. She's always been more comfortable with who she is, and it doesn't help that she's also the talented one. Mark eschews her interests, choosing gangsta rap and American sports over her classical music and violin. The trouble is, he's not nearly as good at football or basketball as she is with the bow. His jock friends never fail to remind Mark of his athletic shortcomings, and his parents constantly encourage him to devote more time to academics, like his sister. He's hit with feelings of inferiority from both sides, but he doesn't try to impress his parents like he does his friends. He spends most of his spare time cultivating his jock image, both by developing his modest athletic skills and by spending his allowance on overpriced sports merchandise.

Mark still comes up short of full acceptance by his peers, however. Fortunately, he has found one thing that helps him allay his gnawing feelings of worthlessness, something he has learned from his friends. There are these three guys that sit in the same part of the cafeteria every day. They don't play sports, they don't have girlfriends, they don't even put any thought into what they wear. They talk about weird stuff, like computer programming, and they don't talk to anyone outside of their miserable little clique. They're so pathetic, it's funny. It feels good to

approach them as a group and hurl clever insults worthy of prime time TV. Mark has thought up some great lines himself, and his friends have given him high fives for his wit. He doesn't feel bad about exercising his talent; certainly the geeks don't suffer any more than he does, but that's beside the point — any remorse on Mark's part would imply that the objects of his wit are human. The cafeteria geeks are anything but human. Sure, Mark isn't the most popular kid in school, but at least he tries. He beats himself to a pulp trying to be one of them; the idea that someone else could not even care and still be in his league is absolutely revolting. Most infuriating is the geeks' feigned ignorance of the social hierarchies around them. They know they're at the bottom, yet they pretend to be either unaware of or indifferent to their pathetic reality. Mark loathes those creatures with every fiber of his body. It is this unalloyed hatred that enables Mark to define who he is. By asserting his superiority over the geeks he can become Mark the athlete, Mark the gangsta, Mark the anything-but-a-miserable-little-half-Asian-Jap-Kraut-freak.

Doug

Doug lives in a very traditional family. His father brings home the bacon (he has a middle management position in a blue collar enterprise), and his mother is a housewife. Doug is an only child, so there are no other siblings to help absorb the brunt of his father's verbal abuse. His mother does her best to protect her son, but even her good intentions have led to excess; she tries so compulsively to shield Doug from all danger that she has inadvertently given him a complex. Smothered in mother-love as he struggles through puberty, Doug wants nothing more than to claim independence from his parents. His desire for self-determination extends into other areas of his life as well; Doug insists that he is in control of all situations, a policy that frequently drives him to denial of his less-than-ideal social standing. He refuses to admit, for instance, that girls have no interest in him, or that the school's jock bullies aggravate him. There's always a girl at some other school (or on the Internet) who's crazy about him, and he gets even, not angry, with his tormentors.

Doug is no shining star at school, though he could be a straight A student if he applied himself. He reserves his real energy for his one passion — computers. His mastery of technical minutiae gives him an upper hand over his computer-illiterate parents, whom he can shut out for hours at a time while he trades pirated software with other online hackers. His proficiency in the digital realm gives him a sense of power and control that he lacks elsewhere in his

life. No one can see his face when he's online, and he goes by a cool-sounding alias rather than use his own name.

Doug uses the computer as a method of escape, but he also has a life in the real world, however modest it might be. Doug has known his friends Craig and Carson since junior high, when, as a scrawny, pre-pubescent sixth grader, he found refuge with the older guys in the lunch room. He's used to being the youngest and smallest of his friends, but he's learned to make up for it over the years with what some would call an obnoxious (he prefers "assertive") personality. Doug never thinks twice before he speaks, and he rarely lets uncertainty about what he's saying detract from his conviction. Although he is prone to say mean things to his friends at times, he knows that they can usually handle it with a snappy comeback.

Carson

Out of the three friends - Craig, Carson and Doug - Carson is the most cerebral, and, by extension, the most neurotic. This isn't surprising in light of his background - both of his parents are tenured university professors. His only sibling is his 27-year-old sister, a full decade his senior. Following in her parents' footsteps, she is nearly finished with her Ph.D. dissertation. Her visits home are a little unsettling for Carson, since they invariably bring reminiscences of a past that he is not a part of. He's grown weary of reminders that his family existed long before he did; they make him feel like something of an afterthought. His insecurities are reinforced by the differential treatment he and his sister have received through the years. He remembers the time and effort his parents put into bringing her up, but once she was gone it was as if their energy had expired. Now they seem content to enjoy life and let their son fend for himself. A wide generation gap doesn't help Carson's relationship with his parents either - it's been a long time since they were teenagers.

As the oldest of his friends, Carson faces some pretty daunting decisions. He has no idea what he wants to be when he "grows up," but a deluge of mail from colleges makes it difficult for him to simply live in the moment. He shares an interest in computers with his friends, so it seems logical for him to become a professor in computer science, but he often wonders what else might be out there. In the meantime, he's just trying to get through each day. Unlike Doug, Carson's problem isn't denial of a bad situation - he accepts the fact that his life is unsatisfying. His flaw is that he accepts too much; he is resigned to his station in the school's caste system and makes no attempt to break out

of his apathy. He is basically waiting out his high school years in the hope that college will be better. After all, both his parents and his sister consider their teen years a write-off and insist that their lives didn't really start until they reached their twenties.

All of his anxieties, his resignation and his contempt for the present make Carson a very cynical individual. He puts just enough effort into his easy-as-pie classes to maintain his four point average, but no more. He abhors all school-sponsored extra-curricular activities. He's attracted to numerous girls, but he sees them all as ditzes and airheads. And he uses his caustic wit to ensure that his friends don't rise above his misery.

Carson's insecurities certainly make him a tad malicious at times. This bad temper doesn't seriously injure his friendship with Doug and Craig, however. Doug lashes right back, and Craig is secure enough not to let Carson's comments seriously affect him.

Samantha

Despite the ring through her nose, the noisy color of her hair, and the radical slogans sewn onto her backpack, Samantha has a very deliberate and precise demeanor; up until last week she might have been just another goody-goody in search of a new identity. Of course, it's not surprising that she has identity issues considering that she's best friends with Maike Yoshida. Samantha, a white, taller-than-average girl, feels ethnically boring in comparison to her mixed-up companion. Her liberal upbringing by ex-hippie-turned-yuppie parents has also left her with a hefty dose of white guilt; she's heard plenty about all the terrible things that white people have done, but she doesn't see her parents doing anything about it. By adopting an outlandish style and counter-cultural fashion trends, Samantha hopes to distance herself from what she sees as the evil of White America.

Samantha's parents couldn't be more supportive. They understand perfectly the need of their eldest daughter to explore her identity through dress and even got her a gift certificate to the piercing shop for her birthday. Of course, this unconditional acceptance spoils much of the fun of teen rebellion. In the end, Samantha still feels the same, and authority figures (ie parents, teachers, administrators) adore her more than ever with her nose ring and her punk hair.

If only guys would pay as much attention to Samantha's crazy style as her elders do. No one has ever asked her out, and although Shelby, the school drug dealer, seems to have a crush on her, she is not interested. She's

comfortable enough around the boys from her Unitarian youth group, but they all seem too goofy to imagine in any kind of romantic context. Her one, bona fide crush is on her neighbor, Craig Johnson. She hasn't told anyone about this infatuation, however, largely out of shyness and fear of being rejected.

Maike

To: Riotgrrl <newmans@hiwire.com>
 From: Maike Yoshida <yoshim@hiwire.com>
 Subject: Crazy night!

You're not going to believe what I just went through. Craig has got to be the weirdest guy on the face of this planet. I can't tell if he's got some kind of chemical imbalance or if he just chews on caffeine tablets all day. Get this -- he shows up at my door like 20 mins. late, and then he tries to get me to hurry so we can make the movie. Of course, he couldn't help but succumb to the curiosity that gets them all. I'm sure he would have interrogated my dad right there on the doorstep if he hadn't been so antsy to get going. He saved that for me over dinner. It's almost like a routine I've memorized by now: the guy asks me where my parents are from, I tell him either Japan or Germany, and just when he thinks he's got it figured out, I drop in the other one. Gets 'em every time. I just get so tired of it. I would kill just to hear some stupid question like, "so when'd ya dye your hair green?" ;-)

Oh well. Believe it or not, it did get better than that. The service was terrible and the food was vile, so Craig gets this idea of just taking off. The only thing weirder than him suggesting it was me actually doing it, as if it were the most natural thing in the world. Can you believe it? Me, the girl who's never even kicked the machine at school that gives you free Sprite. And the strange thing is, I don't even feel all that bad about it. It's like they had it coming, you know? It was liberating to feel fed up and just let it out. None of the usual growing frustration that sits there and eats at you, just a simple reaction to a simple problem. I suppose it will come around to me some day, but then maybe Craig and I were just sending their lousy service karma back at them. Who knows.

So getting away was another crazy adventure. This guy from the restaurant saw us sneak out and threw an egg at the back window as we drove away. Craig wanted to get out of there as fast as he could to make sure the guy didn't have time to take down the license plate -- I hope he didn't catch it. But even after we were light years away, Craig kept driving like the guy was right behind us. He had a

better chance of getting pulled over for reckless driving than of getting caught by that restaurant guy. He said he just wanted to get to the movie on time, but he didn't even like the movie. You won't believe this, but he hated it so much, he started throwing those little white fire-cracker thingies at the screen. We wound up getting thrown out. You can imagine my embarrassment, and that was after he asked me if I had any Nazi relatives right in the middle of the ticket line.

I don't know what to make of Craig. Part of me just can't forget that his name rhymes with "plague." For some reason, I keep thinking of that story you told me about him chasing you with the garden hose when you were kids. I guess he's just an overgrown, immature brat. He doesn't seem to care much for school, even if he does seem pretty sharp in other things. Sooner or later he'll probably wind up in some sort of serious trouble. He's rude, impulsive, inconsiderate and just plain nosy, but somehow he doesn't quite come off as being annoying. It's really bizarre how he just doesn't care what people think of him, even kind of refreshing in a weird sort of way. But don't worry or anything; I doubt anything could ever happen between me and him.

Maybe this odd affinity for him comes from growing up in such an unusual environment. I know you've heard it a million times, but just this feeling of not knowing what's expected of me drives me nuts. Like my dad might want one thing, my mom another, and everyone else wants something else. I think that's why I just play it safe most of the time. I don't think I'm an inherently boring person; I just need to act that way to keep a handle on things, you know? I just wish I could be more spontaneous or casual sometimes. It's like I have to keep this guard up with most people, and that makes everyone think I'm a priss or something. I think you and Craig might be some of the only people at school who I don't have to be careful around -- you because you just know me, and Craig because, well, how can you be serious around a guy like that?

I don't know. I guess it's getting late. You doing anything tomorrow? Maybe we could share some symphony gossip over cookies or something. Looks like I'll have to go -- Nick's teasing me about my "love letter." Someone's going to find his action figures with superglue-simulated arthritis ;-)

Heart,
Maiké

Craig

Journal #23

Just got back from my first real date. I think I completely blew it. I was so goddamn nervous -- the only thing I could do to keep from losing it was to keep moving. Got it off to a bad start. I was trying to get some Java code to work right and completely lost track of time. Needless to say, Maike was not amused. She must think I'm a freak, which is probably somewhat true. Might have won her over a bit pulling the dine-n-dash, but I erased any gains with intrusive questions about her past. I hate it when Doug & Carson do that to me. Why do I feel so compelled to ask annoying questions myself? Maybe it keeps people too busy to ask about me?

Note to self: got to resist the temptation to drive like a maniac (normally) w/Maike in the car. Definitely put her off w/Dukes of Hazard routine. Unfortunately, I get the feeling like all this is moot. Chances of 2nd date are like an asymptote approaching the x-axis -- virtually zero. And now Mom thinks I've got a girlfriend. She was so excited, you'd think she was the one that had been on the date. I knew something like that would happen. Maybe it explains why I've taken so long to try in the first place. I don't see why she can't just ignore some aspects of my life -- I'm tired of her 2-parents-in-one excuse. It would be easier sometimes to have 2 that just didn't care.

Maike's dad seemed pretty cool. Nice house they live in, or what I could see of it, anyway. Even with their background, they seem so normal. Abnormally normal. Like a Leave it to Beaver American dream with different nationalities. No real Americans are like that anymore. 2 parents, 2 kids, 2 cars, etc. What a weird way to live.

I guess Carson & Doug will want to know all the details Monday. Can't believe they asked me to put a tape recorder in the glove box. Cost allowing, they probably would have put one of those thumbnail sized cameras in the back seat. How did I wind up with friends like that? I wonder how much my connection with them has retarded my personal growth. But then who else would I hang out with? Chad Stockhammer and that crowd? One thing that C & D have going for them is honesty -- they have no pretenses about who they are, unlike 99.9% of the school. Guess I just wish they had something to be pretentious about. Then maybe they wouldn't stick to me like leeches. I like them and all, but the amount of time I spend with them is what most people would reserve for a spouse.

But back to the real reason I started this entry -- it's like I've almost been afraid to get to the point -- Maike. It took me so long to muster the guts to ask her

out, and where has it gotten me? But it's all my own fault. I'm not even sure what it is about her, exactly. Maybe it's something about her cautious smile -- like she thinks she shouldn't be smiling in the first place -- that makes her so beautiful. I can see it cracking at the corners of her mouth and just dying to break free across her face, but she just won't let it. There were only a couple times tonight when it actually managed to escape, but what moments those were! And her face -- I don't think I've ever seen a face quite like that, so different and so ordinary at the same time. She's got this quality to her, like a familiar product in an exotic package. She doesn't even realize how gorgeous she is, like she's afraid to admit it. I wish I could take her and show her that everything's O.K., that she can just relax and enjoy the gift that she has. If only I hadn't totally freaked her out tonight. I could have gotten to know her better, maybe even started something. Maybe in some parallel universe we're chatting over coffee right now, forging little bonds of friendship that could grow into something big. But I've completely fucked up, and that option has expired.

Maybe some late night TV will cheer me up. Even if it's not funny (imagine that!), it might get my mind off of this hopeless crush. Till next time...

Craig

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