

## **Dribble**

Douglas A. Wu, 2005

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FADE IN:

EXT. CITY - OUTSKIRTS - DAY

The sun reflects off of a motorcycle helmet, adorned with a colorful custom graphic, as it falls to a gravel strip running along the side of the road.

J.J. JONES, a boy about 16 years old with piercing blue eyes and dressed in biker leathers, bends down to pick up the motorcycle helmet.

J.J. stands erect in front of a sign marking the beginning of city limits. A Harley-Davidson motorcycle, with a cloth bag and a basketball tied to its back seat, lurks in the background.

J.J. turns away from the sign, walks back to the motorcycle and gives it the once over. J.J. then puts on the motorcycle helmet and rides off in the direction of the city.

EXT. CITY - CITY STREETS - DAY

J.J. rides the motorcycle past an automobile plant, a warehouse and a shopping center.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

J.J. rides the motorcycle past main street businesses including a two-story department store, a county building and a hardware store.

J.J. pulls the motorcycle off of the street when he comes to a run-down, tired-looking, single-story building with a picture window full of sporting goods displays.

The sign above the store reads, "JONESES' SPORTS" and the sign in the picture window reads, "CLOSED."

J.J. dismounts the motorcycle and walks toward the store.

J.J. presses his face to the store's picture window. He uses his hands to shield his eyes from the daylight so he can look into the dark and deserted store.

J.J.

I guess dad isn't working today.

A passer-by, an older gentleman dressed in a suit and tie, stops and touches J.J. on his right shoulder.

J.J. turns away from the picture window and faces the man.

PASSER-BY

Tell your dad to hang in there. The town needs more people like him. You know, someone willing to have his business downtown.

J.J.

I'll tell him that.

EXT. - CITY - MAIN STREET - DAY

J.J. makes a left turn at the end of the street.

EXT. CITY - SIDE STREET - DAY

J.J. rides the motorcycle past old houses made of brick and wood.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

J.J. works to unload the back of the motorcycle when the basketball drops to the ground and starts to roll toward the open garage of the modest two-story house. J.J. picks up the basketball and starts to dribble it.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - UPSTAIRS OFFICE - DAY

DON JONES, a tall, middle-aged man, ink pen in hand, sits at his cluttered desk in the middle of a cluttered home office filled with pictures of basketball players, sport memorabilia, trophies, books and boxes and boxes of business records.

A sticker on one of the sides of the personal computer's casing reads, "Don Jones's computer, do not touch!"

Only half of the sticker is visible due to the mounds of paperwork, spreadsheet printouts, books and magazines cluttering the desk.

Somewhere among the piles of stuff a computer printer springs to life.

Mr. Jones stares at the personal computer's CRT while clicking his pen's ink tip release with his left thumb.

Later, while the computer printer pounds away, Mr. Jones glances at photos of basketball teams in action and after the games in victories and in defeats.

The printer shuts off. Mr. Jones clears away stuff on the printer, tears away the printout and studies it.

MR. JONES

What made me think I could make it in sporting goods?

Mr. Jones crumples up the printout and tosses it at a garbage can positioned near the window. The paper wad narrowly misses the garbage can's rim.

Mr. Jones goes to retrieve the wad of paper and inadvertently glances out the window and sees J.J. entering the house.

Mr. Jones immediately tosses the paper wad into the garbage can and leaves the room.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

In the middle of the living room is a coffee table with pictures of friends and family. Chairs are positioned at either end of the picture window.

J.J. is sitting on the couch positioned along the wall. He is thumbing through a college yearbook.

J.J. puts the yearbook aside when he looks up and sees Mr. Jones entering the room.

MR. JONES

How was basketball camp, J.J.?

J.J.

Ok, dad, I guess, I learned a bunch of new stuff.

MR. JONES

It's my old college yearbook.

Mr. Jones takes the yearbook from J.J.

J.J.

What was college basketball like?

Mr. Jones closes the yearbook and puts it on the coffee table.

MR. JONES

The game was a lot different then. Basketball players back then got back on defense, took good shots on offense and moved without the basketball. Above all, we were sportsmen who treated winning and losing with respect.

J.J.

That's not how the game is played today. I don't know if I'm good enough to play at the next level.

MR. JONES

Your game is developing into something special. You have an accurate jump shot and a quick release. More importantly, you play with your head. You know when to take the shot, when to attack the basket and when to pass. Plus, you're a good defender.

Mr. Jones picks up the yearbook from the coffee table and he and J.J. leaf through it together.

EXT. LOCAL DRAG STRIP - NIGHT

J.J. rides the motorcycle up to teenagers JOE GREEN and MARIO LOPEZ and dismounts it.

Joe and Mario tower over J.J. Mario is powerfully built and sports a pair of bulging biceps.

Joe is a little taller than Mario and leaner than Mario. In addition, Joe wears eyeglasses.

The two are using powerful hoses to wet an area behind the starting line.

J.J.

What's up, Mario? I got your message...something about a drag race?

J.J. reaches out to shake Mario's hand.

MARIO

Martin's racing his new car and we're his crew. Anyway, learn anything new at basketball camp?

J.J.

We'll have a game soon and I'll show you what I learned. So, why are you two watering the ground?

JOE

Don't you know anything about drag racing?

J.J.

Joe, why don't you enlighten me?

JOE

Burnouts.

J.J.

Oh. So how was your summer?

JOE

Played lots of basketball and hung out with Martin and Mario.

J.J.

I can't believe it, summer is almost over and I still don't have a girlfriend.

A blue 1971 Ford 351 Boss Mustang rumbles up to the water puddle and forces J.J., Joe and Mario to leave the area.

The driver locks the front brakes and drops the clutch and in an instant the Ford Mustang's spinning rear tires leave a trail of billowing steam and smoke.

MARIO

Let's find Martin.

J.J., Joe and Mario begin to walk back to the drag cars' staging area when all of a sudden a late model Ford Mustang zooms past and into a parking space.

JOE

Who or what was that?

J.J. watches the Ford Mustang's driver, a Chinese teen-aged girl, exit the vehicle and disappear into the crowd. J.J., unknowingly, sees BRENDA LEE, his future girlfriend, for the first time.

J.J.

I don't know but she sure is beautiful.

MARIO

We were almost blindsided by that driver and that's all you can think about?

J.J.

Sorry.

The threesome approaches a red 1971 Pontiac Trans Am.

MARTIN SMITH is under the hood making final adjustments to the car's engine.

J.J.

Martin. Is this the car?

Martin, a teenager just like J.J., Joe and Mario, slams the hood shut and turns to greet J.J.

J.J. towers over Martin. However, Martin is stockier, more muscular than J.J. Martin sports a Pontiac muscle car T-shirt and a Pontiac racing cap.

MARTIN

I built it into a real hot rod.

J.J.

Yeah. It's a phat ride.

Martin points to the hood's graphic.

MARTIN

Nice job.

J.J.

Thanks. I'm glad you like my design.

MARTIN

I just hope the car is as fast as it looks.

Just then a new sound, that of revving engines, can be heard coming from the starting line area.

JOE

It's show time.

J.J., Joe and Mario watch Martin pull his red 1971 Pontiac Trans Am into the line.

Martin's red 1971 Pontiac Trans Am is paired up with the blue 1971 Ford 351 Boss Mustang that chased J.J., Joe and Mario from the burnout area. Soon, the queue is up to the vintage muscle cars. It is Ford vs. Pontiac all over again, just like it was in the '60s.

The cars are slowly approach the starting line, their engines screaming.

Martin and his challenger, a middle-aged man, look at each other and then at the light.

It flashes and simultaneously Martin and his challenger drop their vehicles' clutches.

The vehicles pull away in a haze of acrid tire smoke.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

The Lees' library room is decorated with Asian and Western art, the room's bookshelves are filled with Asian and Western books and the desk in the room is adorned with mementos of trips to Asia and photographs of family and friends.

In the middle of the room MICHAEL LEE, a middle-aged Chinese man dressed in workout clothes, is practicing Tai Chi.

Mr. Lee's son BOBBY LEE, about Brenda's age, a tall and athletic-looking teen, is practicing using chopsticks at the desk. Bobby's task is to use a pair of chopsticks to pick up a marble laying on the desk.



Mr. Lee and Bobby stop their tasks when Brenda comes into the room.

MR. LEE

Why don't you try one, Brenda? Your brother is quickly learning how to use chopsticks.

Bobby places a marble on the desk.

Brenda then takes the chopsticks from Bobby and attempts to use them to pick up the marble. She fails.

Bobby takes the chopsticks from Brenda and performs the feat.

BRENDA

I never was very good at this. What's your secret, Bobby?

BOBBY

Practice. You know, you shouldn't spend so much time...

BRENDA

Socializing?

MR. LEE

I know we're in America but we shouldn't forget about our heritage.

Bobby puts down the chopsticks and leaves the room.

Just then Mr. Lee resumes his Tai Chi exercises. Brenda remains in the room and observes Mr. Lee's Tai Chi exercises.

Brenda begins to practice the movement.

MR. LEE

Our people have performed this ritual for centuries. There's a certain joy in doing this correctly that is far different and, maybe, more rewarding than anything American society and culture has to offer. So much of our culture is like Tai Chi, filled with beauty, grace and spirituality. Would you like to try some more?

BRENDA

OK.

MR. LEE

Follow my movements.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brenda walks into her room, a room with a decidedly minimalist décor.

The room has a desk, a bed, a nightstand and a bookcase lined with academic books but nothing else. There is nothing in the room that hints at who is the person named Brenda Lee.

Bobby is already in the room reading one of her books. He places it on the desk when he sees Brenda.

BOBBY

Where were you tonight?

BRENDA

It's none of your business.

BOBBY

What did you do?

BRENDA

I don't need this from you, too.

BOBBY

Mom and dad just want the best for you. Well, whatever you do, remember not to disgrace the family name.

BRENDA

You know me better than that, Bobby. Haven't I always obeyed our family's wishes?

BOBBY

I know. I'm sorry for saying that and I apologize.

BRENDA

Apology accepted.

Bobby leaves the room.

Brenda flops down on the bed and sighs.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - J.J.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

J.J. is laying on his bed, looking up at the ceiling and spinning a basketball on his fingertips at the same time his mother, DOLORES JONES, a middle-aged women, is walking into the room.

Mrs. Jones rolls her eyes as if in disbelief while she looks over the messy, clothes-strewn room.

The room buried under the mess is decorated with half-finished paintings and sketches, movie and motorcycle posters, NBA posters, basketball team photos and trophies.

MRS. JONES

What are you doing tomorrow?

J.J.

I'm playing basketball games in the park.

MRS. JONES

Well, don't spend all day doing that. Remember, you have to help your father inventory the store.

J.J.

Aw, mom. OK.

MRS. JONES

Are you sure you wouldn't forget?

J.J.

I got it. I got it.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - J.J.'S BEDROOM - DAWN

J.J. awakens to the rays of first light.

J.J. gets out of bed, puts on a robe and leaves the room.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

J.J. ties a cloth bag to the back of the motorcycle and rides off.

EXT. RECREATIONAL FACILITY - PARKING LOT - MORNING

J.J. pulls the motorcycle into the parking lot just outside of a public recreational facility.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - MORNING

A chain-link fence separates the public recreational facility from the basketball courts ringing the perimeter.

Martin, Joe and Mario, dressed in workout clothes, are on one of the basketball courts shooting baskets. Martin sports a Chevrolet muscle car T-shirt.

The teens' bags and personal items are piled in one corner of the basketball court.

EXT. RECREATIONAL FACILITY - POOL DECK - MORNING

Mr. Lee and Brenda are swimming laps in the pool.

Bobby and his teen-aged athlete friends, JOEY, ANDY, DELL and DECKER, are watching from the pool deck.

EXT. RECREATIONAL FACILITY - POOL - MORNING

Brenda is swimming freestyle toward Mr. Lee.

MR. LEE

You're getting better.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - MORNING

J.J., Martin, Joe and Mario are about to choose teams for a pick-up basketball game.

MARIO

All right, who wants to play on my team?

J.J., do you want to play or what?

J.J.'s eyes are focused on Brenda, who is swimming laps in the pool. J.J., when he hears Mario's question, turns his attention back to the basketball game.

J.J.

I'll play, Lopez. I mean Mario. We'll make a good team.

EXT. RECREATIONAL FACILITY - POOL DECK - MORNING

Bobby is turning his head in the direction of sounds of play coming from the basketball courts.

BOBBY

Who's playing on our courts? Let's teach them a lesson.

Bobby and his friends leave the pool deck.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - MORNING

J.J. and Mario are about to face Martin and Joe in a pick-up basketball game.

Bobby and his friends enter the basketball court.

BOBBY

I'm Bobby Lee and these are my boys: Joey, Andy, Dell, and Decker. You're on our turf. Let's play a game. If we win, we have the court for the rest of the summer and vice versa.

MARTIN

I'm Martin and this is J.J., Joe and Mario and we don't like the numbers.

BOBBY

We'll play four on four and we get to substitute.

MARTIN

OK. We'll play one point per basket and the first team to 10 points wins.

BOBBY

Take it out.

Martin picks up the basketball and inbounds to J.J. to start the game.

EXT. RECREATIONAL FACILITY - BASKETBALL COURTS - BASKET

The basketball cuts through the basket over and over again.

EXT. RECREATIONAL FACILITY - BASKETBALL COURTS - MORNING

Martin is dribbling the basketball toward the basket. Bobby is guarding him.

MARTIN

We're tied and we win if I score. It's you and me, Bobby.

Everyone else steps aside to watch the confrontation.

Martin crosses over his dribble and gets by Bobby.

At the last instant Decker comes over to help Bobby. Too late, Martin slams the basketball through the basket.

BOBBY

Ah.

MARTIN

Bobby, how did you like that in your face dunk to end the game?

Bobby turns away from Martin and exits the basketball court with his friends.

J.J., Martin, Joe and Mario go to their bags and personal items laying on the basketball court and then leave in the direction of the public recreational facility.

EXT. RECREATIONAL FACILITY - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

J.J., dressed in casual clothes, leads Martin's Trans Am out of the public recreational facility's parking lot.

INT. CHOP'S - FRONT ENTRANCE - NOON

Chop's front entrance leading into the main dining room is decorated with old movie posters.

One poster stands out in particular, James Dean in "Rebel without a Cause."

Chop's is a '50's-style eatery decorated with jukeboxes and trophy cases filled with memorabilia of past high school championships.

J.J. stops and looks over the James Dean movie poster as he and his friends enter.

INT. CHOP'S - LUNCH COUNTER - NOON

JERRY (CHOP) WEBSTER leans over from behind the lunch counter to be closer to J.J. and his friends.

Mr. Webster, a former U.S. Navy supply officer and the owner of Chop's, is dressed in a white T-shirt, white pants, a white apron and a white hat.

CHOP

OK. What do you guys want for lunch?

J.J.

Chop, we'll have the usual. I'm been meaning to ask you, why do we call you Chop?

CHOP

They called me Chop in the Navy and the name stuck. That's a double order of burgers and fries and medium Cokes for everyone, right?

J.J.

Right.

CHOP

I'll bring the order to you guys.

INT. CHOP'S - BOOTH - NOON

The foursome locates a booth in the diner and Chop brings the order out.

The four friends eat their meal of hamburgers and fries.

J.J. finishes his hamburger and fries first and then looks around the diner.

J.J. sees Brenda leave her seat in Chop's. Brenda smiles at J.J. and then turns to exit Chop's.

Joe, who is sitting on the same side of the booth as J.J., sees Brenda smile at J.J.

JOE

Who's the babe? Didn't I see her at yesterday's race and at the recreational facility this morning?

J.J.

I'm not sure.

MARTIN

Yeah, right. You're turning red in the face. I know you want to go up to her and start a conversation.

J.J.

Maybe I'll do it the next time I see her.

MARTIN, JOE AND MARIO

*(in unison)*

You know that there wouldn't be a next time. You're chicken!

J.J.

Let's go down to the high school and pump some iron.

MARIO

You had to change the subject. OK. Let's go.

INT. JONESES' SPORTS - DAY

Mr. Jones is in the store's main retail area counting the contents of boxes of assorted sportswear and athletic shoes.

J.J. enters the store.

J.J.

Sorry I'm late, dad. I guess I lost track of time.

J.J. moves aside sporting goods displays and yet more boxes of assorted sportswear and athletic shoes to create a workspace for himself.

J.J. picks up the items needed to conduct the inventory project and starts counting the contents of a box of assorted sportswear and athletic shoes.

J.J. makes numerous mistakes over the course of doing the job and has to start over a number of times. Finally, Mr. Jones stops J.J. after he makes yet another mistake.



MR. JONES

All right, what's the matter J.J.? I watched you make mistakes you normally don't make.

J.J.

Yeah, I'm just not with it today.

MR. JONES

Do you want to talk about it?

J.J.

A girl smiled at me today and I can't stop thinking about the incident. I froze up and she walked away.

MR. JONES

It sounds to me you'll either have to take action or wipe her smile from your memory.

J.J.

What should I do, dad?

MR. JONES

Ask her out on a date. The worst that could happen is that she'll say no. Do you know her phone number?

J.J.

I know that she hangs out at Chop's.

MR. JONES

Good. Ask her out on a date the next time you see her. You can use my car for a night out on the town or whatever.

J.J.

Thanks dad. Now, let's finish the inventory.

J.J. and Mr. Jones retrieve their pens and clipboards and resume the inventory project.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brenda is talking on her cell phone.

Bobby is walking into the room.

BRENDA

I think I'm going to the mall tomorrow to look for jeans. Do you want to come along? My brother just walked in the room. I'll talk to you later.

Brenda hangs up the cell phone.

BOBBY

How was your day?

BRENDA

Sometimes I feel like an outsider in this town. I did smile at a boy today.

BOBBY

You did? Did he smile back?

BRENDA

I don't think he even saw me.

BOBBY

Good, you know our parents don't like us to have relationships with...

BRENDA

With the people like the boy I smiled at today?

BOBBY

Yes.

BRENA

I was only trying to be friendly.

BOBBY

I know you were but our parents may be less understanding.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - MR. AND MRS. JONESES' BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Joneses' bedroom is decorated plainly. The only other items in the room beside the bed are a dresser drawer, a couple of sitting chairs, a full-length mirror, a desk and two nightstands with lamps positioned on either side of the bed. The door to the room's walk-in closet is open. It is filled with clothes, shoes and assorted odds and ends.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones are preparing their bed for sleep.

Once they get into bed Mrs. Jones picks up a book on her nightstand.

Mr. Jones is laying on his back.

Mr. Jones suddenly turns to face Mrs. Jones.

MR. JONES

Dolores, he's getting older now.

Mrs. Jones puts down the book.

MRS. JONES

J.J.? Where have you been all these years?

MR. JONES

Today he told me a girl smiled at him while he was eating lunch with his friends.

MRS. JONES

Oh? He didn't mention that to me.

MR. JONES

Yeah, and I think he's going to ask her out the next time he sees her.

MRS. JONES

Well. We raised him to think for himself. If he thinks he ready to date, then he's ready to date.

MR. JONES

You're right, Dolores. I just didn't expect him to grow up so fast. Pretty soon he'll be 18 and on his own. I just hope enough doors will open up for him so he can make something of himself.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - J.J.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

J.J. is laying in bed and staring up at the ceiling for what seems like an eternity before falling asleep.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Mrs. Jones is at the stove scrambling eggs while Mr. Jones and J.J. are preparing coffee and toast in the cramped kitchen area.

Mr. Jones is the last one to leave the kitchen with a cup of coffee and the morning newspaper in hand.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DINING AREA - MORNING

J.J. is sitting on a wooden chair at the wooden breakfast table eating his breakfast of eggs, toast and orange juice.

Mrs. Jones is buttering her toast and taking sips of coffee.

Mr. Jones is reading the newspaper, his breakfast of eggs and toast on the table in front of him, seemingly unaware of what is happening around him.

MRS. JONES

J.J., what are you doing today?

J.J.

I'm going to the mall.

Mr. Jones puts down the newspaper.

MR. JONES

Are you going to buy anything?

J.J.

No, I don't have any money. I just want to spend the day at the mall, maybe with Martin.

Mrs. Jones places her coffee mug on the table.

MRS. JONES

Isn't Martin the one with the Trans Am?

Mr. Jones picks up the newspaper again.

J.J. looks down at his plate of half-eaten food and then up at his mom.

J.J.

Yes.

MRS. JONES

Well. Tell Martin to drive safely if he picks you up. Remember, dinner's at 6.

J.J. clears his breakfast dishes from the table.

J.J.

OK, mom. I wouldn't be late.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - MORNING

J.J. is kicking the motorcycle's tires.

J.J.

Great.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - HALLWAY PHONE - MORNING

J.J. is dialing the phone that sits on a plastic table in the hallway between J.J.'s bedroom and his parents' bedroom.

J.J.

Martin?

MARTIN (O.S.)

Yeah, this is Martin.

J.J.

I need a ride to the mall.

MARTIN (O.S.)

What's up?

J.J.

Motorcycle trouble.

MARTIN (O.S.)

When and where?

J.J.

*(smiling)*

Pick me up outside my house in 15.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Mrs. Jones is taking the dishes to the kitchen.

Mr. Jones is reading the newspaper in the dining area.

MRS. JONES

Well, it looks like J.J. is going to try to find the girl who smiled at him.

Mr. Jones puts down the newspaper and glances at his watch.

MR. JONES

He thinks the mall is the best place to look. Personally, I would've tried something a little more creative. Well, I'm late.

Mrs. Jones is washing dishes in the kitchen sink.

Mr. Jones is getting up from the kitchen table.

MRS. JONES

Remember dear. Sell, sell, sell.

INT. MALL - MALL DIRECTORY - NOON

J.J. is pointing to a store on the map, "Books 'n Stuff." Martin, sporting a Mopar muscle car T-shirt, is nodding his head in agreement.

J.J. and Martin start meandering through the crowded mall.

INT. MALL - BOOKS 'N STUFF - NOON

J.J. and Martin enter the store.

The store's clerk and people in business attire are the only people in the place. They are reading magazines and books.

J.J. picks up a motorcycle magazine and Martin picks up a book about the NBA.

They read for a few minutes when J.J. looks up and notices the clerk looking at him.

J.J. taps Martin on the shoulder.

J.J.

Let's split.

MARTIN

Home?

J.J. and Martin put down their reading material.

J.J.

Yeah.

INT. MALL - WALKWAYS - NOON

J.J. and Martin enter a department store.

INT. MALL - DEPARTMENT STORE - NOON

J.J. and Martin are walking past clothing displays when J.J., out of the corner of his eye, sees Brenda and JEN BOND shopping for jeans.

Jen is a knockout blonde about Brenda's age.

INT. MALL - DEPARTMENT STORE - JEANS RACK - NOON

Brenda is pulling aside the last jean on a circular rack.

J.J. is coming toward her and motioning her to him.

J.J.

I saw you at the race the other day,  
didn't I?

BRENDA

Who wants to know?

J.J. pulls a quarter from his pants pocket.

J.J.

Yesterday you smiled at me in Chop's.  
Look, let's flip for drinks. I call  
heads. If it is heads drinks are on me.

The quarter rotates through the air and then hits the ground. It is heads.

BRENDA

Whatever.

INT. MALL - FOOD COURT - NOON

The foursome of J.J., Martin, Brenda and Jen is sipping sodas and eating pizza at a table in the middle of a crowded food court.

Crowds of people are walking around and eating food from a myriad of eateries ringing the food court.

J.J.

We never formally introduced ourselves.  
I'm J.J. and this is my friend Martin.  
And you two are?

J.J. motions to the person sitting next to Brenda.

JEN

I'm Jen Bond and this is Brenda Lee.  
She's new in town.

J.J.

I see.

MARTIN

Are you two students at Norforce High  
School?

JEN

I'll be a freshman and Brenda, you're  
entering as a sophomore?

Brenda looks up from her plate of uneaten pizza.

BRENDA

Yes.

MARTIN

We're students of the school, too. We're  
members of the basketball team. Last  
year I was the starting point guard and  
J.J. played on the junior varsity team.

J.J. puts down his drink.

J.J.

This year I'm going to try out for the  
varsity team. I've been practicing all  
summer.

JEN

I'm impressed.

J.J.

Not very talkative are you?

Brenda rolls her eyes and then takes a sip from her drink.



BRENDA

Uh?

J.J.

Why did you smile at me yesterday?

BRENDA

I don't know. It was stupid of me, I suppose.

J.J.

You don't mean that.

BRENDA

*(defensively)*

I don't know, I just want to go home.

J.J. picks up the empty plates and cups littering the table.

J.J.

All right, need rides? Martin can give you lift home.

JEN

Well, Brenda drove me here.

J.J.

Martin, why don't you give Jen a lift?

Martin nods his head.

BRENDA

Whatever. Yeah, I'll take you home, J.J.  
I know that's what you want.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Brenda stops the Ford Mustang in the driveway.

J.J. gets out of the car and comes over to the driver side window.

J.J.

Why don't I make this up to you by taking you out on a date?

BRENDA

Well...

J.J.

Great, you wouldn't regret this. We'll arrange the details later. What's your phone number?

J.J. pulls a pen and a notepad from his pants pockets.

BRENDA

You always carry around a notepad and pen?

J.J.

Yeah, I like being prepared.

Brenda jots her phone number on the note pad and hands it back to J.J.

BRENDA

I don't know why I'm doing this.

J.J.

I'll be fun.

J.J. proceeds to step away from the Ford Mustang.

Brenda backs the Ford Mustang out of the driveway and drives off.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

J.J. is entering the room.

Mr. Jones is carrying plates to the kitchen table.

Mrs. Jones is dishing up the night's dinner, of roast beef, mash potatoes and steamed green beans, onto plates.

MRS. JONES

You're late.

J.J.

*(smiling)*

So, I have a date! I have a date. Well, maybe it's not a date but I get to spend time with...

MRS. JONES

With the girl you mentioned this morning?

J.J.

We haven't decided on the details and yes, it's with the girl we talked about this morning.

MRS. JONES

Well, it's not whatever you're calling it until the details are settled.

J.J.

It's a date. Trust me.

Mr. Jones enters the room from the kitchen's dining area.

MR. JONES

Good for you, J.J. It's about time you showed interest in dating.

J.J.

Can I borrow the car for the date, dad?

MR. JONES

Sure, I already said you could.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Brenda enters the well-equipped kitchen and takes a container of orange juice from the refrigerator and a glass from the cupboard.

Mr. Lee at the countertop sharpening a knife's blade by pulling it back and forth on a sharpening stone.

Brenda goes to the countertop and pours herself a glass of orange juice.

Mr. Lee leaves the countertop area, takes a raw fish from the bottom shelf of the refrigerator and places it on the countertop next to Brenda.

Brenda finishes her glass of orange juice and places the empty glass in the dishwasher.

Mr. Lee makes an incision at the vent near the tail of the fish with the knife he just sharpened.

Mr. Lee runs the knife blade right through the belly from the vent to the gills.

Brenda watches Mr. Lee continue to clean the fish.

MR. LEE

I hear you have a date Saturday.

BRENDA

Yes.

MR. LEE

You know how I feel about you dating and relationships. I just think you're not ready, especially with the people who live in the area.

BRENDA

I can handle it.

Mr. Lee is using a spoon to scoop out the reddish-brown kidney line running along the fish's backbone.

MR. LEE

I can't forbid you to go on the date.  
But...

BRENDA

I'm not even sure what's going to come of the date. He's just doing it because I gave him a ride home.

Mr. Lee cuts below the dorsal fin along the length of each side.

MR. LEE

If I find the relationship is proceeding in a manner I find unacceptable then I will have you end it.

Brenda turns to walk away just as Mr. Lee is removing the dorsal fin by giving it a quick pull from tail end to head.

INT. CITY - BARBERSHOP - DAY

Mr. Jones enters the nearly deserted barbershop, a shop decorated with photographs and mementos of the town's past and the famous people who have stopped by for haircuts.

A bell rigged to sound when the door opens announces Mr. Jones's entrance into the establishment.

A TV, with the sound turned down low, plays in one corner of the barbershop.

A young man reading piles of magazines looks up from his chair positioned along the wall and sees Mr. Jones sitting down in the chair and STAN PACKARD walking over to tend to him.

Mr. Packard is an older gentleman. Mr. Packard is wearing a blue smock over his clothing.

MR. PACKARD

The usual?

MR. JONES

Yeah, give me the usual.

Mr. Packard begins to cut Mr. Jones's hair.

MR. PACKARD

Really, Don. How's it going?

MR. JONES

It's not good. Ever since that shopping center opened business has been bad.

MR. PACKARD

I know what you mean.

MR. JONES

If things don't improve soon, I'm going to have to close it.

MR. PACKARD

This town is not the same anymore.

MR. JONES

I know what you mean. It's hard to see why a young person would want to make a life in this town, in this community.

MR. PACKARD

Changing the subject, I didn't see you pull up in your car.

MR. JONES

Yeah, my son has the car for the day. He has a date today.

MR. PACKARD

He must be excited.

MR. JONES

He couldn't stop talking about it.

Mr. Packard puts down his tools just as Mr. Jones gets up from the chair.

MR. PACKARD

All done.

Mr. Jones takes out his wallet and pays Mr. Packard.

MR. JONES

Thanks, Stan. See you next week.

EXT. LEES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Brenda watches J.J. pull his dad's car, a late model white Chevrolet sedan, into the driveway of the expensive-looking house.

A red import sedan occupies part of the driveway.

J.J. pokes his head out the open driver side window.

J.J.

Come on. Let's go.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - LIVINGROOM - DAY

Mr. Lee, standing amid expensive Asian and Western furniture, watches from the picture window as Brenda gets into the car.

INT. MR. JONES'S CAR - DAY

BRENDA

Where're we going?

J.J. pulls the car out of the driveway.

J.J.

It's a surprise.

EXT. PARK - PARKING LOT - DAY

J.J. and Brenda leave the car and walk onto a park trail.

A sign at the head of the trail is pointing in the direction of the lake.

EXT. PARK - SHORELINE - DAY

J.J. and Brenda come to a sandy shoreline by a beautiful blue lake.

There is brown-colored wire picnic basket on the beach waiting for J.J. and Brenda.

J.J.

What a hike. I'm hungry, how about you?

BRENDA

Is that all you can think about?

J.J. goes to the picnic basket and pulls out a translucent cloth.

As he is unfurling the cloth, he brings it up to head level and briefly looks at Brenda through the translucent material.

J.J. finishes the task with a smile on his face.

Brenda notices J.J. smiling.

BRENDA

What or who are you smiling at?

J.J.

You. Let's have lunch on the lake.

J.J. points to a green canoe made of wood tied to the dock.

BRENDA

Have you ever done that before?

J.J.

No. Come on. It'll be fun.

J.J. and Brenda bend down to gather up the cloth and the picnic basket.

EXT. PARK - DOCK - DAY

Brenda climbs into the canoe.

J.J. hands the picnic basket to Brenda before boarding it.

The canoe is showing signs of instability.

EXT. PARK - LAKE - CANOE - DAY

J.J. paddles as Brenda, at the other end of the canoe, looks around.

EXT. PARK - LAKE - CANOE - DAY - LATER

J.J. leans over in an attempt to kiss Brenda and without warning the canoe capsizes.

J.J. and Brenda end up in the water.

J.J.

Man.

J.J. looks at the capsized canoe.

BRENDA

Don't panic. We can swim to shore. It's not that far.

J.J.

I don't know how to swim.

BRENDA

Can you at least dog paddle?

J.J.

I think so.

BRENDA

Follow me. We'll make it.

Some time has passed and now J.J. is splashing water in a flurry of activity in an attempt to keep up with Brenda.

J.J.

I'm getting tired.

BRENDA

I'll slow down.

EXT. PARK - SHORELINE - DAY

J.J. and Brenda stumble onto the sandy shoreline cold, soaking wet and out of breath.

J.J. and Brenda flop down on the beach.



After catching their breath they get to their feet and hug each other.

BRENDA

I didn't expect this to happen on our date.

J.J.

I'm taking you home.

INT. JONESES' SPORTS - DAY

Mr. Jones is counting money in the cash register.

J.J. is in another area of the store placing shoeboxes on the shelves.

MR. JONES

I'm being meaning to ask you, how're things going between you and Brenda?

J.J. is stopping what he is doing and walking over to Mr. Jones who is finishing counting the money in the register.

J.J.

OK, I guess.

MR. JONES

You know having a girlfriend means certain responsibilities.

J.J.

I have a girlfriend?

MR. JONES

Well, do you think about her constantly? Do you spend all your freetime with her whether talking on the phone or face to face? Do you buy her gifts for no reason at all?

J.J.

Well...

MR. JONES

You have a girlfriend.

J.J.

I hadn't noticed. It's been a blur to me the last few weeks.

MR. JONES

As I was saying, having a girlfriend brings certain responsibilities.

J.J.

What kind of responsibilities, dad?

MR. JONES

I was a teenager a long time ago.

J.J.

I know what you mean.

MR. JONES

You do?

J.J.

Well, I guess. I don't know exactly what you mean but I'll be sure to ask you for advice.

MR. JONES

I'm sure you will. Now, get back to work.

J.J. looks at the clock on the wall and then leaves the store.

J.J.

Sorry, dad. I have to get ready for a date with Brenda.

EXT. SMITHS' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Martin works underneath the red 1971 Pontiac Trans Am.

J.J. rides onto the driveway of a two-story wood-framed house and kills the engine.

Martin drops the tools on the ground as soon as he hears J.J.'s motorcycle.

J.J.

Come out from under there. My motorcycle needs work.

Martin slides out from underneath the red 1971 Pontiac Trans Am.

MARTIN

Hold your horses. I could hear your motorcycle misfiring all the way down the street.

J.J.

I have a date with Brenda. I can't show up with my motorcycle sounding junk.

Martin bends down to adjust the motorcycle engine's fuel mixture.

MARTIN

OK, it's done.

J.J.

That's it? That's it?

MARTIN

Try it.

J.J. starts up the motorcycle. The engine sounds perfect.

J.J.

Thanks. Ever consider a career as a mechanic?

MARTIN

Uh.

J.J.

You know there'll always be people like me needing your help.

MARTIN

Yeah, yeah.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - J.J.'S MOTORCYCLE - DAY

Brenda is holding onto J.J. despite his knapsack slung around his back as they ride the motorcycle about the countryside.

EXT. HILLSIDE - DAY

J.J. and Brenda sit on a hillside over looking a lush green valley.

The setting sun fills the valley with long rays of orange-yellow light.

J.J. takes out a sketchpad and starts to sketch the scene.

BRENDA

Let me see.

J.J. shows the sketchpad to Brenda.

J.J.

What do you think?

BRENDA

That's really good but what other hidden talent do you have? Who's the person named J.J.? Does J.J. stand for anything?

J.J. puts down the sketchpad.

J.J.

James Joseph and my goals in life are to become rich and famous. But seriously. I'd like to make the high school's varsity basketball team, graduate with honors and possibly play college ball. I'm not sure what I want to study but I'm leaning toward studying art in college. Brenda, what're your goals?

BRENDA

I'd like to graduate with honors, too, earn a B.S. in biology and attend medical school.

J.J.

Any hobbies or interests outside of school?

BRENDA

Not really.

J.J.

Why did you smile at me in Chop's

BRENDA

I don't know. You looked cute to me, I guess.

J.J.

Am I just another cute guy to you?  
Another pretty face?

BRENDA

Oh, I don't know. We'll see.

J.J.

I don't know about you, but I'd like for us to go on many more dates.

BRENDA

We'll see.

J.J. and Brenda kiss.

EXT. PARK - TRAIL - DAY

J.J. and Brenda get up from underneath a tree in a lush park decorated with colorful flowers and tall trees.

J.J. reaches his hand out to Brenda as they walk onto a park trail.

Later in the walk J.J. pulls a petal from a flower in his hands.

J.J.

She loves me?

J.J. picks another petal from the flower.

J.J.

She loves me not?

J.J. picks another petal from the flower.

J.J.

She loves me?

BRENDA

Stop it.

J.J. drops the flower.

It flutters to the ground.

EXT. PARK - TRAIL - DAY

J.J. turns to Brenda, holds her hand and looks into her eyes.

J.J.

I can't believe I'm in the park on a beautiful day with you by my side.

BRENDA

Believe it.

J.J.

I always thought of what this would be like and it's better than I ever imagined.

BRENDA

When I was small I used to go down to the seashore and dream of someday coming to this country and now I'm here. It's everything I expected and more.

J.J.

Are you happy?

BRENDA

Yes. Very much so.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S ROOM - DAY

Brenda and Jen are sitting on the bed.

They look through a pile of CD's while listening to music.

BRENDA

What about this?

Brenda shows the CD to Jen.

JEN

OK, we'll give it a try as soon as the song is done. You know, having a boyfriend has changed you.

BRENDA

I hadn't noticed.

JEN

Ever since you met J.J....you've let your guard down and I like the new you. For the first time in your life in this country you're not afraid to share with everyone the person named Brenda Lee.

BRENDA

I'm experiencing a feeling I never thought I'd have and it feels good, really good.

JEN

I'm happy that you're happy.

EXT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - PARKING LOT - MORNING

J.J. pulls the motorcycle into a parking space.

J.J. dismounts the motorcycle and starts walking toward the school with his helmet and bookbag in hand.

EXT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - ENTRANCE - MORNING

J.J. approaches Martin, Joe and Mario who are loitering near the entrance to the school.

Martin sports a Pontiac cap.

Joe has the look of a well-prepared student with his glasses and a copy of "War and Peace" in hand. Mario is listening to music stored on his portable MP3 player.

J.J.

You guys ready for what should be a terrific year?

MARTIN

I guess so.

J.J.

Joe and Mario, are you two ready to face the school year?

JOE

Look who's talking? You already have a girlfriend and school is just starting.

Mario takes off the MP3 player's headphones and points to Martin and Joe.

MARIO

Right, we're trying our best to be noticed. They even joined the football team hoping to improve our standing with the girls of this school.

J.J.

Beginner's luck, I guess.

MARTIN

I don't believe in luck. Anyway, I hope everything works out.

The school bell rings.

J.J.

I hope so, too.

The four friends start to walk toward the school entrance.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - AUDITORIUM - MORNING

A middle-aged man wearing a business suit complemented with a funny-looking tie approaches the podium.

The students and teachers in the packed auditorium, who just seconds ago were talking and laughing among themselves, quiet down.

MR. SKINNER

As many of the returning upperclassmen know, I am Ken Skinner, principal of this high school. I'm going to keep my comments short. I just want to remind all of you the importance of doing well in your studies and participating in school and community activities.

The students react to his words in differing ways. Some students react favorably to his words.

Others students fidget in their seats.



J.J. has the look on his face of one who is daydreaming.

Brenda sits quietly in her seat.

MR. SKINNER (*continued*)

The choices you make during your years in high school can have a profound impact on your success in life. Academic success in high school is the foundation for success in life. There's a world beyond these walls. Explore the world you'll soon be apart of by getting involved in after school activities, sports and community events. Lastly, I want to remind everyone of homecoming the 18th of next month. The football team is facing Upton. We have a storied rivalry with that private school. I want everyone to show support for the team before, during and after the game.

Brenda's expression changes indicating interest in learning more about homecoming.

J.J.'s face is one of indifference.

MR. SKINNER (*continued*)

Student council members have the homecoming court entries.

Mr. Skinner raises his arms.

The classes leave the auditorium, the lowest grade first.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - J.J.'s HALLWAY LOCKER - MORNING

Brenda walks up to J.J., who is retrieving books from his locker.

J.J.

Hi, Brenda. How did you like the principal's speech?

BRENDA

Principal Skinner seems nice enough. I really don't know enough about him to form an opinion.

J.J.

Well, it's the same old thing every year, I imagine. He gave the same speech last year. Hey, doesn't your brother attend Upton?

BRENDA

He does. My parents decided to send him to private school and I really don't want to talk about that. Would you think any less of me if I applied for homecoming court?

J.J.

I never cared for that sort of thing.

BRENDA

I want to be just like the American girls and that's what they do, right? They try out for homecoming court and cheerleading and preside over school dances and proms, yes?

J.J.

Yes, they do. If that is what you want to do, I'll support you. In fact, I'll apply for homecoming court, too.

BRENDA

I'd like that.

INT. NORFORTH HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

J.J. is drawing a sketch of Brenda in his math notebook when he looks up and sees HOWARD MEYER, his math teacher, a young man in his twenties dressed in a shirt, tie and slacks, standing over him.

MR. MEYER

What's this? Is she more important than learning about math? Math is knowledge that could be the key to your future success.

J.J.

I don't want to say. It's personal.

MR. MEYER

Maybe the class knows. Class.

Mr. Myer shows the sketch to the class.

CLASS

*(in unison)*

It's his girlfriend.

MR. MEYER

I'll let you have your sketch back but you have to pay attention from now on, OK?

J.J.

I've never been so embarrassed in my life.

MR. MEYER

What did you say, J.J.

J.J.

OK, OK. It wouldn't happen again.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DINING AREA - NIGHT

J.J. puts down his math book and notebook and Brenda does the same to conclude a homework session.

The kitchen table is piled high with schoolbooks and notebooks.

J.J.

I'm done.

BRENDA

Me too.

J.J.

Did you find the assignment difficult?

BRENDA

Honestly, I've done the math before in my homeland's schools.

J.J.

Well, I just breezed through my assignment without really paying attention to the material.

BRENDA

That bad?

J.J.

Yeah. I got the assignment done, though.

BRENDA

Do you treat all your assignments that way?

J.J. tears a page from his math notebook and hands it to Brenda.

It is the sketch he made of Brenda.

J.J.

Yeah, I'm smart enough to get A's without really trying. Look, I want you to have this.

BRENDA

It's beautiful

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Later, J.J. and Brenda open the refrigerator door and reach for an apple sitting on the top shelf.

They look at each and start to laugh.

Suddenly, they find themselves looking into each other's eyes.

J.J. and Brenda kiss.

Mr. Jones, who is entering the kitchen from a hallway, sees J.J. and Brenda kissing. Mr. Jones starts to interrupt the couple and then he starts smiling.

MR. JONES

Are you two practicing the traditional kiss homecoming kings give homecoming queens?

Mr. Jones reaches in the open refrigerator and takes an orange out before leaving the room.

BRENDA

You told him of our plans?

J.J.

Yes. Didn't you tell your parents?

BRENDA

No. I'll tell them about homecoming when I feel they're ready.

J.J.

Hurry up. There's a chance we could be selected for homecoming court.

BRENDA

I promise. They wouldn't be pleased, though. They believe I should be concentrating on my studies and not my social life.

J.J. and Brenda kiss.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - MUSIC ROOM - DAY

J.J. enters the room dribbling a basketball.

Mario is in the room at the piano listening to music playing on his MP3 player.

Mario is about ready to sing a song.

MARIO

If you're going to dribble the basketball, dribble it in 4/4 time. I'm trying out my new song and I need help getting the timing down.

Mario turns off the MP3 player.

J.J. changes the cadence of his dribble.

J.J.

OK.

MARIO

One, two, three, four.

Mario begins the song as J.J. stops dribbling the basketball.

Soon, the song is over and the notes are fading from the room.

J.J.

You have a rare gift for music. Are you and your band going to perform that song at homecoming?

MARIO

We'll see. I have something special planned for homecoming.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Brenda, TAMMY NEW and Jen are in the bedroom laughing and smiling. They can hardly contain themselves.

Tammy has red hair and is about the same age as Brenda and Jen.

BRENDA

I never dreamed I'd be selected for the event.

JEN

We'll help you get ready.

BRENDA

What am I going to wear?

Tammy and Jen head for the closet.

JEN

Let's see, Tammy. What can we do to create the perfect homecoming outfit?

Soon clothes and shoes are flying out of the closet and land on the bed, on chairs in the room, tables and the floor.

Brenda models the outfits mixed and matched by Tammy and Jen.

The girls stop what they are doing when they see and hear the door open.

It is Brenda's mom, VIVIAN LEE, a conservatively dressed middle-aged woman.

Mrs. Lee's body language reveals her displeasure of the scene in the bedroom.

MRS. LEE

Brenda, what are you doing?

JEN

Hello, Mrs. Lee. Did you hear about Brenda's entry into the homecoming queen competition?

MRS. LEE

It's news to me. And what will you wear to this homecoming?

JEN

Tammy, show Mrs. Lee what she's wearing to homecoming.

Mr. Lee, with Bobby in tow, walks into the room.

Just then Tammy holds up the dress that Brenda is going to wear to homecoming. It is the most beautiful dress in the world, at least in the girls' eyes.

MR. LEE

Right, Bobby. No doubt you're ready to lead your school's football team to victory. You're the quarterback and people are counting on you to make the plays. Try you best tonight and whatever happens, win or lose, don't disgrace the family name. Brenda, are you wearing makeup? And what is this dress for, a date?

MRS. LEE

She's an entry in the homecoming queen competition.

TAMMY

Colleen, who is in the same grade as Brenda, came down with the flu and had to withdraw. The class picked Brenda as their representative.

MR. LEE

Well, I guess you'll have to participate in the competition. Just don't stay out past your curfew and you know how I feel about that boy J.J. It's OK as long as it's not serious.

JEN

Isn't J.J....?

Brenda puts her hands over Jen's mouth.

BRENDA

Shhhhh.

MRS. LEE

Is there something I should know about?

Mr. and Mrs. Lee and Bobby start to leave the room.

Brenda turns to Tammy and Jen.

BRENDA

It's nothing, just secrets between girlfriends, Mom. Yes Jen, J.J. is a nominee for homecoming king and I intend to dance the night away with him.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Mrs. Jones walks in room just as J.J. ties a tie.

MRS. JONES

Look at you, J.J. You're turning into quite a young man.

J.J. admires himself in the mirror.

J.J.

Aw, mom.

Mr. Jones enters the room with a camera in his hands.

MR. JONES

Say "cheese", J.J. I want to capture this moment.

MRS. JONES

Well, do you think you'll be crowned homecoming king?

Mr. Jones takes several pictures of J.J. and Mrs. Jones.

J.J.

It doesn't matter. Tonight, I'm going to dance with Brenda in front of the whole school. I couldn't care less about it.



EXT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - LATE AFTERNOON

The field is a blur of activity as the school's freshmen, sophomore, junior and senior classes work on their homecoming floats.

In one corner of the staging area J.J. is walking up to Brenda just as she is preparing to climb onto the sophomore homecoming float.

BRENDA

*(surprised)*

Shouldn't you be on your float by now?

J.J.

Yeah, but I had to see you.

BRENDA

You know, it's bad luck if you see me prior to selection.

J.J.

Who says?

BRENDA

I say and I have a strange feeling I'm going to be crowned homecoming queen. I've never been queen of anything.

J.J.

If you're crowned homecoming queen, wear this as a reminder to whomever is crowned homecoming king that I'm your boyfriend.

J.J. places a beautiful necklace around her neck.

BRENDA

It's beautiful and looks so expensive.

J.J.

Don't worry about it. Just enjoy it.

BRENDA

Why else did you come here? I know you too well, you're up to something. It wasn't just to give me this necklace, was it?

J.J.

I came here because I want to kiss you. If we are elected homecoming king and queen, it's customary the homecoming king and queen kiss. Well, I'll give you a kiss in accordance with custom but it'll be a peck compared to the kiss I'm going to give you now. Consider it a good luck kiss.

BRENDA

J.J.!

J.J. and Brenda kiss.

After the kiss J.J. throws the football straight up into the air.

EXT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - FOOTBALL FIELD - DUSK

Martin, in a football uniform, looks up to catch a spinning football coming straight down at him.

Martin looks ahead and then runs to catch up to Joe, also in a football uniform, and Mario, in street clothes.

MARTIN

We did our best.

JOE

Coach said Lee runs a 4.5 40. I came up on him on one play and couldn't even lay a finger on him. He was gone just like that.

Joe snaps his fingers.

MARTIN

Lee is faster than that, for sure. Virginia Tech great Michael Vick doesn't compare to Bobby Lee, as least from my point of view.

MARIO

I don't want to hear anymore about the game. Now, I'm looking forward to seeing you two at the homecoming dance with your dates.

MARTIN

Oh great, another event where I'm going to be showed up. This is J.J. and Brenda's night as homecoming king and queen.

MARIO

So, they're our friends and I happen to think we, too, will wow the crowd with our dates.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL GYM - HOMECOMING - PODIUM - NIGHT

Mario receives the microphone from the MC, a middle-aged man dressed in a tuxedo.

A crowd of beautifully dressed teenagers is gathered around the podium.

The gym itself is decorated with balloons, bunting and banners.

MARIO

I've written a song for tonight. It's called "First Dance."

Mario hands the microphone back to the MC and then takes up the lead singer position with the band.

HOMECOMING MC

And here is your homecoming king and queen, J.J. Jones and Brenda Lee.

J.J. and Brenda walk toward the gym's entrance bathed in light.

J.J. and Brenda then make their way to the center of a circle formed by the dance's couples.

Mario begins his song the same time J.J. and Brenda start to dance.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL GYM - HOMECOMING - LATE NIGHT

Mario and the band are covering popular songs of the 1980s and 1990s.

Martin and Joe and their dates, dressed to kill, are the only couples not on the dance floor.

MARTIN

Have you ever seen a happier couple?

The girls are giving Martin and Joe the 1,000-yard stare.

MARTIN'S DATE

Stop looking at J.J. and Brenda. What's wrong with you?

MARTIN

Look at how they dance. They move as one on the dance floor.

Martin's date prompts Martin to look at her.

MARTIN'S DATE

Stop looking at them and pay attention to me.

MARTIN

You want to dance? What was I thinking?

MARTIN'S DATE

I have no idea.

MARTIN

Do you want to join us?

JOE

Let's go.

Soon Martin and Joe and their dates are spinning and dipping and gliding across the dance floor much to the delight of J.J. and Brenda who are doing the same.

EXT. LEES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

J.J. and Brenda walk onto the house's front porch illuminated by an overhead light.

J.J.

I have something to confess to you. I think I'm falling in love with you.

Brenda enters the house and closes the door.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DINING AREA - NIGHT

J.J. enters the kitchen's dining area.

Mrs. Jones is at the table cleaning silverware.

MRS. JONES

How was the dance?

J.J.

I think I made a huge mistake.

MRS. JONES

Why do you think that? What happened between you and Brenda?

J.J.

I told her I was falling in love with her and she ran into the house without saying a word in reply.

MRS. JONES

Are you falling in love with her?

J.J.

I don't know. It sorta of came out.

MRS. JONES

Maybe Brenda isn't ready yet to hear those words. Look, if she feels the same way she'll express her feelings for you when she's ready. Give her some time.

J.J.

Why does love have to hurt so much?

MRS. JONES

I can't explain it, it just does.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brenda, dressed in workout clothes, is practicing Tai Chi in front of a mirror and as she is doing so she becomes sad.

Brenda stops when Mr. Lee walks into the room.

MR. LEE

I heard what happened this evening.

BRENDA

Can't anyone keep a secret in this house?

MR. LEE

You told your mother.

BRENDA

I don't know what to say to him.

MR. LEE

Tell him you don't feel that way about him.

BRENDA

He's such a nice boy. How do I tell him?

Brenda goes to the desk and picks up the sketch J.J. made of her.

She looks at it and then shows it to Mr. Lee.

MR. LEE

You'll find a way. He deserves to know the truth.

BRENDA

It's complicated.

MR. LEE

I know but that shouldn't stop you.

BRENDA

No, it shouldn't.

Brenda looks at the sketch and sighs.

INT. CHOP'S - BOOTH - DAY

J.J. and Jen are finishing a meal of hamburgers, fries and sodas.

J.J.

Tell me Jen, what's up with Brenda?

JEN

Give her and her parents time. She cares very much for you. However, her parents are a whole another matter.

J.J.

It's always the parents.

Just then Brenda is entering Chop's and looking for J.J. who is waving.

All of a sudden Brenda does a 180 and leaves.

J.J. comes to the door but it is too late.

J.J. arrives at the door just as Brenda is pulling the Mustang out of Chop's parking lot.

J.J.

*(yelling)*

Brenda!

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

J.J. rides the motorcycle at a high rate of speed, leaving a rooster tail of dust and dried leaves in his wake.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

J.J. is standing in front of Mr. Jones who is dribbling a basketball.

MR. JONES

Are you sure you want to do this? You've never beaten me before.

J.J.

It'll take my mind off Brenda considering what has happened. Let's play to 10 scoring by two's. The first to 10 wins.

MR. JONES

Take it out.

J.J. dribbles past Mr. Jones and scores on a lay-up.

MR. JONES

I'm just getting warmed up.

J.J. hands the basketball to Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones then feints a drive to the basket.

Instead, he backs off and shoots a jump shot from long range.

MR. JONES

I still have my shooting touch.

Mr. Jones hands the basketball to J.J.

J.J. backs up to the end of the driveway and then shoots a jump shot.

J.J.

Observe my shooting touch.

J.J. hands the basketball to Mr. Jones after putting the basketball in the basket.

MR. JONES

Now it's time to get serious.

Mr. Jones starts backing up toward the basket in a way that protects the basketball from J.J. prying arms.

Mr. Jones comes to almost underneath the basket.

Mr. Jones shoots a skyhook.

J.J. elevates to block the shot.

J.J.

Get that junk out of here.

J.J. rebounds the basketball.

Next, J.J. dribbles out to the end of the driveway before turning around.

J.J. elevates to shoot a jump shot.

Mr. Jones jumps into the air.

J.J. changes his shot in mid-air to avoid Mr. Jones's block attempt.

MR. JONES

I see you have some of Michael Jordan's moves.

J.J.

I always try to emulate the superstars.



INT. CHOP'S - DAY

Brenda is turning around to face Jen who is approaching from behind.

BRENDA

How could you do that to me? Yesterday,  
I saw you with J.J.

JEN

Wait a minute Brenda. We were talking  
about you. He just wanted to know what's  
the matter between him and you.

BRENDA

You mean you weren't out on a date with  
him?

JEN

No. I would never do something like that  
to you.

Brenda is turning and walking toward the exit.

BRENDA

I've made a huge mistake.

JEN

*(yelling)*

I think he's at home now.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

J.J. hands the basketball to Mr. Jones.

Mr. Jones advances the basketball toward the basket.

Mr. Jones uses his forearm to hold off J.J. as he approaches  
the basket.

Mr. Jones elevates over J.J. and scores a lay-up.

J.J.

Not fair.

MR. JONES

Fair.

J.J.

I'll give you that basket but only because I'm ahead.

Mr. Jones hands the basketball to J.J.

J.J. advances the basketball toward the basket.

J.J. and Mr. Jones battle for position under the basket.

MR. JONES

I have you right where I want you.

J.J. switches his dribble hand and dribbles out from under the basket.

J.J. manages to score on a left-handed lay-up.

J.J.

Not so fast.

MR. JONES

You've improved your ability to use your left hand?

J.J.

Yeah. It's now 8 to 4.

J.J. hands the basketball to Mr. Jones.

MR. JONES

I've got to make this shot.

Mr. Jones backs up to the basket and then dribbles away from it.

Mr. Jones turns around and approaches J.J.

J.J. jumps into the air in anticipation of a shot attempt. Mr. Jones responds by backing away while shooting a jump shot.

MR. JONES

Jordan used that shot in his 30s.

Mr. Jones hands the basketball to J.J.

J.J. dribbles to the end of the driveway and then turns to face the basket.

J.J.

It's time to end this. I'll do it the way Jordan ended things in his 20s.

MR. JONES

Not the...

J.J. dribbles hard to the basket and then elevates into the air.

Mr. Jones tries to keep J.J. from elevating by grabbing his torso.

Too late, J.J. slams the basketball through the basket.

MRS. JONES (O.S.)

*(yelling)*

J.J, get inside and finish your homework.

Just then Brenda's Ford Mustang stops in front of the house.

J.J. moves toward the rapidly slowing Ford Mustang.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Jones is standing next to Mr. Jones at the kitchen counter.

Mrs. Jones is watching J.J. and Brenda talking from the window over the kitchen counter.

MRS. JONES

Don, why were you playing basketball with your son? What about the business reports you said needed work?

MR. JONES

Dolores! I was just taking a break.

MRS. JONES

Well, did you win?

MR. JONES

No.

MRS. JONES

Is he going to make the varsity team this year?

MR. JONES

He's ready. I have to say he had a good teacher.

Mrs. Jones elbows Mr. Jones.

MRS. JONES

What about my role in his development as a basketball player and as a person, Don?

EXT. PARK - TRAIL - DAY

J.J. and Brenda walk along a trail in the woods.

J.J.

Everyone in school sees us as a couple.

BRENDA

I've noticed everyone treats me differently than the ones who don't yet have boyfriends and girlfriends.

J.J.

Does that make a little nervous, a little scared?

BRENDA

A little.

J.J.

Have courage, Brenda.

BRENDA

What do you mean?

J.J.

It takes courage for us to open our hearts to each other. It takes courage for us to trust each other completely.

BRENDA

I see. I'm sorry I jumped to conclusions about you and Jen.

J.J.

No, I'm the one who should be apologizing to you. I acted like a lovesick idiot the last week or so.

BRENDA

I have something to say to you, I...I...

J.J.

Shhh. I don't say it. You don't have to say anything to me.

BRENDA

Oh.

J.J. and Brenda kiss.

BRENDA

I intend to enjoy every moment of the rest school year.

J.J.

I'm sure you will. I'm sure we will.

INT. MR. IRELAND'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

Among the pieces of papers scattered on the kitchen table is a board of education coaching contract signed by ROBERT IRELAND, the man examining the contract.

Another piece of paper is the basketball team's roster from the previous season.

Mr. Ireland, an older gentleman, has the look of a man who has taught too many classes and basketball teams in too many school districts for too many years.

Mr. Ireland is worn out from teaching and coaching but cannot retire because he is not quite old enough.

Mr. Ireland comes across as a gruff teacher and basketball coach but underneath his hardened exterior is a kind-hearted man who cares deeply about his students and basketball players.

Mr. Ireland picks up the team roster from the kitchen table when he hears a loud noise.

Mr. Ireland looks out the window and sees a motorcycle moving at a high rate of speed.

MR. IRELAND

What the...he's going to kill himself.

Mr. Ireland returns to scanning the roster.

MR. IRELAND

Another year as basketball coach and  
what do I have this time around?  
According to this, I'll need to find a  
shooting guard and a small forward to  
complete the starting five.

EXT. MAIN STREET - MOTORCYCLE SHOP - DAY

J.J. comes to a halt in front of a grungy-looking motorcycle shop.

J.J. leaves the motorcycle to look at the motorcycle in the window.

J.J.

Don't let that rocket ride out of your  
sight, J.J. Someday when I make it big,  
I'm going to buy one just like it.

EXT. JONESES' SPORTS - DAY

A sign in the window reads, "Going out of business,  
everything must go."

INT. JONESES' SPORTS - DAY

J.J. makes his way through a crowd of people to reach Mr. Jones who is taking boxes out of the storeroom.

People dash every which way through the store with boxes in hand as they pick through the remains of the inventory.

MR. JONES

I'll be right there, Mrs. Webster.

J.J. takes some of the boxes from Mr. Jones's hands and follows him to the table in the middle of the store.

J.J.

What happened? I thought...

MR. JONES

Here you go Mrs. Webster.

MRS. WEBSTER, a young woman, leaves the table with the boxes.

J.J.

we were doing OK.

MR. JONES

Not exactly, but we'll be OK. I'll just have to find a job, that's all.

J.J.

What about my future that includes a college education, dad?

MR. JONES

Don't worry about it. We'll find a way to pay for it.

J.J. pulls a basketball from a shelf in the store and starts to dribble it.

J.J.

Yeah, we'll find a way.

MR. JONES

That reminds me, how was the first day of basketball tryouts?

J.J.

It was OK. Coach Ireland had us do conditioning drills but it was easy.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

J.J., dribbling a basketball, enters the weight room followed by Martin, Joe and Mario.

Mario turns on the room's boom box while J.J., Martin and Joe take up positions at the exercise bike and bench press, respectively.

Mario leaves the boom box and mounts the rowing machine.

J.J.

How do you think training camp is going so far?

J.J. pedals the exercise bike.

Mario pulls back and forth at the rowing machine.

MARIO  
Worried about something?

J.J.  
I'm not worried.

Joe spots Martin's bench press attempt.

MARTIN  
Something's bothering you. Worried  
you're not good enough to make the team?  
Almost got it. There.

The weight is safely placed on the bench.

J.J.  
Well, you heard about my dad's business  
closing.

Joe prepares to do a bench press.

JOE  
Tough break.

J.J.  
Tell me about it. It's just that I need  
to make the team to get myself noticed.  
I know my play may not earn me a full  
ride for college but at least it could  
pave the way for something, anything to  
help pay for college.

Martin spots Joe's bench press attempt.

MARTIN  
I know what you mean, colleges like  
students who don't study all the time  
but are also involved in activities.

MARIO  
How do you know so much about getting  
into college?

MARTIN  
I've been considering it.

Joe does a bench press and Martin spots the attempt.



JOE

Martin, watch what you're doing.

The weight is safely placed on the bench.

J.J.

Can we get back to the subject at hand?

Martin and Joe change positions at the bench press station.

MARTIN

Look, don't worry. The tryouts for the remaining two starting spots are coming down to you and PAUL KNIGHT and one other guy who's terrible.

J.J.

I guess you're right. Besides, Paul's a small forward.

Mr. Ireland, dressed in a rumpled shirt, pants and tie, is walks into the room.

Everyone stops working out.

J.J.

Coach.

MR. IRELAND

J.J., good job in today's scrimmage. You're making real progress. By the way, do you still ride a motorcycle?

J.J.

*(sheepishly)*

Yeah.

MR. IRELAND

Too bad, you could get yourself in big trouble riding that thing.

J.J.

I hear you.

Mr. Ireland walks out of the room.

J.J.

What made him say that?

MARTIN

Who knows? Anyway, told you so. You have nothing to worry about.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL GUIDANCE COUNSELORS' OFFICES - DAY

Joe walks into the office of NINA NEUMANN, a conservatively dressed African American woman in her 30's.

Ms. Neumann sits at her cluttered desk doing paperwork.

MS. NEUMANN

Hello, Joe.

JOE

You wanted to see me, Ms. Neumann?

MS. NEUMANN

I've been looking at your records and test scores. Why don't you apply yourself in the school's classes?

JOE

I don't know.

MS. NEUMANN

Your standardized test scores are excellent but your grades are so, so. What do you want to do with the rest of your life?

JOE

Play pro basketball and retire rich and famous. Nowadays, high school players are going straight to the NBA.

MS. NEUMANN

Do you know the odds of making the NBA? Besides you could be so much more than a basketball player. You could be a doctor, a lawyer, a businessman or whatever you want to be in life with your unrealized potential.

JOE

How am I going to pay for college?

MS. NEUMANN

Work hard in classes and on your SAT's  
and good things will happen to you.

JOE

I'll think about it.

MS. NEUMANN

Don't take too much time to make your  
decision. You're graduating at the end  
of the year.

JOE

I know.

EXT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - TRACK - AFTERNOON

J.J. runs laps dressed in workout clothes while Brenda looks  
on, stopwatch in hand.

INT. CHOP'S - BOOTH - AFTERNOON

J.J., Martin, Joe, Mario and Paul Knight, wearing their  
varsity jackets, sits in a booth at Chop's. The remains of a  
meal of hamburgers, french fries and sodas lie on the table.

Paul, an African American, 15 years old, is a sophomore in  
Norforce High School and at 6-7 is taller than J.J and  
Martin, also sits in the booth.

PAUL

Aren't you going to say what's up or how  
about hello? Yeah, that's all I want, a  
hello. Hello is a simple word to say.  
Well, I know when I'm not wanted. I'm  
leaving.

Paul abruptly gets up and leaves.

MARTIN

Paul Knight, right?

Paul turns around and starts to walk back to the booth.

PAUL

Who wants to know?

Paul retakes his seat at the table.

J.J.

Your teammates on the varsity team!

PAUL

I thought...you didn't even know my name.

JOE

Lighten up. You're part of the starting lineup now. Us five against the rest of the league, right? Of course we know your name. We've had our eyes on you since the first day of training camp.

MARIO

Can't you take a joke?

PAUL

It was a joke?

Paul starts to laugh.

MARIO

So, do you think we're going to go far this year?

MARTIN

Yeah, with me running the show anything is possible.

JOE

You'll pass the basketball like coach wants you to?

MARTIN

I'll pass it.

J.J.

You better pass it. Especially when the opposition comes after you with two or three guys.

MARTIN

Don't worry about it. I'll take of all of your needs on the court.

PAUL

You sound like you want to be the team's leader? Why don't we elect you captain?

MARTIN

That sounds like a good idea.

PAUL

I'll bring it up at practice.

MARTIN

I don't mean to the change the subject J.J., but how're things going with Brenda?

J.J.

OK. I haven't seen much of her since basketball started. I guess that's for the best. I get the feeling no one in her family likes me. We have to sneak around a bit if we want to see each other. In fact, I plan on seeing her tonight.

JOE

It must be tough.

J.J.

It's OK so far.

MARTIN

I see.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

J.J. enters the kitchen wearing his varsity jacket.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones are in the kitchen making dinner.

Mrs. Jones is boiling water and preparing noodles for cooking.

Mr. Jones is shredding green peppers and lettuce.

MR. JONES

You made varsity.

J.J.

Yeah.

MRS. JONES

That's good.

J.J.

Mom, dad, can you attend all the games?

MRS. JONES

I don't know much about basketball but I'll be at every game supporting you.

MR. JONES

Well, I know a little more about the game than you do so I'll teach you.

Mrs. Jones elbows Mr. Jones.

MRS. JONES

No thank you. I think I'll try to learn it on my own.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Brenda enters the dark room as quietly as she can but does not see Mrs. Lee coming up to her from behind.

MRS. LEE

Brenda. Where have you been?

Brenda turns around.

BRENDA

*(surprised)*

I've been out and about.

MRS. LEE

You've been out with J.J. again, haven't you?

BRENDA

That's none of your business.

MRS. LEE

Don't talk to me like that. I'm just looking out for you. You know that your father thinks you're seeing too much of J.J. He thinks you're neglecting your studies in favor of him.

BRENDA

What?

MRS. LEE

We have big plans for you and your brother.

BRENDA

We no longer live in the place I was born. Now, we live in a free country and I want to be with J.J. It's my decision and mine alone.

MRS. LEE

It's getting late. Let's talk about this later.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BOBBY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Bobby is tossing and turning in bed and then sits up when he hears voices, it is J.J. and Brenda.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Hi, J.J.

J.J. (O.S.)

It's two o'clock in the morning and climbing through the window is crazy.

BRENDA (O.S.)

I had to see you at this hour. My parents...

J.J. (O.S.)

can't take that we're boyfriend and girlfriend?

BRENDA (O.S.)

It's just that they're having a hard time accepting I'm dating someone like you.

J.J. (O.S.)

I know, they probably have a different idea than you do of who you should date.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Any, how're basketball tryouts going?

J.J. (O.S.)

Did you hear that I made the varsity team?

BRENDA (O.S.)

J.J.!

Bobby hears rustling noises coming from Brenda's room and then nothing.

Bobby grows angrier by the moment in the silence.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Brenda comes up to J.J. who is playing a video game in a tastefully decorated television room complete with a video game console, a stereo system and a couch.

J.J. continues to play without looking at Brenda.

Brenda turns away from J.J. and heads for the kitchen's refrigerator.

J.J.

How was school today?

Brenda takes a sip from her drink she pulls from the refrigerator and then walks back to J.J.

BRENDA

I'm sorry. I shouldn't have been so inconsiderate but you seem to be caught up in the video game.

J.J.

So, how was school today? Do you want to play a game?

Brenda punches J.J. in the shoulder and glares at him.

J.J. looks at Brenda with a smirk on his face.

J.J. and Brenda pick up the video game's hand controllers.

BRENDA

You're mine.

J.J.

Not today Brenda, not today. You know, we should do this more often when our parents are away.

Just then the video game is flashing, "GAME OVER."



BRENDA

Yeah, let's play again. Right now.

J.J.

Shouldn't you be leaving now? Something about parents and homework and that they're worried about us.

BRENDA

I can handle my parents. Come here you worry wart.

J.J. and Brenda kiss.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Mr. Lee, dressed in workout clothes, is bending down and touching his toes.

When Mr. Lee stands erect he finds Brenda, also dressed in workout clothes, standing in front of him.

MR. LEE

Do you want to join me? I'm about to do Tai Chi.

BRENDA

OK.

Mr. Lee and Brenda stretch, first on the floor and then against the wall.

MR. LEE

How's life treating you?

BRENDA

OK.

MR LEE

And what about your relationship with J.J, how's that progressing?

BRENDA

Fine!

MR. LEE

Just don't let the relationship distract you from your studies.

BRENDA

What?

Brenda stops stretching and moves away from the wall.

MR. LEE

We want you to have a good life, a successful life. We came to this country so you and your brother would have a chance at a future living in freedom and prosperity. Where we came from life was not easy, as you know. We have a good life in this country but it could end just like that. (Mr. Lee snaps his fingers.) We need to prepare, to be ready in case that happens but it can be avoided all together if one works hard and not be distracted by...

BRENDA

friends and...I don't feel like doing Tai Chi any more.

Brenda walks out of the room while Mr. Lee starts Tai Chi in beginning position.

Later in Mr. Lee's exercise Bobby enters the room.

MR. LEE

Bobby, keep an eye on Brenda and J.J.

BOBBY

I wouldn't disappoint you.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - BASKET - LATE AFTERNOON

J.J. is standing four feet from the basket and shooting baskets over and over again until his shooting form is perfect.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - BASKET - LATE AFTERNOON

The basketball cuts through the basket over and over again and then J.J. launches the basketball into the air for the final time.

The basketball is traveling on an upward path toward the basket.

INT. CIVIC CENTER - LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Mr. Ireland, dressed in a rumpled shirt, pants and tie, is catching the basketball coming toward him with his outstretched hands and then putting it aside.

The Norforce High School basketball team is gathering around Mr. Ireland.

MR. IRELAND

Tonight, we face our greatest challenge in Upton. They have a 7-1 center and we all know what Bobby Lee is capable of on the basketball court. Play hard and we may just beat them tonight and win the tournament.

INT. CIVIC CENTER - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

It is the opening tip.

The cheering crowd is going silent.

In the first play of the game the Upton center is dunking the basketball over Mario following an alley-oop pass from Bobby.

The crowd is cheering the play.

Next, Martin passes the basketball to J.J. after receiving the inbounds pass from Mario.

J.J. leaps high into the air and releases the basketball at the highest point of his leap.

The cheering crowd is becoming silent.

Everyone is coming to his or her feet to watch J.J.'s shot go in the basket.

INT. CIVIC CENTER - BASKETBALL COURT - HALFTIME - NIGHT

The game clock is winding down to halftime.

Bobby turns his head to receive instructions from his coach.

Martin guards Bobby.

Martin sees an opportunity to steal the basketball.

The game clock is winding down to 10 seconds left in the half.

Martin makes a steal and runs down the basketball court with Bobby chasing him.

Bobby almost catches up to Martin but it is too late. Martin lays the basketball in the basket.

The crowd is cheering Martin's play.

The referee blows his whistle to signal the end of the first half.

P.A. system comes to life.

ANNOUNCER (O. S.)

It's a close game between Norforce and Upton. Please join us for the second half.

J.J. walks off the basketball court when he sees Brenda waving to him from the stands.

J.J. pauses to smile and wave at Brenda.

Bobby, nearby, notices J.J. and Brenda's actions as he is walks into the locker room.

INT. CIVIC CENTER - BASKETBALL COURT - HALFTIME WARMUPS

The two teams emerge from the locker room.

The schools' cheerleaders perform halftime routines and the schools' band play the schools' fight songs.

J.J. and his teammates warm up at the free throw area by shooting baskets and lay-ups.

J.J. finishes a lay-up and walks off the basketball court.

Bobby walks over to J.J., who is standing behind the end line under the basket.

Bobby punches him in the shoulder.

J.J. starts to go after Bobby but cannot because Martin is restraining him.

INT. CIVIC CENTER - BASKETBALL COURT - START OF SECOND HALF

The referee blows his whistle to signal the start of the second half.

The crowd's eyes are on the game clock.

It starts to count minutes to the end of the game. The half opens with Joe inbounding the basketball to Martin.

Bobby guards J.J. to start the second half.

J.J. leaps into the air, about to release the basketball, when Bobby pushes J.J. to the ground.

J.J. hits the basketball court hard.

The crowd cheers when J.J., with a look of disgust on his face, starts to walk to the foul line.

J.J. receives the basketball from the referee.

J.J. measures a free throw.

The crowd sits silently in the stands waiting for J.J. to make his first free throw.

The basketball cuts through the basket.

J.J. receives the basketball from the referee.

J.J. measures another free throw.

The basketball cuts through the basket.

The crowd cheers J.J.'s second free throw.

J.J. points to Bobby.

In the next play of the game Bobby tries to receive the basketball on an inbounds play.

J.J. knocks the basketball out of bounds.

Bobby again tries to receive the basketball to start play but J.J. is in the way.

J.J. has a look of innocence on his face. Bobby's face is one of anger.

J.J. and Bobby point to each other and bump chests. The referee separates the two.

Bobby receives the basketball on the inbounds play without incident.

INT. CIVIC CENTER - BASKETBALL COURT - END OF GAME - NIGHT

The game clock is winding down to 30 seconds to the end and Mr. Ireland is pacing back and forth in front of the bench.

Mr. Ireland is nervously playing with his tie.

MR. IRELAND

Timeout!

The Norforce High School basketball team walks off the basketball court and gathers around Mr. Ireland.

The schools' cheerleaders run onto the basketball court and the schools' bands begin to play.

The team gathers around Mr. Ireland's clipboard.

MR. IRELAND

OK, here's the play we're going to run.  
J.J., you're taking the final shot.  
J.J., make sure you're behind the three-point line when you shoot. Make the shot and we win.

J.J.

OK.

The referee blows his whistle to signal the end of the timeout.

The cheerleaders run off the basketball court and the bands stop playing.

The two teams run back onto the basketball court.

The game clock reports it is 10 seconds until the end.

Mario inbounds the basketball to Martin.

Martin signals the play.

The crowd is cheering.

Martin dribbles the basketball and then passes off to Paul.

Paul waits for his defender to come and try to block the passing lanes.

Paul readies his pass knowing his man will try to block it out of bounds.

Meanwhile J.J. runs toward the baseline under the basket. Paul passes J.J. the basketball.

J.J. runs parallel to the line and his defender follows him.

Mario swings out and lets J.J. through but not J.J.'s defender.

Bobby leaves Martin and runs toward J.J.

Bobby elevates and blocks J.J.'s shot.

Bobby runs the length of the basketball court and scores on a lay-up.

Martin and J.J. trail the play.

The crowd is cheering.

The referee blows his whistle to signal the end of the game.

INT. CIVIC CENTER - OUTSIDE LOCKERROOM - NIGHT

Bobby walks out of the locker room and sees J.J. waiting for him.

J.J.

Why did you push me around like that on the basketball court in front of everyone, in front of Brenda? I didn't do anything to you to deserve that.

BOBBY

Did you do, you know, with my sister?

J.J.

What're you talking about?

BOBBY

You know what I'm talking about.

J.J.

No, it's nothing like that. You've got to believe me.

BOBBY

Whatever. You better watch yourself.

J.J.

Is that a threat? Are you threatening me?

BOBBY

Just watch yourself.

Bobby turns his back to J.J. and walks away.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

J.J. walks into the kitchen's dining area carrying a basketball.

Mrs. Jones is intently reading the newspaper's sports section.

The headline to an article says "Another loss: J.J. misses a key shot down the stretch."

Mrs. Jones puts down the sports section and gets up from the table.

Mrs. Jones takes the basketball from J.J.'s hands and then demonstrates a mechanically perfect jump shot.

MRS. JONES

Just, the person I wanted to see. My I borrow that? I've been watching you during your games. I think I know what's wrong with your jump shot. Look, when you shoot follow through like this. It will improve your shot's accuracy.

J.J.

Uh, uh.

MRS. JONES

Look, try it.

J.J.

OK, OK.



INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Mr. Ireland, dressed in a rumpled shirt, pants and tie, is handing candles to J.J., Martin, Joe and Mario and the other members of the varsity team, 12 players in all, the coaching staff and trainers.

The room's lights flicker off.

MR. IRELAND

We've had a rough start to our season, a start none of us expected. The community is expecting us to win and I know we're better than what we're showing on the basketball court. We have to play as a unit to be successful, a unit that is stronger than the sum of its parts.

Mr. Ireland lights his candle.

MR. IRELAND (*continued*)

My candle alone can't light this room. Starters, would you please light your candles?

The starters light their candles using Mr. Ireland's candle.

MR. IRELAND (*continued*)

Reserves, light your candles.

The starters help the reserves light their candles.

MR. IRELAND (*continued*)

Any one of these candles alone is not enough to light this darkened room. Now, with a few more candles the room becomes brighter still.

The light from the burning candles is not enough to light the entire room.

MR. IRELAND (*continued*)

Assistant coaches and trainers, light your candles.

The assistant coaches and trainers light their candles using the players' burning candles.

MR. IRELAND (*continued*)

The lighting power of the candles combined creates a light powerful enough to illuminate the entire room. I want each of you to consider how to use your individual talents to make the teammates around you better. That's all I have to say.

The candles flicker out and the room is dark again until light enters from the opening door.

TEAM

(*in unison*)

Teamwork!

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The game clock is nearing the last five seconds of the game. The scoreboard has the Norforce High School basketball team trailing by two points.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - SIDELINE - NIGHT

Mr. Ireland, dressed in a rumpled shirt, pants and tie, is pacing the sidelines and nervously playing with his tie. Suddenly, Mr. Ireland yells to a referee running past him.

MR. IRELAND

Timeout!

The referee blows his whistle to signal a timeout.

The cheerleaders run onto the court and the schools' bands begin to play.

The team gathers around Mr. Ireland.

MR. IRELAND

Martin, who's free when they double up on you?

MARTIN

It's J.J.

MR. IRELAND

Martin, you know what you have to do.

MARTIN

OK.

The timeout ends.

Martin receives the ball from Joe and he proceeds to dribble into a double-team.

Martin pivots and passes over the double-team.

J.J. receives the basketball near the three-point line. J.J. leaps high into the air and releases the basketball.

The crowd and teams watch in silence as the basketball arcs through the air.

J.J. contorts his body as if he is trying to will the basketball into the target.

The basketball cuts through the basketball net.

The crowd lets out a huge cheer and then mobs J.J. and Martin at center court.

INT. A HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

A HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COACH, a young man dressed in slacks, a dress shirt and tie, watches game video of the Norforce High School basketball.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: Two people are guarding Martin, who is sticking out his tongue and contorting his face a la Michael Jordan, on the basketball court.

Joe, who is scowling, formerly covered by one of the double-teamers, cuts toward the basket.

Martin, sticking out his tongue and contorting his face, passes Joe the basketball.

Joe, who is scowling, lays the basketball into the basket.

INT. CHOP'S - BOOTH - DAY

CUT TO: J.J., Martin, Joe and Mario are in Chop's eating hamburgers and fries and laughing.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: J.J. has three people guarding him but he breaks the defense with a bounce pass to Martin, who is positioned in the corner.

Martin, tongue wagging and contorting his face, shoots a jump shot.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - LIBRARY - DAY

CUT TO: Joe is in the Norforce High School library studying a stack of vocabulary flash cards amid piles and piles of SAT preparation books.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: Mario is being hacked by two people under the basket but he still scores.

Mario then points to Martin and smiles at him.

INT. LEE'S HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CUT TO: Brenda is sitting in her room amid a pile of books and open notebooks when suddenly she looks at the sketch made by J.J. and smiles.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: Martin, tongue wagging and face contorting, does an up and under move near the basket and lays the basketball into to the hoop.

EXT. MR. SMITH'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

CUT TO: Martin is in the driveway of his house tinkering under the hood of his red 1971 Pontiac Firebird Trans Am.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: Three people are guarding Mario under the basket but he manages to pass the basketball to Joe, standing under the basket opposite of Mario.

Joe, with a scowl on his face, is scores on a lay-up.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - ART ROOM - DAY

CUT TO: J.J. is in a Norforce High School art classroom sketching a basketball scene.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: Martin finds an open space in the zone and shoots a jump shot.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: Martin, tongue wagging and face contorting, passes Joe the basketball.

Joe scores on a turn-around jump shot.

The scowl on Joe's face turns into a smile.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

CUT TO: Paul is in a Norforce High School classroom intently listening to a teacher lecture.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: J.J. sees a chance to score on an inbounds pass play when the person guarding him turns his back.

J.J. bounces the basketball off the person's back and shoots a lay-up.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

CUT TO: Paul receives a pass from J.J. and scores on a jump shot.

INT. CLUB - PERFORMANCE STAGE - NIGHT

CUT TO: Mario and his band are in a smoky club playing before a crowd of hooting and hollering teens.

INT. A HIGH SCHOOL - BASKETBALL COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

CUT TO: The coach turns off the video monitor and picks up his clipboard.

The coach draws up 3-2 zones, 1-2-1 zone, and man-to-man and 2-3 zones on the clipboard.

HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COACH  
They've got game. My team's current  
defensive schemes aren't good enough to  
stop that team. Let's see, what if I try  
this?

The coach erases the defensive schemes on the clipboard and  
starts drawing even more elaborate defensive schemes.

INT. SHOPPING CENTER - SUPER STORE - DAY

J.J. walks up to Mr. Jones who is logging sporting goods  
inventory with a scanner.

J.J.  
How's it going dad?

MR. JONES  
OK. It feels different somehow, though  
I'm doing exactly what I did before.

J.J.  
Well, it's for the best as you said many  
times over.

A young man, who has on one of the super store's management  
vests, is walking up to Mr. Jones and J.J.

SUPERVISOR  
Don, did you do IT yet?

MR. JONES  
No.

SUPERVISOR  
Well, get on it.

MR. JONES  
OK, OK.

J.J.  
I've got to go.

J.J. turns his back to Mr. Jones and walks away.

MR. JONES  
I'll see you at home. Remember, we'll be  
gone this weekend.

J.J.

OK, OK.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

Joe sits at the desk staring at an unopened SAT test booklet.

A test moderator, an older conservatively dressed woman, looks over the nearly full room.

TEST MODERATOR

You may now begin the test. Good luck.

Joe opens the booklet to the first page and picks up a sharpened pencil laying on the desk.

JOE

*(muttering)*

Man, don't jinx it. A college basketball scholarship is riding on this test.

Joe starts to fill in the SAT test grid.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - NIGHT

J.J. opens the front door.

It is Martin.

MARTIN

Doing anything tonight?

J.J.

Not a thing.

MARTIN

Where's your mom and dad?

J.J.

They're out of town.

MARTIN

You mean to tell me you have the house to yourself and you're not throwing a party?

J.J.

Uh.

MARTIN

Can I arrange a little get-together to pass the time? I'll make a call to my girl and I'll round up Mario, Joe, and Paul and their girlfriends. Why, you should call Brenda, too. It'll be fun and nothing will happen to the house. Your parents will never know about this, trust me.

J.J.

I'll start getting things ready.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

J.J. gathers cleaning items from the kitchen closet: a water bucket, mop, rubber gloves, plastic bin liners, dustpan, a brush and disinfectant.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

J.J. and Martin move furniture in the living room to create space for a dance floor.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

The area is alive of people talking and dancing.

People keep coming in the front door. Loud music is blaring from the living room's stereo system.

The atmosphere is hazy from people's cigarettes.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE NIGHT

Some people are milling around a garbage can lined with plastic and full of beer and ice.

Other people are filling their cups from kegs of beer.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - UPSTAIRS ROOM - LATE NIGHT

A teen-aged boy on crutches tries to finish a can of beer but the beer is reaching the front of his shirt as often as it does his mouth.

The teen-aged boy gives it one more try before he tosses the can of beer aside and stumbles off.



EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATE NIGHT

People in drunken stupors are wrestling each other.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

People are breaking the room's furniture and lamps.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATE NIGHT

J.J. is walking to Martin who is otherwise occupied talking to someone else.

In the living room Brenda is dancing with a beer in her hand.

MARTIN

I'll be right back.

J.J.

*(yelling)*

Martin, you promised me a quiet get-together.

MARTIN

Quiet down, it's not that bad. Besides, everyone is having a great time. It looks like your girl is having a night to remember.

Martin points to Brenda.

J.J.

Well, you better help me clean up the place after it's all over. And how are we going to get the people out of here? Too many are showing up and it's getting harder to maintain some sort of control.

MARTIN

Leave that to me. I have an idea.

J.J.

*(sarcastically)*

I hate when you say, "I have an idea."

MARTIN

Trust me.

J.J.  
(*sarcastically*)  
I hate when you say that, too.

Martin makes his way out of the room.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - LATE NIGHT

J.J. opens the front door.

It is Bobby and his friends Joey, Andy, Dell and Decker.

BOBBY  
Where is she, J.J.?

J.J.  
Brenda?

BOBBY  
Yeah, Brenda!

J.J. points to Brenda.

J.J.  
She's over there.

J.J. and Bobby are making their way to Brenda in the living room.

Brenda is dancing with reckless abandon.

BRENDA  
(*drunk*)  
Bobby, how're you?

BOBBY  
You'll pay for this, J.J.

J.J.  
What did I do? We're just trying to have a good time.

BOBBY  
A good time? She's drunk. How am I going to explain this to my parents?

J.J.

Come on now. All she's had is a little too much to drink. Don't make it more into than that.

BOBBY

You don't understand.

Bobby begins to take Brenda away.

Sirens can be heard in the distance.

Someone in the crowd is yelling, "5-0, 5-0."

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - FRONT YARD - LATE NIGHT

A police car with flashing lights is pulling up in front of the house.

People are exiting from the front door and running away from the house.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - MORNING

Bobby wakes up Brenda.

BRENDA

You...what're you doing in my room? My head hurts. I need aspirin.

BOBBY

He's not a good person at all, not responsible at all. It's only a matter of time before he messes up.

BRENDA

Go away and leave me alone.

BOBBY

Too bad. I want to point out the facts about J.J.

BRENDA

He's still a good person. You'll see.

BOBBY

And what if he's not a good person? What if he does something the law can't overlook? What if he has already done something the law can't overlook?

BRENDA

I hope he goads you into an insane act born of desperation that could lead to jail time for you, too.

BOBBY

That'll be the day. J.J.'s going down on his own and I've no intention of going down with him.

BRENDA

We'll see.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Lee are unloading the dishwasher.

MRS. LEE

Did you hear what happened to Brenda last night? I don't know what to do.

MR. LEE

I think it's time we meet the boy's mother and father.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Mr. Lee performs Tai Chi.

Brenda enters the room.

BRENDA

You wanted to talk to me? Can I do Tai Chi with you?

MR. LEE

No Tai Chi for you tonight. I want you to call J.J. and tell him we want to have him and his parents over for dinner.

Brenda turns and runs out of the room on the verge of tears.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

The dining room table is littered with the remnants of a meal.

Mr. Lee, Mrs. Lee, Mr. Jones and Mrs. Jones are seated around the table.

MR. LEE

Let's move to the family room. We want to talk to you about an important matter.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The couples sit on the room's couches and chairs.

MR. LEE

We only want what's best for our children.

MRS. LEE

They have a budding friendship that could become more. Do you think they will become more than just friends?

MR. JONES

No. I mean they're teenagers. Did we know what we wanted from life when we were their ages?

MRS. JONES

The whole thing could collapse next week and we'll be there to pick up the pieces.

MR. JONES

I know what's that like.

MRS. LEE

I hope you're right. If not, we're prepared to take more drastic action.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BOBBY'S ROOM - NIGHT

The well kept, clean room is filled with motorcycle equipment, posters, and athletic trophies of all kinds,

academic books and awards, desks, chairs, a full-size bed and bookshelves.

J.J. and Bobby look over the room.

J.J. picks up a motorcycle helmet on the desk and examines it.

J.J.

Why am I here?

J.J. puts the helmet back on the desk.

BOBBY

The only thing we have in common is our interest in motorcycles. We can use our interest in the machines to overcome our dislike of each other.

J.J.

It's a start. You know, I still want to be your friend. I'd settle for someone who'll respect my relationship with your sister.

BOBBY

We'll see.

EXT. SMITHS' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

J.J. and Martin are looking over J.J.'s motorcycle.

J.J.

It could use a tune up or something.

MARTIN

The engine sounded fine to me.

J.J.

I need more power from the engine.

MARTIN

Something tells me you've challenged Bobby to a race.

J.J.

Well...

MARTIN

Your bike needs more than a tune up.

J.J.

Yeah, Bobby's bike is something else.

MARTIN

Aren't you going to give me a hand?

J.J. and Martin start loosening the motorcycle's engine's mounts.

INT. COLLEGE SPORTS ARENA - COLLEGE GAME - DAY

J.J. Martin, Joe, Mario and Paul are watching the action on the basketball court.

J.J.

*(yelling)*

Did you see the move that guy over there made on his defender?

MARIO

Yeah, it was an all-world move only the best pros do in desperate situations and he did it.

MARTIN

What will it take to land a college basketball scholarship?

PAUL

Practice and attending the right summer basketball camps with every intention of impressing the college coaches and their scouts who show up.

JOE

Good SAT scores.

MARIO

SAT scores? You wait and see. By the end of the season I'll have so many offers I'll have a hard time choosing where to play college ball.

J.J.

Yeah, right.

The college teams' players continue to make fantastic moves on the basketball court.

The five teens are looking on in awe.

INT. COLLEGE SPORTS ARENA - COLLEGE GAME - LATER IN THE DAY

J.J. looks at his watch.

J.J. gets up from his seat in the arena.

J.J.

I've got to go back to town.

MARTIN

What're you going to do?

J.J.

I'm going motorcycling with Bobby.

MARTIN

It's today?

J.J.

Yeah.

PAUL

Good luck and take it easy. We're playing Upton tomorrow, right?

J.J.

Thanks.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

J.J. and Bobby ride their motorcycles on a deserted country road.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Bobby signals J.J. to stop by raising his hand.

J.J. and Bobby bring their motorcycles to a halt.

BOBBY

Let's play a game of follow the leader.

J.J.

OK.



BOBBY

See if you can keep up with me.

J.J. and Bobby rev their motorcycles' engines and ride off.

EXT. TWISTING COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

The two ride furiously on the twisting road.

J.J. accelerates his motorcycle past Bobby.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

J.J. sees four cars up ahead traveling on his side of the road.

J.J.

See if you can keep up with me, Bobby.

J.J. approaches the first car.

J.J. pushes the motorcycle into the oncoming lane and as soon as he clears the car he dives back into his lane of travel, cutting the car off.

The second car is just ahead.

J.J. tailgates up to the car's bumper and then pushes the motorcycle to the road's shoulder.

J.J. passes the car and then looks back and waves to the surprised driver.

The third and fourth cars are way ahead of J.J.

J.J. pops a wheelie and opens the motorcycle's throttle.

The motorcycle surges ahead.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

J.J. sees one car pull out into the oncoming lane.

The car is making a pass.

J.J. sees an opening developing.

J.J. steers the motorcycle into the oncoming lane and then back into his lane of travel to also pass the car.

J.J. darts the motorcycle into the oncoming lane to make the final pass.

A semi is moving in that lane.

J.J. approaches the semi head on.

J.J. makes his move when the semi is within 500 feet of him.

J.J. pops a wheelie and darts the motorcycle back into his own lane of travel.

J.J. cuts off the car directly behind him.

The driver honks the car's horn.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

Bobby weaves through the traffic and closes in on J.J.

EXT. RAILROAD CROSSING - DAY

A train lurches toward a railroad crossing.

EXT. COUNTRY ROAD - DAY

J.J. looks back and sees Bobby in the distance.

J.J. then looks ahead and sees the closing railway-crossing gate.

J.J. opens the motorcycle's throttle to wide open and sneaks under the railway-crossing gate.

Bobby backs off and slows his motorcycle to a halt.

J.J. looks back and sees that the train is blocking Bobby's attempt to catch him.

J.J. turns his head in time to see a police car approaching him at a perpendicular angle.

J.J. opens the throttle on the motorcycle.

The police car changes direction to pursue J.J.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DUSK

Brenda exits the Ford Mustang and approaches J.J.

J.J., dribbling a basketball, turns around to face Brenda.

BRENDA

You don't have to do this J.J. I know everything. Don't play against Bobby and his team tomorrow. Please turn yourself in. Don't make it worse by trying to avoid the police. You didn't do anything criminal.

J.J.

Don't you see Brenda? I have to do this more than ever now that you know everything. We come from different worlds, you and me.

BRENDA

I don't understand.

J.J.

Say, I didn't get in trouble with anyone and had an uneventful high school career, didn't play sports. Would you go out with me, would you acknowledge me in the school's hallways, around town?

BRENDA

I don't know.

J.J.

I want people to recognize me, to know that's a person who's going to make it in this world. Being a part of the basketball team means the world to me.

BRENDA

You're smart enough to rise above the obstacles presented to you and reach your goals.

Brenda, back turned to J.J., walks back to the Ford Mustang.

Brenda is crying.

J.J.

His life is already planned out and yours, too. You two are going to college for training in professional careers. All I'll ever be is in jail or stuck forever in this town. I've got nothing to look forward to in life.

BRENDA

Yes, you do. You have to see that what you're doing is going to lead you into a situation you can't overcome.

J.J.

Don't you see, I need to know at least for one brief shining moment I was better than Bobby Lee and I want you and everyone in our high school and his high school to remember I was. I want them to remember that...not what I've just done.

J.J. continues dribbling the basketball.

Brenda gets in the Ford Mustang and drives off.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brenda lies on the bed in the dark room.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - OUTSIDE BRENDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Lee stands outside the locked door.

MRS. LEE

You can't stay in there forever. You'll have to come out eventually.

BRENDA (O.S.)

Go away.

MRS. LEE

I'm coming in.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Brenda opens the door and Mrs. Lee enters the room.

BRENDA

It hurts so much.

Brenda begins to cry.

MRS. LEE

There'll be many more boys you think you're in love with before you'll find someone you truly love. There, there, let it all out.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - J.J.'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

J.J. lies on the bed in the dark room.

J.J.

I blew it.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The game clock is showing 30 seconds left in the half.

Martin, tongue wagging and face contorting, picks up the basketball and inbounds to Joe, who has a scowl on his face.

Joe passes J.J. the basketball.

J.J. shoots a jump shot and then twists his body as if he is willing the basketball into the basket.

The basketball cuts through the basket.

J.J. points to Joe.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - STANDS - NIGHT

High in the stands, amid the teeming crowd sits Mr. and Mrs. Jones.

The couple loudly urges the basketball team to victory.

MRS. JONES

I taught him how to do that.

MAN

Sure you did.

MRS. JONES

I did, I really did.

MR. JONES

Calm down, honey. You're causing a scene.

MRS. JONES

I'm so proud of him.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

The referee blows his whistle to signal the end of the half.

The schools' cheerleaders come on to the basketball court to perform halftime routines and the schools' bands play the schools' fight songs.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - STANDS - NIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Jones get up from their seats.

Brenda is noticeably absent from her usual seat in the stands surrounding the basketball court.

MR. JONES

Well, it's end of the half and they're down 10 but that could change in a hurry. Let's get something to drink.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones are getting up from their seats.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

It is late in the game. The game clock ticks past 30 seconds to go.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - STANDS - NIGHT

The crowd is cheering.

Some in the crowd are yelling including Mrs. Jones.

MRS. JONES

*(yelling)*

Come on ref, that was a foul. My grandmother has better eyes than you do.

MR. JONES

I've created a monster.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Mr. Ireland, dressed in a rumpled shirt, pants and tie, signals the play.

The scoreboard shows the game between Norforce High School and Upton is tied 60-60.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - STANDS - NIGHT

MRS. JONES

Come on, Martin. Pass it to J.J.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

J.J. receives a pass from Martin.

Bobby switches off to guard J.J.

J.J. beats Bobby off the dribble and scores on a lay-up.

The scoreboard shows Norforce High School leading 62-60.

The game clock ticks down to a few seconds to go.

Bobby stops at the three-point line, after receiving the basketball on the fly, and fires off a shot.

Bobby's body language reveals he is confident the basketball is going to go into the basket.

The crowd is gasping.

The shot hits the side of the basket's rim.

Bobby turns to his team, disgusted with himself for missing the shot.

The referee blows his whistle to signal the end of the game.

At the same time as the game is ending two POLICE OFFICERS are stepping onto the court and walking toward J.J.

POLICE OFFICER

J.J., you're under arrest.

J.J. tries to run but the other POLICE OFFICER blocks his escape.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - STANDS - NIGHT

MR. JONES

Why are those police officers harassing my son?

MRS. JONES

Come on, he needs us.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones make their way through the throng of people exiting the stands.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Mr. Ireland, Martin, Joe, Mario and Paul turn around and walk back toward J.J. and the police officers.

MR. IRELAND

What's this all about?

MARTIN

Yeah, what did J.J. do?

POLICE OFFICER

J.J., where're your parents?

J.J.

*(pointing)*

Over there.

The police officers turn their heads.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones are approaching the group.

MR. JONES

What did he do, officer?

POLICE OFFICER

We'd better let him explain it to you.

J.J.

I'll tell you at the police station.

MRS. JONES

J.J., we're here for you and we'll help you in finding legal assistance. We'll get through this together.

One of the police officers takes out his handcuffs.

J.J.

No handcuffs. I don't want anyone to see me leave that way.

POLICE OFFICER

OK, no handcuffs.

J.J. and the two police officers leave the gym.

Mr. and Mrs. Jones follow J.J. and the police officers.



INT. CHOP'S - BOOTH - DAY

J.J., Martin, Joe, Mario and Paul and Paul sit in a booth in Chop's and drink sodas.

"On the Waterfront" plays on one of the televisions in Chop's.

J.J. looks at the television and begins to mouth Marlon Brando's dialogue in the taxicab scene.

INT. CHOP'S - TELEVISION SCREEN - DAY

TERRY

You was my brother, Charley. You should've looked out for me a little bit. You should've taken care of me - just a little bit - so I wouldn't have to take them dives for short-end money.

CHARLEY

I had some bets on you. You saw the money.

TERRY

*(yelling)*

You don't understand! I could've had class. I could've been a contender. I could've been somebody, instead of a bum, which is what I am. Let's fact it (beat)...It was you, Charley.

CHARLEY

OK, OK, I'll tell him I couldn't find you. Ten to one he wouldn't believe me.

Charley hands Terry a gun for protection.

CHARLEY

Here, take this, you're going to need it.

After Terry jumps out of the taxi, the driver takes Charley, not to the Garden, but to a River Street garage, where Truck, Friendly and others are glimpsed.

INT. CHOP'S - BOOTH - DAY

J.J. looks away from the television after the movie's scene ends.

Martin, Joe, Mario and Paul are staring at him.

J.J.

Look, my hearing's next Monday. It's only a week from now. Once that's over with we'll get on with the season.

MARTIN

We could've been contenders too, if it wasn't for you. You screwed up all of our dreams when you acted all macho and heroic like the characters in your favorite movies. You know what, the movies are dumb!

J.J.

Man, I don't have to take this.

J.J. gets up from the booth and walks out of Chop's.

MARTIN

We don't need him. We've got each other.

The foursome take sips from their sodas.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - J.J.'S ROOM - DAY

J.J., a cloth bag slung on his shoulder, turns down a picture of Brenda on the nightstand and then walks out of the room.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Jones exit the house and runs to J.J.

J.J., seeing his parents coming to him, stops the motorcycle's engine start up procedure.

MR. JONES

Where're you going, J.J.!?

J.J.

I don't know. I want to be anywhere but here right now. I need to get away from here.

MR. JONES

You're throwing your future away, why?

J.J.

You don't understand, dad. Nobody understands who I am and what I've done.

MR. JONES

I may not know everything but I do know I can't...can't stand by and watch my son throw his future away. You have such promise. You could make something of yourself.

J.J.

I'll be back, trust me. You have to trust me in this.

MR. JONES

Will you be back in time for your hearing?

J.J.

Yeah.

J.J. rides off on his motorcycle.

MRS. JONES

J.J.! Don, what're you doing?

MR. JONES

Let him go, let him go. He's entering a dangerous time in his life and we can't help him this time.

MRS. JONES

We need to go after him. We can let him..

MR. JONES

We can't do anything for him. He'll only let us help him when he decides. We can't make that decision for him.

MRS. JONES

And what if he doesn't come back?

MR. JONES

We'll cross that bridge together.

GREENS' HOUSE - MAILBOX - DUSK

Joe peers inside an empty mailbox outside of a single-story wood-framed house.

JOE

Where're those test scores? First J.J. messes up our hoop dreams and now this. J.J., I'm not going to let you destroy my dreams.

EXT. CITY STREETS, RURAL ROADS, INTERSTATE - DUSK

J.J. rides the motorcycle on city streets.

Soon, the city streets turn into rural roads.

J.J. rides past the sign marking the end of city limits.

As the miles pass the twisting, turning, rising and dipping roads turn into interstate highways.

J.J. moves the motorcycle in and out of interstate traffic, passing vehicles right and left.

INT. LOPEZES' HOUSE - MARIO'S ROOM - DUSK

Mario is writing notes on sheet music on a baby grand piano in the middle of the room filled with musical instruments, sound systems and racks of CD's and records.

MARIO

J.J., wherever you are, this one is for you.

Mario begins to play the piano and sing the song.

EXT. INTERSTATE - DUSK

J.J., miles away at the instant Mario is singing, is passing a sign that reads, "Welcome to Indiana."

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Brenda, laying on the bed, looks at the sketch J.J. made of her.

Music plays in the background.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S BEDROOM - DAY

Brenda sighs and then crushes up the sketch before throwing it on the floor.

Suddenly, there is a knock at the door.

BRENDA

Who is it!?

JEN (O.S.)

Jen.

BRENDA

Go away.

JEN (O.S.)

Let me in. You can't hide in there forever.

BRENDA

OK, I'm coming. I'm coming.

Brenda gets off the bed and opens the door.

Jen enters the room.

JEN

I'm worried about you. Is everything OK?

BRENDA

I feel like I'm standing at the edge of a cliff and staring into a deep, dark abyss. I feel like I'm at the edge ready to fall over and disappear forever.

Jen picks up the crumpled sketch from the floor, unravels it and then looks at it.

JEN

I'll get better.

BRENDA

When?

JEN

Maybe not today or tomorrow but someday it will get better.

BRENDA

When?

JEN

Honestly, Brenda, you're going to have to decide if you want J.J. to be a part of your life. If he's not going to be a part of your life, you're going to have to find a way to move on.

BRENDA

I can't make up my mind.

JEN

I'll be here supporting you all the way. That's what friends do but ultimately, you're the one that has to make that decision. Well, you better do it quick. This is tearing you up inside.

Jen points at the sketch before placing it on the desk.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Lee enters the room.

Brenda is laying on the bed, staring at the ceiling and listening to music.

MRS. LEE

Your father is doing Tai Chi downstairs and you should join him.

BRENDA

Uh.

MRS. LEE

He's worried for you and wants to help.

BRENDA

He's always had plenty of advice for me in the past.

MRS. LEE

I know you're still thinking about J.J. In my day I had plenty of boyfriends. I was interested in one in particular but we never pursued it seriously. Then I met your father.

BRENDA

You never told me this before.

MRS. LEE

It was years later I met up with the person whom I thought I was interested in and wondered what I ever saw in him. You'll have boyfriends in your life and some may be good and others may not but you only have one father, don't destroy the relationship with silence.

BRENDA

Well, if I'm going to do Tai Chi tonight I'll have to get changed. Out! Out of my room, please.

Mrs. Lee walks out of the room just as Brenda opens the drawers to pull out her workout clothes.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Mr. Lee is leading Brenda in Tai Chi.

MR. LEE

In Taoism there is the concept of the Ying and the Yang. One has to keep mental emptiness and mental activity in balance, the Ying and the Yang in balance, to achieve a state of emptiness. Meditation will help you bring your Yang and Ying back into balance and Tai Chi helps with meditation.

BRENDA

Yes, I understand.

MR. LEE

Meditation will help you overcome the anguish and sadness that is in your heart. Let's do some more.

Brenda stops the Tai Chi exercise.

BRENDA

It's not the same anymore. I'll be in my room if you need me.

Mr. Lee resumes the Tai Chi exercise just as Brenda leaves the room.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brenda is laying on her bed and staring at the ceiling.

Music plays in the background.

There is a knock at the door.

BRENDA

Who is it!?

BOBBY (O.S.)

It's me. We need to talk.

BRENDA

OK.

Bobby walks into the room.

BRENDA

What do you want!?

BOBBY

I want to see how you're doing.

BRENDA

I'm fine.

BOBBY

You don't have to attack me.

BRENDA

I'm not fine if you really must know.  
I'm having trouble understanding why you  
would do such a thing to me. I hold you  
partly responsible for what happened.  
Why Bobby, why?

BOBBY

Someday you'll understand. Will you ever  
forgive me?

BRENDA

It's going to take time.



INT. JONESES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mr. Jones leafs through the pages of his college yearbook.

Mr. Jones stops at a picture of the basketball team.

MR. JONES

What have you done, J.J.?

Mrs. Jones enters the room.

MRS. JONES

What're you looking at?

MR. JONES

I'm looking at my old yearbook and thinking about my college basketball team. All those years ago and look at where my life is now. It didn't turn out as I expected.

MRS. JONES

Look, we've done the best we could possibly do.

MR. JONES

Did we really? J.J. wanted to play college basketball so bad. He wanted to be just like me. It didn't quite turnout that way.

MRS. JONES

Wondering if he'll come back?

MR. JONES

I don't know if we made the right decision and I feel so helpless.

Suddenly, the front door's doorbell rings.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - FRONT DOOR - DAY

Mr. Lee is at the door.

MRS. JONES

Come in.

MR. LEE

Is Mr. Jones in the house?

Mr. Jones comes to the front door.

MR. LEE

Can we talk?

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mr. Jones and Mr. Lee sit in chairs across from each other.

MR. LEE

It's about my daughter. She's not doing well.

MR. JONES

I imagine she must be feeling awful right now.

MR. LEE

She doesn't talk to us anymore. She spends all her time in her room. She only comes out to eat. I don't know what to do anymore.

MR. JONES

May I speak honestly?

MR. LEE

Yes.

MR. JONES

They persisted in their relationship despite you and your wife's doubts about everything and now she feels isolated.

MR. LEE

You may be right. My wife and me only want the best for our children but this has only led to disaster for two families.

MR. JONES

We can only do so much as parents. We have to learn how to let go so they can be free to make their own decisions, good or bad.

MR. LEE

Interesting.

INT. CHOP'S - BOOTH - DAY

Martin, Joe, Mario and Paul look over the remains of a meal of hamburgers, fries and sodas.

MARTIN

It's awful quiet at this table.

PAUL

Everyone's thinking about J.J.

MARTIN

You had to bring that up, why?

JOE

We can't help it.

MARTIN

Yeah, I know. But we have to move on. We've got to be thinking about school and the basketball team and family and friends, not about J.J.

MARIO

Funny how it's only after someone is gone before you realize how much he means to you. Do you think we'll see him again?

MARTIN

It's hard to say. I hope so.

EXT. SMITHS' DRIVEWAY - DAY

Martin's red 1971 Pontiac Trans Am screeches to a halt in a cloud of tire smoke.

A middle-aged man comes outside to greet Martin.

MAN

Do you want to talk about it?

MARTIN

Yeah, dad. It's either that or pretty soon I wouldn't have a Trans Am.

MAN

Let's go inside. I'll fix you your favorite meal.

Martin exits the car and walks into the house with the man.

JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mrs. Jones puts down the phone's handset.

Mr. Jones is in another part of the kitchen.

MRS. JONES

Don, I've called everyone I could think of in town and all around but I couldn't locate J.J. We haven't heard from him in a week and I'm getting worried he has run far away.

MR. JONES

He'll tell us where he is, just give him some time for him to sort through his troubles. I know you want him to be surrounded by family and friends as he thinks this through but he wants to do this himself. Be thankful we raised a good person deep down inside. Well, I've got to now. I have an appointment with Mr. Packard.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Mr. Jones drives past the former Joneses' Sports storefront.

The signs on the building's boarded up windows read "For Rent."

EXT. CITY BARBERSHOP - DAY

Mr. Jones wheels the car into a parking space outside the barbershop.

INT. CITY BARBERSHOP - DAY

Mr. Packard begins to cut Mr. Jones's hair.

MR. JONES

Thanks for seeing me on such short notice.

MR. PACKARD

I suspect a lot more is on your mind that a haircut.

MR. JONES

You heard, haven't you?

MR. PACKARD

Yeah. Any news?

MR. JONES

He said he'd be back in time for the hearing.

MR. PACKARD

You don't sound too sure of yourself.

MR. JONES

You know I drove past my old storefront on the way in and saw the "For Rent" signs. My former landlord didn't waste anytime putting up those signs.

MR. PACKARD

It's just a business decision and besides life goes on, right?

MR. JONES

That's the problem. If I had a way to turn back the clock, I would. I keep going over the events in my mind and I now know what I would have said to my son to prevent him from....

MR. PACKARD

From what, Don?

MR. JONES

What're you trying to say?

MR. PACKARD

Time's arrow only points in one direction and that is toward the future. You're going to have to let go of the past to move forward.

MR. JONES

You're right. I was too concerned with trying to keep my business going and I didn't realize what was happening in J.J.'s life but now I'll have to deal with it. I'll be sure to be there for him in the future.

MR. PACKARD

That's the old Don I remember. Well, I'm done now.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - FAMILY ROOM - MORNING

Mrs. Jones nervously vacuums the family room when suddenly the vacuum's belt breaks apart in a puff of white smoke.

MRS. JONES

Darn vacuum belt. It always breaks at the most inopportune moments.

Suddenly, Mrs. Jones hears a phone ringing over the din of the vacuum.

Mrs. Jones turns off the vacuum and leaves the room.

INT. MR. and MRS. NATHANSON'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

J.J. and Mr. Nathanson, a middle-aged man wearing jeans overalls, nosily eat a breakfast of bacon, scramble eggs and toast at the kitchen table.

Mrs. Nathanson, a middle-aged woman wearing a colorful dress, talks on the phone.

MRS. NATHANSON

Hi Dolores, it's Carol. I'm calling about J.J. He showed up at our house last night.

MRS. JONES

I'm glad he's ok.

MRS. NATHANSON

He really hasn't told us why he is here. Other than that he's doing fine. He certainly has an appetite.

Mrs. Nathanson puts down the phone and coming to the kitchen table.

MR. NATHANSON

J.J., do you have any plans for today?

J.J.

No. Uncle Sean, I really don't want to do anything today.

MR. NATHANSON

I know you don't want to tell us what's happened. Could you tell someone else?

MRS. NATHANSON

Would you be willing to talk to our pastor today and then come to church with us tomorrow.

J.J.

Aunt Carol, is it confidential?

MRS. NATHANSON

Yes. Great. I'll call Rev. Cline right away. By the way, we'll find something for you to wear to church.

INT. CHURCH - MORNING

The congregation sits in the pews in rapt attention.

REV. CLINE

Yesterday I had a chance to talk to a young man who is at the crossroads of his life. He started the fall as a young man who had a girlfriend and a starting position on the varsity basketball team. Things turned for the worse and now he is not a member of the basketball team and his girlfriend wishes she never met him. If Jesus has taught us anything, it's that we must be able to recognize our sins and atone for them. Jesus sacrificed his life to atone for our misdeeds but that is not enough. Each and every one of us is accountable for our sins, our misdeeds. Not to the Lord, our Savior, but to the people who have been hurt by us. And I know each and everyone of us, including me, have done some things that are questionable according to the teachings of the Bible. We must recognize our misdeeds and seek forgiveness from those we have hurt.

CONGREGATION

*(in unison)*

Amen.

REV. CLINE

Let us pray that this young man will return to the people he has hurt and seek forgiveness from them. Let us pray he that he chooses to find, again, the path in life he was traveling just a short time ago.

CONGREGATION

*(in unison)*

Amen.

REV. CLINE

Turn to page 100 in our hymnal so that we may sing a song of encouragement for this young man.

The worship hall is soon full of joyful music.

INT. CHURCH - OUTSIDE THE WORSHIP HALL - MORNING

The congregation files out of the worship hall.

Rev. Cline greets those passing out of the church's front entrance.

Rev. Cline pauses when he comes to J.J. and Mr. and Mrs. Nathanson.

REV. CLINE

God will forgive you for what you have done or will do in life. Can you ever forgive yourself?

J.J.

I...I don't know.

REV. CLINE

You must, J.J., you must.

EXT. MR. and MRS. NATHANSON'S HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Nathanson stand in the way of J.J, who is trying to leave on his motorcycle. A cloth bag is tied to back of the motorcycle.

J.J.

Get out of my way.



MR. NATHANSON

Where do you think you're going?

J.J.

I don't know and I don't care.

MRS. NATHANSON

Did you listen to what Rev. Cline was trying to tell you?

J.J.

He just helped me see what I need to do.

MR. NATHANSON

It's the wrong decision, J.J. Don't let your self-doubt and your grief and your anger destroy you. There's still hope but you have to stop running. You can run and run and run but the feelings inside you will still be with you.

J.J.

Get out of my way.

Mr. and Mrs. Nathanson step aside and J.J. rides away.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

J.J. rides the motorcycle through town.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

J.J. stops the motorcycle before a sign. The sign indicates two possible outcomes. One path will lead him away from the town he is in and farther from his hometown. The other path will lead him back to his hometown.

All of a sudden J.J. hears police and fire sirens coming from the basketball courts across the street.

EXT. - BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

J.J. rides the motorcycle to within earshot range of the scene developing on the basketball courts. A man watching the scene backs into J.J.'s motorcycle.

MAN

Watch it, kid.

J.J.

Sorry.

EXT. - BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

A late model Chevy sedan pulls up to the basketball courts.

JACK LANCING, dressed in a suit and tie, exits the car and makes his way to the crime scene.

EXT. - BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Jack grabs the arm of a policeman whose walkie-talkie is crackling with instructions from the dispatcher.

MR. LANCING

What do we have here?

POLICE OFFICER

It's a drive-by shooting, Detective Lancing. It happened about 15 minutes ago.

MR. LANCING

Don't see many around here.

POLICE OFFICER

Times are changing, detective.

MR. LANCING

What's his name?

POLICE OFFICER

Harmon Kar, he's just a kid according to the ID we found on him.

MR. LANCING

Where have I heard the name before?

POLICE OFFICER

He played high school ball.

MR. LANCING

Where's the body?

POLICE OFFICER

It's being loaded into the coroner's van.

EXT. OUTSIDE BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

J.J. gets off the motorcycle and makes his way through the crowd watching the scene.

The basketball court is ringed with a chain-link fence.

J.J. places his hands on the chain-link fence and leans forward. J.J. is so close to the fence his nose is almost touching the links.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

Mr. Lancing grabs the arm of SCOTT WIN, who is at the front of the gurney.

Mr. Win, dressed in a white lap coat and smoking a cigar, halts the process of loading the body into the county coroner's van.

MR. LANCING

What do we have Scott?

MR. WIN

He's a 21-year-old male, 6-5, and approximately 200 pounds. He has multiple gun shot wounds to the torso.

Mr. Lancing lifts the sheet covering the body.

MR. LANCING

What a mess.

MR. WIN

I'll tell you more as soon as I do the autopsy.

Mr. Win and his ASSISTANTS complete loading the body into the van as Mr. Lancing and the policemen at the scene look on.

The van drives off as the police officers at the scene gather around Mr. Lancing.

MR. LANCING

I want every shred of evidence of the shooting bagged and tagged and detailed interviews with people in the area. I want to know who did this to the boy.

EXT. OUTSIDE BASKETBALL COURTS - DAY

J.J.

That could easily be me someday if  
I....I keep running.

J.J. makes his way through the crowd to return back to the motorcycle.

EXT. CITY STREETS - DAY

J.J. turns the motorcycle onto the path that will lead him home.

EXT. RURAL ROAD - NIGHT

It is raining as J.J. rides the motorcycle past a sign marking the beginning of city limits.

EXT. JONESES' HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Mr. Jones answers the door and finds J.J. standing before him.

J.J., soaking wet, and Mr. Jones hug.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - FRONT HALLWAY - NIGHT

Mr. and Mrs. Jones watch J.J., dripping wet, wipe off his helmet and put it into a closet.

MR. JONES

J.J.? Have you decided?

J.J.

Yeah.

MRS. JONES

He's all wet. He should get a shower first before he talks to you.

J.J.

Seems like old times.

MR. JONES

I wish I could say that.

J.J.

I want to do something before the hearing. Will you help me?

MR. JONES

I know what you're thinking.

J.J.

There's enough time.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - J.J.'s BEDROOM - NIGHT

J.J. takes a piece of paper from his desk and puts it in his pocket.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - UPSTAIRS - HALLWAY PHONE - NIGHT

J.J. dials the numbers on the piece of paper and then stops.

J.J. puts the phone down.

J.J.

What am I doing?

J.J. again picks up the phone and dials the numbers on the piece of paper.

J.J.

It's ringing.

MRS. LEE (O.S.)

Hello.

J.J.

This is J.J., I mean James. I'd like to speak to Brenda.

MRS. LEE (O.S.)

James, I thought you were in jail.

J.J.

No, No.

MRS. LEE (O.S.)

All right, James. I'll tell her that you called.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mrs. Jones reads a book.

Mr. Jones sits beside her.

MR. JONES

I didn't think he'd come back.

Mrs. Jones puts down the book.

MRS. JONES

What's going to happen to him?

MR. JONES

He faces numerous moving violations but it's his first offense. I don't think the law will come down too hard on him.

MRS. JONES

I'm more worried that he wouldn't be able to put the past behind him.

MR. JONES

He'll be able to put this behind him. It will take time, though.

MRS. JONES

But first he'll have to get over Brenda. He's going to have to let her go.

MR. JONES

He's seeing her tomorrow. That's the first step in the process, I think.

MRS. JONES

I hope you're right.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - BRENDA'S ROOM - NIGHT

Brenda and Jen are sitting on the bed.

Music is playing in the background.

BRENDA

He wants to see me tomorrow.

JEN

J.J.?

BRENDA

He wants to see me before he does what he should have done all along.

JEN

Do you want to see him?

BRENDA

I don't know what I'm going to do.

JEN

Honestly, do you still have feelings for him?

BRENDA

You can't let those kinds of feelings just go because the person you care about has done something hurtful.

JEN

Then see him.

BRENDA

And what if I did. Would you think that was the wrong thing to do?

JEN

I'll support you regardless if you decide to see him or not. The question is, what do you want to do?

Brenda and Jen turn their heads.

The door to the room is opening. Bobby is standing at the door.

JEN

Call me if you want to talk further.

Jen leaves the room.

BOBBY

I couldn't help overhearing. You love him, don't you?

BRENDA

Yeah.

BOBBY

I know I can't make it up to you for the past but I see now that I was wrong.

BRENDA

What should I do?

BOBBY

Have you ever told him that you love him? Has he ever said he loves you to you?

BRENDA

No and yes to answer your question.

BOBBY

Whatever happens, tell him how you feel. He deserves to know.

Bobby leaves the room.

Brenda flops down on the bed.

BRENDA

What am I going to do?

INT. LEES' HOUSE - LIBRARY - NIGHT

Mr. Lee and Brenda ready themselves to start Tai Chi.

BRENDA

I'm ready.

MR. LEE

You lead this time. Show me what you've learned.

BRENDA

All right. Let's start in the beginning position.

Mr. Lee and Brenda smile at each other.

INT. JONESES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DINING AREA - MORNING

Mr. Jones enters the room.

J.J. is at the table eating cereal.

MR. JONES

It's time.

J.J.

Yeah. Let's get this over with.



MR. JONES

Look, we don't need to be in court until 1 p.m. so there'll be plenty of time to say whatever you want to say to your friends and Brenda, too.

J.J.

Brenda's supposed to meet me in the park.

MR. JONES

OK then, let's go.

J.J. grabs his jacket hanging on a hook in the kitchen and follows Mr. Jones out the door.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL - GUIDANCE OFFICE - MORNING

Joe enters the office.

Ms. Neumann sits at the desk and Mr. Ireland, dressed in a ruffled, shirt, pants and tie, stands next to her.

JOE

You wanted to see me?

MR. IRELAND

Ms. Neumann has something to say to you.

JOE

If it's bad news, I can take any of that right now.

MR. IRELAND

It's not bad news.

MS. NEUMANN

Joe, it's about your test scores.

JOE

Is it bad?

MS. NEUMANN

No, it's good news for a change.

JOE

I'm going to state? I'm going to state?

MR. IRELAND

If you want we can call the team's coach right now and make a verbal commitment.

JOE

Call him up.

INT. NORFORCE HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Joe, with a scowl on his face, is inbounding the basketball to Martin.

Martin, tongue wagging and face contorting, faces a double-team of Mario and Paul.

Martin shoots a fade-away jump shot.

MARTIN

I'm feeling it.

Mario inboundes the basketball to Paul.

Paul dribbles past Martin and executes a reverse lay-up over Joe.

PAUL

What about that move?

Joe, with a scowl on his face, inboundes the basketball to Martin, tongue wagging and face contorting.

Martin dribbles into the lane.

Mario and Paul try to cut off the path to the basket.

Martin twists his body into a 180-degree spin and then passes the basketball when he comes into to view of Joe standing at the free throw line.

Joe, with a scowl on his face, dribbles into the lane and unleashes a monster dunk.

JOE

Who's your daddy now?

Mario inboundes the basketball to Paul.

Paul launches a jump shot.

It grazes the rim.

Mario rebounds the basketball and tries to dunk it.

Joe rejects Mario's attempt.

The basketball goes flying off to the other side of the gym.

JOE

Get that junk out of there!

J.J. emerges out of the shadows and picks up the basketball.

J.J.

I hear the team's playing Upton in the first round of the playoffs.

J.J. tosses the basketball back to Martin and then starts walking over to his former teammates.

MARTIN

I thought your hearing is today?

J.J.

Yeah.

MARTIN

You know, it's our coach's decision to place you back on the team.

J.J.

Joe, I was watching you play. Your game as evolved.

JOE

*(out of breath)*

I'm...

J.J.

What?

JOE

State is offering me a scholarship.

J.J.

I didn't know. Well, you'll do fine at state. I'm sure of it.

Mr. Ireland, dressed in a rumpled shirt, pants and tie, walks onto the basketball court.

MR. IRELAND

J.J., get out of my gym. Out right now or I'll have you removed by force.

MARTIN

Don't do that coach. I think he can help us win the game.

MR. IRELAND

J.J. I can't put you back on the team this year but I'll give you a fair shot next year.

J.J.

Don't fret over it coach. I just wanted to make sure everything is cool with my teammates, with my friends.

J.J. runs off the basketball court and out of the gym.

MR. IRELAND

OK, practice is in 20 minutes.

Mr. Ireland walks out of the gym.

Martin, Joe, Mario and Paul resume their basketball game.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Brenda opens the door, about ready to leave the house.

MRS. LEE

Going so soon?

BRENDA

I've got to go. I'm going to be late.

MRS. LEE

Give me a hug.

Brenda and Mrs. Lee hug just as Mr. Lee and Bobby enter the room.

BOBBY

Brenda!

BRENDA

Everyone's treating this as if I'm going to my own funeral.

Brenda opens the door and leaves.

INT. LEES' HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Mr. and Mrs. Lee and Bobby hear Brenda fire up the Ford Mustang's engine and open the door.

INT. BRENDA'S CAR - DAY

Brenda, from her point of view, sees her parents and Bobby wave to her as she pulls the Ford Mustang out of the driveway.

INT. BRENDA'S CAR - DAY

A song starts to play on the radio. It is a song J.J. and Brenda danced to at homecoming.

Brenda's eyes begin to tear up and the Ford Mustang start to slow down.

The driver of the car behind Brenda beeps the car's horn.

INT./EXT. BRENDA'S CAR - DAY

Brenda pulls the Ford Mustang to the side of the road.

Brenda turns off the radio and looks in the mirror as she dries her eyes.

BRENDA

I can do this.

Brenda tosses the tissue paper aside and pulls the Ford Mustang back into traffic.

INT. MR. JONES'S CAR - DAY

MR. JONES

Well, we're almost at the park. Are you nervous?

J.J.

Yeah.

MR. JONES

Do you think she'll be there?

J.J.

She'll be there.

MR. JONES

Why're you putting yourself through this?

J.J.

It's something I have to do. I can't explain it.

MR. JONES

Are you looking for closure?

J.J.

I don't know, maybe.

MR. JONES

Are you hoping she'll forgive you?

J.J.

Uh.

MR. JONES

You are, aren't you? Well, what if she says no.

J.J.

I haven't thought about that. I don't want to think about that.

MR. JONES

I understand.

EXT. PARK - SHORELINE - DAY

J.J. is tossing stones into the lake.

J.J.

Where did my life go wrong?

Brenda comes up behind J.J.

J.J. drops the stones in his hands and turns around.

BRENDA

Yes, where did your life go wrong?

J.J.

I wanted to see you for so long. I couldn't stop thinking about you every minute of every day I was away from you.

J.J. advances toward Brenda.

Brenda starts to move backwards.

BRENDA

Don't you see, J.J.? It's been over for a long time.

J.J.

Over! I thought we loved each other.

BRENDA

Why did you do it?

J.J.

I still don't know and I've thought about it and thought about it. I guess I was afraid that I didn't measure up. Your family had everything and my family seemed so middle class in comparison.

BRENDA

Afraid you didn't measure up?

J.J.

Sounds stupid, doesn't it.

BRENDA

I loved you unconditionally for who you were. You know, deep down you're still a good person. Material things mean nothing to me in comparison. And what you did next with my brother?

J.J.

Things got out of control I guess. I want the things the way they were.

BRENDA

Let it go, J.J. Let it go so we can both move on with our lives. It's over, at least for now.

Brenda turns around and walks off.

J.J. picks up a stone and flings it into the lake before he too walks away.

J.J.

Is there still a chance for us?

Brenda stops walking and turns to face J.J.

BRENDA

Maybe.

J.J.

Goodbye, Brenda.

J.J. turns way from Brenda and starts walking away.

INT. MR. JONES'S CAR - DAY

MR. JONES

Ready to go?

J.J.

Yeah, let's go.

FADE OUT:



Bibliography

"On the Waterfront." © Columbia Pictures Corporation, 1954