

AN ORDINARY DAY

by

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FADE IN:

INT. DANNY BOLZER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The lights are out. DANNY BOLZER, 22, is barely visible in the feeble glow of an old computer monitor. Shirtless, scrawny, strung out, and pissed off, he takes a swig from his beer bottle and scratches at the stubble on his chin.

The light from the monitor highlights the sweat on his face, and makes him look decidedly CREEPY.

He types the word

"BOMB"

into an Internet search engine, hits the ENTER key, and gets 4,810,237 hits.

THE CREEP

Damn, that's a lot.

INT./EXT. PATTI'S LEXUS, A HOUSTON STREET -- NIGHT

JENNIFER GOODSON and PATTI McCARTY, both 16, are sitting at a stop light in Patti's Lexus. They are obviously best friends. MUSIC is playing. They are having a great time. Life is good.

A car pulls up beside them, and Jennifer turns to see NORMAN COOPER, 17, waving to her. He may be a little nerdy-looking, but he's handsome enough behind his ordinary glasses, riding in his ordinary car. Jennifer pretends not to see him.

JENNIFER

Oh, no. Not him again.

The light changes and the girls drive off, leaving Norman still waving from his older model Chevy. He sighs. A car behind him HONKS. He starts to go, but his engine stalls, then stops dead.

INT. DANNY BOLZER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The Creep glances down the list of hits on the computer's monitor. There are links to websites about all kinds of things, the A-Bomb, the punk band Tsunami Bomb, the Population Bomb. The list goes on and on.

CREEP

Too much stuff.



PATTI  
 (sarcastically)  
 Oh, and that was for such a good  
 reason.

JENNIFER  
 Patti, Robert quit the football team.

PATTI  
 So?

JENNIFER  
 He quit in mid-season.  
 (beat)  
 He was the captain.

Patti shakes her head at her friend, unbelievably.

PATTI  
 So, why did he quit?

JENNIFER  
 I don't know. He said he had to.

PATTI  
 Didn't you ask him why?

JENNIFER  
 Would it have mattered?

PATTI  
 Jennifer, Robert is a good guy. He  
 must've had a reason.

JENNIFER  
 Well, whatever.

They pass a movie theater. Patti points at the box office.

PATTI  
 Is that Mr. Jennings?

Jennifer doesn't even look.

JENNIFER  
 I guess.

EXT. MOVIE THEATER -- NIGHT

ALAN JENNINGS, 35, buys a ticket and looks around warily,  
 hoping no one sees him. He goes inside the theater.

INT. DANNY BOLZER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

The Creep scans through more of the Internet searches. One item in particular catches his eye.

CREEP

Whoa, wait a minute.

"...they caught the suspected terrorist trying to download instructions for making a bomb with the cooperation of his Internet Service Provider."

Damn, that's not so good.

He closes the web browser, then leans back in his chair. He scratches his unwashed head and takes another swig of beer.

CREEP (CONT'D)

There has to be another way.

INT. MOVIE THEATER -- MOMENTS LATER

Alan searches through the dark theater, illuminated only by the light from the already underway movie. Finally he spots RITA CAMPBELL, 32, and slips into the seat next to her.

JENNINGS

Hi, Rita.

He gives her a peck on the cheek, and grabs a handful of popcorn from her bag.

CAMPBELL

Hi, sweetie.

JENNINGS

I don't know why we need all this cloak and dagger stuff.

CAMPBELL

You know we would never hear the end of it if any of our students knew we were dating.

JENNINGS

I really don't think it would be that bad if they knew about us.

CAMPBELL

Alan, hush. Just watch the movie.  
We'll talk about it later.

A few rows behind them, ROCHELLE DOTSON, 16, nudges another GIRL. They point to the two teachers and whisper and giggle.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY -- COMPUTER TERMINALS -- DAY

The Creep has cleaned up considerably, but soap and water can't hide the wildness in his eyes. He sits in front of a library computer, scrolling feverishly through Internet searches, taking notes, making sketches, some of which definitely look like bombs.

INT. DANNY BOLZER'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Several drawings are spread out on the desk, and a couple more are taped to the computer monitor. The drawings look like schematics for a bomb. The Creep scribbles something in a notebook, then flips to another page and crosses items off a list with a magic marker.

ANGLE ON NOTEBOOK

There are only two items not crossed out, "digital watch with alarm" and "box of metal screws".

BACK TO SCENE

The Creep stands up and tosses the notebook on the desk. He lies down on the bed, slugs down a few more swallows of beer, and smiles to himself before turning out the light.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE, BOWIE SR. HIGH SCHOOL -- MORNING

It's mid-October, an ordinary morning in Houston, Texas. The temperature is mild right now, around sixty degrees, but it will warm up considerably before the day is over.

Bowie High is an older school, built in the late 1940's, but the building and the grounds are well cared for. Students are scurrying across the lawn, bent under the weight of their backpacks, trying to beat the tardy bell. This looks like one of those perfect schools, where nothing ever goes seriously wrong -- until today, perhaps.

INT./EXT. THE CREEP'S CAR, STREET BY BOWIE HIGH -- MORNING

The Creep is driving slowly by the front of the school in an old junker of a car. One of the doors is a different color, and there are dents and dings all over the body.

He's paying a lot more attention to the school than the road in front of him. A student, JOHN "SCREAMDOG" SMITH, 16, suddenly walks in front of the car, slams his fist on the hood, and flips the Creep the bird.

SCREAMDOG

Hey, moron! Watch it.

Screamdog looks like someone you don't want to run into in a dark alley. His head is shaved Neo-Nazi short, he's dressed head to toe in black. He's wearing biker boots and as many metal accessories as he thinks he can get away with.

The Creep's friendly smile telegraphs something like "Oh, I'm sorry, I didn't see you", but he actually says...

CREEP

You little prick. I hope you're right next to it when it goes off.

He moves forward again, and turns right at the corner, muttering under his breath. He spots some students going in a side door. He pulls to the side of the road and stops.

CREEP (CONT'D)

No administrators at the side door today. Good.

EXT. TEACHER'S PARKING LOT -- DAY

The Creep gets out, grabs a couple of textbooks and a fairly full backpack from the front seat. He lifts the heavy backpack very slowly by one of the shoulder straps, then carefully slips into it before heading for the side door.

He walks past a sign labeled "TEACHER'S PARKING LOT, AUTHORIZED PERSONNEL ONLY". He looks left and right as he crosses the lot. Then, taking a final look around, he goes into the building.

A dark-blue Mustang whips into the lot and parks in one of the last empty slots. Ms. Campbell And Mr. Jennings hop out almost before it stops. They're running late. She grabs her purse and heads for the front of the building.

JENNINGS

Rita, I'm sorry. I forgot to set  
the alarm -- what else can I say?

Rita wheels and faces him.

CAMPBELL

Nothing, Alan. It was all my fault.  
I never should have been there.

She turns and marches toward the front of the school again.

JENNINGS

Rita, the side entrance is over here.

CAMPBELL

We have to sign in at the office.

JENNINGS

Oh, yeah. Right.

He grabs his backpack from the car and catches up with her.

EXT. NEAR THE FRONT ENTRANCE -- SAME TIME

ROBERT DELGADO, 17, and TINA SANCHEZ, 16, are approaching  
the door. Robert is a Senior, looks like a jeans model, and  
is a natural athlete. Tina is a Junior. Pretty and  
vivacious, but unsure of herself, she can't seem to stop  
talking.

TINA

Then you know what? They were talking  
sports and this guy said you were  
the best running back Bowie High  
ever had.

Robert's mind is somewhere else.

ROBERT

Yeah, that's great. Just great.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE SCHOOL, FRONT ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

Tina is still talking when she and Robert pass RAY CHAMBERS,  
47. Mr. Chambers is wearing a short-sleeved white shirt and  
dark blue tie. He is stationed at the front entrance,  
ushering students into the building.

TINA

So what do you want to do this weekend? See a movie, or just hang out at the mall, or...

ROBERT

Tina, I can't this weekend. I have to work in Dad's store again.

TINA

The whole weekend?

ROBERT

Just about.

And they disappear down the hall.

Mr. Chambers is one of Bowie High's assistant principals. He's balding quite a bit, mostly on top, and looks like he might have once been a college or pro football player, but his waist has expanded considerably since then.

A few more students pass through the front door, and Ms. Campbell and Mr. Jennings slip inside along with them.

GEORGE PARKS, 52, Bowie High's principal, approaches, giving Ms. Campbell and Mr. Jennings a knowing look as they go into the office together. Mr. Parks is a tall, distinguished-looking man, dressed in a dark, pinstripe suit. Everything is always business with him.

PARKS

Ray, once first period has started, come to my office. I want to go over duty roster changes with you and Mrs. Strauss.

CHAMBERS

Okay, sir. I'll be there right after the bell.

A BELL rings.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)

Uh, the final bell.

PARKS

Right. Oh, and bring Officer Franklin too. I need to talk to him about the metal detectors the district keeps promising to install.

CHAMBERS

Will do.

Mr. Parks goes into the office.

EXT. NEAR THE SAME ENTRANCE -- DAY

Jennifer and Patti are on the sidewalk, approaching the front entrance. Jennifer is one of those girls who is voted Most Beautiful nearly every year, and wonders what's wrong if she doesn't win. She's tall and slim, always dressed in the newest style, and can easily afford it.

Patti is shorter than Jennifer, cute, and a little tomboyish. Patti would probably be voted Most Popular if anything, but it wouldn't concern her if she wasn't. She has a vitality that most people find compelling.

JENNIFER

So, I got another pair of Manolo  
Blahnik's at Neiman's yesterday, and  
I think they'll be...

Jennifer passes MRS. ROSSBACH, 56, and brushes against her, creating a swaying motion in the pile of papers and books Mrs. Rossbach is carrying. Patti sees the materials start to slide, and pauses to stabilize them. Jennifer just keeps walking and speaking, unaware that Patti has stopped.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

...just perfect with at least two of  
my outfits, plus...

ROSSBACH

Thank you, Patti.

Patti's already on the move.

PATTI

You're welcome, Mrs. Rossbach.

And she's right behind Jennifer.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE SCHOOL, FRONT ENTRANCE -- CONTINUOUS

Jennifer is still talking when they reach the door.

JENNIFER

I also think I found the perfect  
dress, its a...

Mr. Chambers motions to the girls.

CHAMBERS

Hi, Patti. Hi, Jennifer. Come on in. You've got ten minutes. That was just the warning bell.

They both smile at Mr. Chambers as they enter, Patti smiling with enthusiasm and Jennifer acknowledging a servant.

PATTI

Hi, Mr. Chambers!

Jennifer looks peeved. She was speaking and "someone" had the audacity to interrupt her.

CHAMBERS

Don't be late to First Period.

PATTI

Okay, sir.

JENNIFER

Whatever.

PATTI

Okay, what dress?

JENNIFER

Well, everybody else is going to be in something obvious, like from the Sean Collection or To the Max, but I found this perfect dress, it's a Laundry by Shelli Segal, and it's way too expensive, so I'll be the only one wearing it...

The one-sided conversation fades into the school's interior.

EXT. NEAR THE SAME ENTRANCE -- DAY

Mrs. Rossbach, veteran teacher, is still approaching the entrance, but her load has slipped again, and she's struggling to hold on to everything.

JAMES KNOX, 17, veteran troublemaker, is moving unhurriedly across the lawn, then through some flowerbeds.

ROSSBACH

James. Could you help me with this?

JAMES

Stuff it.

He strolls nonchalantly past, CRUNCHING some of the flowers underfoot, leaving Mrs. Rossbach still grappling with her materials, mouth agape.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- A MINUTE LATER

Mr. Jennings and Ms. Campbell arrive at the top of the stairwell, and head for their respective classrooms. Students are already outside each room, waiting for the doors to be unlocked. This is accomplished quickly, and the two teachers duck inside, followed by gaggles of students.

Jennifer and Patti come up the last few stairs and onto the third floor hallway, walking quickly toward their lockers.

JENNIFER

I don't know what do about him, Patti.  
He just won't give up.

PATTI

Who? Norman or Robert?

JENNIFER

Norman, of course. Robert isn't on the team anymore, so I couldn't possibly be seen anywhere with him.

Patti gives her a "that's a cruel thing to say" look, which Jennifer ignores.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

I guess Norman is okay, but what would people say? He's so -- normal.

Normal Norman.

I tried telling him "no" a thousand times, but he just won't take "drop dead" for an answer.

PATTI

(giggling)  
My god, Jennifer, you didn't tell him that, did you?

JENNIFER

No. But after the tenth time I felt like it.

And they arrive at their lockers, which are side by side, and just outside Ms. Campbell's classroom.

The locker to the left of Jennifer's doesn't have a lock on it, but it does have a bright yellow smiley-face sticker.

Ms. Campbell and Mrs. Watkins are standing at their doors, encouraging students to get inside on time. Mr. Jennings opens his door across the way, and steps into the hall.

He and Ms. Campbell play hide and seek with their eyes. He's doing the seeking. She's doing the hiding.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Norman's been asking me out for almost a month. I can't make him give up.

Patti grins.

PATTI

Well, at least he's persistent. But why are you like this with most guys? Is it just because he isn't popular?

JENNIFER

No. What do you think I am?

PATTI

Well, I just don't get it. What's the matter with Norman? I think he's cute. If you don't want him, I'd like a shot at him.

Jennifer fidgets, reluctant to talk about it. Patti decides it's time to tease her a little.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Okay, what's the deal? Did dating Robert totally kill your interest in other guys? Are you going gay on me, or what?

She could always make Jennifer laugh when she wanted to, and she succeeds here.

JENNIFER

Oh, shut up, you dip. I guess Norman's okay. I just don't know him. And he's a nerd! He doesn't play sports or anything, and I...

Patti breaks into a big smile when she sees Norman walking up behind Jennifer.

PATTI

Well, well. Guess who's here.

Norman is on a mission. At first glance, he does appear to be the quintessential nerd. He's clean-cut, slight of build, and wears glasses -- but no pocket protector. Patti's right, though, he is cute, and he is determined.

NORMAN

Hi, Jennifer.

He's obviously interested enough in Jennifer to keep pursuing her, but at this point he's not quite sure how to continue.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Uh, can I talk to you for a minute?

Jennifer is trapped between Norman and Patti.

JENNIFER

Well, I can't talk right now, Norman.  
The bell's going to ring soon.

That's not enough to make him give up.

NORMAN

Please, I just want to know why you  
won't go out with me.

Patti soaks all this in, loving every second of it.

Jennifer turns to her locker to avoid talking, and tries to close it. The corner of a brightly-colored notebook gets caught in the door and is hanging out. Jennifer tugs at it, but it won't budge. She just succeeds in making it stick out a little farther. It's stuck just like she is.

She gives in, and the three of them start walking down the hall, with Jennifer stalling for all she's worth.

JENNIFER

Well, I... I don't know why. I...  
Do I have to tell him, Patti?

PATTI

It's a fair question.

Norman decides to try something else. He steps in front of the girls and kneels. A few kids pass by, and clearly want to stop to see what's going on, but they're almost late to class, so they keep moving.

Now that he's kneeling, Norman has to do something, but what? Everything else has failed so far, why not Shakespeare?

NORMAN

"Use me but as your spaniel -- spurn me, strike me, neglect me; but give me leave to" ...uh, to date you.

All of this is completely lost on Jennifer, but Patti's eyes light up. This guy has guts!

PATTI

That's from A Midsummer Night's Dream, isn't it?

She has a sudden flash of recognition.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Oh, that's where I know you from. I saw you do that last year. You were very good.

Norman looks up at Patti, and "sees" her for the first time.

NORMAN

Uh, thanks!

Norman gets up and Patti takes him aside. There's a brief moment here when they realize they like each other, but Patti is still Jennifer's friend, so she lets the moment die.

The Windup.

PATTI

Okay, this is the whole deal.

The Pitch.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Jennifer likes you, she thinks, but she's not really sure, because she doesn't really know you. She wouldn't mind going out with you, but she's just a little bit scared.

She'd probably keep you asking her forever so she won't have to say "yes", so I'll say it for her.

The Home Run.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Yes. Jennifer would like to go out with you on Friday night.

Jennifer's jaw flies open in a huge grin of disbelief.

JENNIFER

Patti!

Norman walks over to Jennifer.

NORMAN

Well, how about it?

I promise, I'm not an ax murderer or terrorist or anything. Seven o'clock on Friday? We'll go see a movie or something.

Patti nudges Jennifer in the ribs.

PATTI

Go on. Go for it.

Jennifer gives in.

JENNIFER

Oh, all right. I'll give you my address later, but we have to get to class right now.

NORMAN

Oh, right. Me too. Thank you, Jennifer.

As they start to walk away, Norman grabs Patti's arm.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

And thank you, Patti.

Letting her "true friend" guard drop for a second, Patti's face reveals some attraction for Norman.

PATTI

Aw, that's sweet.

Thanks.

Anytime.

Is Patti hitting on Norman? Jennifer hauls her down the hallway toward the stairwell at the front of the building.

PATTI (CONT'D)

What?

Patti glances back at Norman and giggles, but Jennifer keeps tugging her along.

PATTI (CONT'D)

What?

ANGLE ON NORMAN -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

The two girls head for the stairwell, and their first class. Norman turns and walks the other way. When he is nearly at the other end of the hall, he does a little celebration jump in mid-air, and nearly bumps into The Creep.

The Creep has made it to the third floor. Norman sees the look in his eyes and deftly skirts around him.

The Creep has stopped at the edge of the corridor, clutching a few textbooks and his backpack. He almost looks young enough to be a student, but the beads of sweat and stubble on his face, along with the fevered look in his eyes, give away the fact that he clearly doesn't belong here.

He leans forward, trying to look around the corner, when...

A HAND lands on the Creep's shoulder. The Creep drops his books, startled.

CHAMBERS

Son, hadn't you better get to class?  
The bell's about to ring.

The Creep keeps his face down and gathers up his books. He doesn't want Mr. Chambers to see who he is. Anger flashes across the Creep's face for a split second, but he forces himself to relax and act subserviently.

CREEP

Uh ...yes, sir. Going right now,  
sir.

And he moves slowly into the hallway, head still down. He glances back and sees Mr. Chambers going down the stairwell.

He begins walking slowly down the row of lockers. The hallway is almost empty now.

A few students are still in the halls, but they're on the move. First Period is about to start.

THE CREEP'S POV: SEVERAL LOCKERS -- A SECOND LATER

These lockers are well cared for, but some of them show the tell-tale signs of student use. One has a little graffiti, another is bulging at the seams. Most of the lockers have locks on them, but a few have small metal triangles inserted in the hasps to keep them shut when not in use.

The Creep fingers several of the small triangles before seeing a smiley-face sticker on one of the lockers. Jennifer's trapped notebook is visible right next to it.

ANGLE ON THE CREEP -- A SECOND LATER

CREEP

Perfect.

He touches the smiley-face, then wiggles the triangle back and forth a little bit. As he twists the triangle, he mumbles under his breath.

CREEP (CONT'D)

Metal triangle, so it's empty. And  
it's...

He looks up at the number on Ms. Campbell's door.

CREEP (CONT'D)

...just where I want it.

The hallway is completely empty now.

The Creep sets down his books and slips his backpack off, carefully setting it on the floor. Reaching into his jacket pocket, he pulls out some small pliers. Working quickly, he twists the triangle until one corner separates, slips the triangle off, and quietly opens the locker.

There's a sudden NOISE down the hall, and he freezes.

INT. OTHER END OF THE THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Some water is leaking from underneath the boys bathroom door. The sound of METAL BANGING comes from inside the bathroom. The door opens, letting out a little more water, and James Knox's head peers around it and sees the hall appears empty. The open bathroom door hides the Creep from his sight.

James props the bathroom door open with a large metal trashcan, disappears momentarily, then slides into the hallway on the film of water, his sneakers slipping wildly on the clean, waxed floor. He skids to a stop, doing his best Tom Cruise/Risky Business impersonation.

James is far enough out in the hall now that he can see the Creep, who is still standing rigidly at the locker, with his head buried inside so his face can't be seen. James "owns" the hall as he strides toward the Creep.

JAMES

Morning's the best time to do that.

You hydroplane better on clean floors.

When the Creep doesn't move or acknowledge him, James saunters past him and goes into Mrs. Rossbach's classroom.

As soon as James is inside, the Creep gingerly pulls a large, fairly heavy paper bag out of his backpack, and carefully places it inside the locker. Then he replaces the triangle, and bends it back into shape with his pliers.

He's almost done. He pulls a large plastic baggie out of the backpack, slips the empty backpack back on, and starts scattering some dark powder onto the floor as he walks toward the stairwell, holding his textbooks under one arm.

He passes one of the school's tall industrial style trashcans, and drops his textbooks inside. Then he scatters a little more powder on the stairs as he goes down them.

ANGLE ON THE LOCKER -- A SECOND LATER

What's inside the locker? Something draws us toward it. We reach the surface of the locker, and...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INSIDE THE LOCKER -- CLOSE UP -- DAY

...we're inside. The paper bag is barely visible in the light seeping through the slits on the locker door.

There also seems to be A VERY FAINT NOISE coming from the bag, maybe electronic whirring or buzzing. It's hard to make out. Suddenly, there is a HUGE JANGLING NOISE.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- A SECOND LATER

The final BELL to start First Period is ringing. VIOLA WATKINS closes the door to her classroom.

INT. MRS. WATKINS' CLASS -- A MOMENT LATER

A CLOCK on Mrs. Watkins' wall reads 8:00. A few students are leaning across the aisles, whispering to each other. One boy, DAVID, is out of his seat, talking to a girl as he leans over her desk, but this is not a Ferris Bueller-style classroom. Most of the students seem to be waiting patiently, glancing through their textbooks, etc.

Mrs. Watkins moves to her desk and looks at her seating chart.

ANGLE ON A STUDENT'S DRAWING

A STUDENT is finishing a faceless drawing of someone whose hair and clothes are exactly like Mrs. Watkins'.

BACK TO SCENE

Mrs. Watkins looks back and forth between her chart and the class. She is not pleased about something. The student, perplexed, looks back and forth between his drawing and Mrs. Watkins.

ANGLE ON THE DRAWING

He finishes the drawing by giving "Ms. Watkins" a frowny-face.

BACK TO SCENE

WATKINS

Well, since David is the only person absent, we can get started.

David looks up, puzzled at hearing his name. Then he realizes what's going on and heads for his seat.

DAVID

Sorry, Mrs. Watkins.

Mrs. Watkins' voice has a pseudo-pleasant tone, but her eyes are drilling holes into David's apparently thick skull.

WATKINS

A seating chart only works if you're in your seat.

(MORE)

WATKINS (CONT'D)

Someday I'm not going to see you back there, and I will count you absent. Better watch it.

All right everybody, clear your desks and get out a pen. Time for your test on the Industrial Revolution.

Moans and groans from the kids, of course, but they start getting ready. Mrs. Watkins signs the attendance slip and puts a piece of adhesive tape on it. She opens the door and sticks the slip on the outside of the door window.

WATKINS (CONT'D)

I hope everyone studied hard for this one. It covers a lot of territory.

INT. HALLWAY OF THE SCHOOL, SIDE ENTRANCE -- DAY

The Creep has reached the bottom of the stairs, and is scattering more of the dark powdery substance as he goes. He looks in his plastic baggie and sees that he has quite a bit of powder left. He walks back up to the first landing, shakes out the rest of the powder, then leaves the building.

INT. MR. WILSON'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Journalism teacher, BYRON WILSON, 36, has finished filling out his attendance slip also, and is taping it on the outside of his classroom door. Norman and the rest of the class are actively engaged in socializing, but Mr. Wilson is pretty laid back, so he doesn't shout to get them quiet.

He pulls a couple of signs from behind his desk and holds them up. One reads "Good News" and the other reads "Bad News". The class notices fairly quickly and gets seated.

WILSON

Which one do you want first? Good?

He holds the "Good News" sign high.

STUDENTS (ASSORTED SHOUTS)

Yeah. Good. Good. Good.

Some "Good" votes, but not an overwhelming majority.

WILSON

Or Bad?

He holds the "Bad" sign aloft.

STUDENTS (ASSORTED SHOUTS)  
Bad. Bad. Bad. Good sucks.

"Bad" is the clear winner.

WILSON  
All right, "Bad" first. Personally,  
I always like to find out the good  
news first, but that's just me.

SHARON HILLIARD, 17, perks up at that comment, seeing a chance  
to get brownie points.

SHARON  
I like the good news first, too, Mr.  
Wilson.

WILSON  
That's nice Sharon. So, the...

SHARON  
Maybe you could have us get into  
good and bad groups, and then you  
could give us the news separately.

He's curious now.

WILSON  
How would that be better, Sharon?

SHARON  
I don't know, maybe because everybody  
could get what they want when they  
want it.

WILSON  
But wouldn't you miss half the  
information that way?

SHARON  
Oh, yeah. 'Course, you're right,  
Mr. Wilson.

WILSON  
Well, you know, there is a teaching  
technique like that called  
Individualized Instruction, but  
there's a real problem with it.

SHARON  
What's that, Mr. Wilson?

WILSON  
You have to have almost as many  
teachers as students to make it work,  
and none of us want that, do we?

A chorus of dissent springs up from the students.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
Good, since you just have me, and  
not eighteen other Mr. Wilsons, I'll  
start with the Bad. Today we're  
going to discuss the homework I gave  
you a few days ago...

There are mock "boos" from the students.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
...and I'm also going to give you a  
long-term assignment to work on.

More "boos".

WILSON (CONT'D)  
Sorry. Has to be done.

NORMAN  
So, what's the Good Stuff, Mr. Wilson?

Mr. Wilson reaches behind his desk, lifts up a large box,  
and sets it on his desk. The box is labeled "Good Stuff".

WILSON  
For the next few weeks, we are going  
to work on photography. The Good  
Stuff is...

He reaches into the box and pulls out...

WILSON (CONT'D)  
Cameras!

There are "ooh's" and "ah's" from the students, a few of  
them are sarcastic, but most of the kids seem to think this  
is a pretty good deal.

WILSON (CONT'D)  
You are going to get to take pictures  
of people around school to use in  
the newspaper and yearbook.

Shouts of joy and merriment echo throughout the room, and most of the students actually mean it. This could be fun.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Now, you're going to work in teams, because we only have enough cameras for every third person, so we're going to share.

For the next three weeks, during the class period, you're going to go out into the school with your team.

The first week, one of you will be the photographer, one will be the fact-checker, and the third will be the reporter.

At the beginning of the second week you'll exchange jobs, and then change again for the third week, until each of you have handled all three jobs.

SHARON

Can we choose our own groups?

WILSON

Thank you for asking that question, Sharon. No. I've already picked your groups.

Don't worry. If you can't stand the people on your team, we'll switch groups in three weeks when we start another assignment.

Any other questions?

ANGLE ON A RAISED HAND IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM

The raised hand, along with its dirty fingernails and the ink-scribbled message "Dead Dog Maggots Are Tight", belongs to John "Screamdog" Smith, who -- despite the trauma of nearly being run over this morning -- apparently decided to attend school today after all.

BACK TO SCENE

Screamdog has been sitting quietly, looking bored, not talking to anyone up to this point. He patiently holds his hand up while Mr. Wilson looks around the room to see if anyone else wants to ask a question. Anyone else.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Anyone?

Since there are no other takers but Screamdog, Mr. Wilson calls on him with great apprehension.

WILSON (CONT'D)

Yes, Johnny -- or is it still Screamdog this week?

SCREAMDOG

Hey, you remembered! You get props for that.

Mr. Wilson is trying desperately to imagine what Johnny/Screamdog will ask this time.

WILSON

We aim to please.

What's your question?

SCREAMDOG

Do we get to keep the cameras?

WILSON

Yes and No. Since you're my only journalism class, the photographer that week keeps the camera all day and takes it home after school.

The next week it goes to the next photographer, and after the third week it comes back to me.

SCREAMDOG

Sweet!

WILSON

Thank you -- I think.

Does anyone else have a question?

Mr. Wilson looks around the room.

WILSON (CONT'D)

All right, then. Come get your cameras. Janet, you're going to be the photographer for Group One.

JANET comes up to the front of the room and takes one of the digital cameras from Mr. Wilson.

She points it at herself and the flash goes off. Mr. Wilson sighs.

WILSON (CONT'D)

People, don't fiddle with these yet. We'll practice with them in just a minute. Janet, Tameka will be your fact-checker and Paul will be the reporter for your group.

Norman, you're the photographer for Group Two, your fact-checker will be...

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY, NEAR MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

A student OFFICE WORKER leaves the office and heads for the stairwell. As she climbs the stairs, little puffs of the Creep's black powder get stirred up by her shoes.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- DAY

The office worker enters from the stairwell, and walks down the hall, pulling the attendance slips off each door. She gets Mrs. Watkins' slip, then heads across the hall to Mr. Jennings' room. She doesn't see a slip on the door, so she opens the door and leans inside. She tries, but can't get anyone's attention. The noise is pretty intense.

INT. INSIDE DRAMA ROOM -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Mr. Jennings, the drama teacher, is conducting some kind of improvisational warmup with the kids, and they are very excited and active.

JENNINGS

Okay, you guys. Atom ... Three.

The students scramble madly -- and noisily -- to form up in groups of three. Mr. Jennings walks among them counting the number of kids in each group. Two students can't find a group, and are left out. Instant disappointment.

One of the groups is comprised of a boy and girl who are actively embracing, and a third member who has his hand on the girl's shoulder, but is standing a foot or so away.

Mr. Jennings comes up to them and stands there until the "couple" notices him. They break their clinch, but continue to hold hands.

The Office Helper tries once more to get Mr. Jennings' attention, shouting this time.

OFFICE HELPER  
Excuse me! Mr. Jennings!

Mr. Jennings turns and notices her.

JENNINGS  
Freeze, you guys. Hold that pose.

Whines of mock injustice from the students. The couple from the affectionate group tries to get back in their embrace again. Mr. Jennings sees them.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)  
Ah, ah, ah. Not that pose. The hand-holding one.

They comply, grinning cheerfully.

OFFICE HELPER  
I need to get your attendance slip.

JENNINGS  
(smiling)  
Ah. The bureaucracy. Sure. Just a second. Don't anybody move now. Pretend you're statues or something.

He starts filling out the attendance slip. A VOICE whines from within the crowd.

VOICE/DON (O.S.)  
Mr. Jennings. Somebody in my group's got B.O.!

JENNINGS  
Who's speaking? Is that you, Don?

DON ROBINSON looks the perfect model for the typical debate student, white shirt, thin tie, horn-rimmed glasses, dark pants.

DON  
Yessir. Phewee!

Mr. Jennings sees a opening for humor, and takes it.

JENNINGS  
Don: Assignment.  
(MORE)

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Experience the B.O. Become the B.O.  
Live the B.O.

DON

Thank you so much, sir, but no thanks.  
This smells worse than gym class.

JENNINGS

Well, you'll just have to deal then.

He sees the Office Worker, still waiting by the door.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Oh, okay. Right. Attendance slip.

Alan looks around the room, counting his frozen students.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Six groups of three, and two not in  
a group, equals twenty. We need one  
more ...who's absent?

There's no answer, but there are a few snickers.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Ah, statues can't answer. Very good.  
You got me. Okay, we'll stop being  
statues now. Atom ... One!

Everyone breaks from their group immediately. Most of the kids start to grab someone, but they quickly realize what a group of one means. A few kids hug themselves, some laugh, others groan. A couple of them just stand there and glare at Mr. Jennings.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Now, who's absent?

KATHRYN MYERS, 17, responds.

KATHRYN

It's Allison, Mr. Jennings. I think  
she's got the flu.

JENNINGS

Thank you, Kathryn.

He finishes filling out the slip, and hands it to the office worker. She leaves.

There's been a break in the routine. Mr. Jennings tries joking around to get them back in the mood.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Wow! The flu. I just figured out what this means. This class is always going around hugging each other and disgusting stuff like that. That means you'll probably all have it within a week. Which means I will undoubtedly get it.

ANGLE ON TWO GIRLS -- DRAMA ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Rochelle Dotson grins and whispers to CYNTHIA LEWIS, 16.

ROCHELLE

And that means Ms. Campbell will get it too.

CYNTHIA

Huh?

BACK TO SCENE

Mr. Jennings is hitting his stride now.

JENNINGS

Of course, if I get it I won't have to deal with all of you, and I'll get to stay home and catch up on all those DVD's I haven't had a chance to watch yet. This is really great!

The class responds with Bronx cheers, etc.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's get started on our improvs. Everyone sit except for ...Barry and Suzanne.

The students, except for BARRY DOUGLAS, 16, and SUZANNE PRICE, 16, scatter in various directions, a few sitting on tables and in chairs, most of them sitting on the floor. Barry and Suzanne are left alone with Mr. Jennings in the open acting area in the middle of the room. They look exceedingly uncomfortable, having been chosen first.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Let's see. You're a couple. You've been dating each other a long time.

There are some catcalls and whistles from the kids.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Everybody, this is serious.

You really like each other, but one of you is bothered by something. No, both of you are, and you've been thinking about breaking it off.

A salacious smirk appears on SAM BURDEN'S face. He interrupts with massive over-innocence.

SAM

Breaking what off, Mr. Jennings?

There are some titters from the class.

JENNINGS

Their relationship, Sam. Their relationship. Shall I break off a little piece of time in which you can serve detention?

SAM

No, sir.

JENNINGS

Good. Okay, Barry and Suzanne. Each of you pick something to target in on. Maybe a trait the other one has.

BARRY

But I don't know anything bad about Suzanne I could use.

Sam just can't help himself today.

SAM

Hey, Barry. Just talk to Charlie.

JENNINGS

Sam. Enough. See me after class.

My fault, Barry. I didn't make it clear. Everybody, listen. This is important. Do not bring actual personalities into this.

(MORE)

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Barry, it shouldn't be a trait that Suzanne actually has. You make it up -- something you think her character would have. Why don't you two go out in the hall and discuss it for just a second while we get someone else started.

Barry and Suzanne leave the room. Mr. Jennings winds his way gleefully through the crowd, looking for another victim.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

So. Who's next to put their head on the chopping block?

No answer from the students. Mr. Jennings paces slowly in front of the group.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

C'mon. Public humiliation for free. How can you beat a deal like that? Any volunteers?

He looks the students over. Many have their eyes lowered in the "I'm Invisible" pose favored by students everywhere. He stops by Tina Sanchez.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Tina. How about you?

Tina looks up, invisible no more.

TINA

Me? Oh, Mr. Jennings. Do I have to? I'm always first.

JENNINGS

But this time you're second. Barry and Suzanne are going to be first.

She gives in.

TINA

Okay.

JENNINGS

All right, who else can we get here?

He walks among his flock, looking for the right sheep to pair with Tina, and stops in front of Kathryn Myers.

She has red hair, freckles, and glasses, and is very intense and serious. She is seated on the floor, and doesn't look up until he stops next to her and places his hand on her head.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Arise, my child, go forth and act some more. You and Tina will be after Barry and Suzanne.

Kathryn gets up, but Tina stays seated.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Let's see. You two are best friends. One of you is contemplating suicide. The other suspects this because of clues you've left lying around. One's job is to deny you're thinking of killing yourself, and the other's job is to make her tell you somehow.

Okay?

Mr. Jennings notices that Tina is still seated, apparently not wanting to do this. He holds out his hand, she takes it reluctantly, and he hauls her to her feet. Kathryn wants some further direction.

KATHRYN

Mr. Jennings, can I be the one who's thinking of killing themselves?

JENNINGS

Themself, or ...no, I guess it would be himself or herself. Anyway, it's one person, so it's singular.

KATHRYN

Oh, yeah. Well, can I?

JENNINGS

Would you like that, Kathryn?

KATHRYN

Yeah.

JENNINGS

Good. Tina, you play the person who's thinking of committing suicide.

TINA

Oh, no. Let her play it. I don't want to.

He moves them toward the door.

JENNINGS

And that's why it's very important that you do it anyway.

KATHRYN

(only half-serious)

Mr. Jennings, why are you so mean to us?

JENNINGS

Mean? This is the way things are in the "real world". Well, the real world of acting, anyway. You don't always get to play what you want, and you certainly don't get to choose your parts.

Now go, Munchkins. Talk it over outside, and send Barry and Suzanne back in.

As they leave, we see that the CLOCK by the door reads 8:20.

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE MR. JENNINGS' ROOM -- DAY

Kathryn calls out to Barry and Suzanne.

KATHRYN

It's time.

BARRY

Okay. Thanks.

Barry and Suzanne enter the classroom, and Tina and Kathryn cross the hall and sit by the locker with the smiley-face. A little puff of powder rises from underneath Kathryn's jeans when she sits. They are within inches of the bomb.

KATHRYN

What can we do? What kinds of clues would someone leave if they were going to kill themselves -- themselves.

TINA

I don't know.

(MORE)

TINA (CONT'D)

I don't like to think about things like that. I don't want to die.

KATHRYN

Well, no one does. This is just an acting exercise. You have to have your character want to die, not you the real person. So, let's figure out some way to start the scene.

TINA

Oh, this class is so stupid anyway. It's just games. What good is it? I don't even want to be an actress.

KATHRYN

Well, why did you take drama then?

TINA

I had to take something. I can't be in any of Robert's classes this year because he's a Senior. If he goes to college next year I won't be able to be with him at all.

KATHRYN

Robert's your boyfriend?

TINA

Yeah, we started going together about a month ago. I tried to get into his elective, but the counselor wouldn't let me.

KATHRYN

So, why drama?

TINA

Well, he's got Senior English with Ms. Campbell right now. Drama is just across the hall, so I can walk him to his locker after class.

Tina gets up quickly.

TINA (CONT'D)

Hey, you wanna see him? Come here.

Kathryn follows her to Ms. Campbell's classroom door. Patches of the powder are visible on the seats of the girls' pants. They peek through the door, and Tina points at someone.

TINA (CONT'D)

That's him on the front row -- in the black t-shirt.

KATHRYN

Oh, that's Robert Delgado. He plays football.

TINA

Not this year. He started the season, but he had to stop.

KATHRYN

He's cute.

TINA

Cute? Girl, have you completely lost your mind? He's not cute, he's gorgeous! And he's mine, too -- don't you go getting any ideas.

The door to Mr. Jennings' room opens, and the sounds of students laughing and joking -- and of Mr. Jennings trying to quiet them down -- float into the hallway. A student, CHRIS ROSENTHAL, pokes his head out into the hall.

CHRIS

Tina! Kathryn! You're next.

TINA

Oh my god. We didn't decide on anything. What're we gonna do?

KATHRYN

Easy! What if Robert told you he was going to dump you and start going with me?

Tina laughs.

TINA

I'd cut open your slutty white belly. That's what.

KATHRYN

Good. Remember that -- only make it like you're so pissed off at yourself that you want to kill you, not me.

TINA

Oh, cool. I can totally do that. But how do we start the scene?

Tina and Kathryn disappear into the classroom, and Chris and another student come into the hall.

A CUSTODIAN turns the corner near the boys bathroom, pushing his cleaning cart. He spots the water in the hallway, parks his cart and goes into the restroom, mumbling to himself.

CUSTODIAN

Damn kids. They mess it up faster  
than I can clean it.

He comes right back, still muttering.

CUSTODIAN (CONT'D)

If I ever find out who's stopping up  
those sinks, I'll strangle them.

And he disappears around the corner.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASS -- DAY

The class is silently reading through a passage in Macbeth. Robert Delgado is in the front row, slumping tiredly in his chair. His mind is not on Shakespeare right now.

Robert is everything Tina said he was, dressed in jeans and wearing a black t-shirt that's just small enough to show off his muscles.

Rita Campbell is standing near her desk, glancing at the paperback copy of the play. She removes her glasses, rubs her eyes and yawns. She keeps glancing down at her outfit, smoothing out an occasional wrinkle, hoping no one will notice it's the same one she wore yesterday. She is an attractive woman, but doesn't flaunt it.

The CLOCK behind her reads 8:25.

CAMPBELL

Now, who can tell me what purpose  
the Porter's scene in Act Two serves?

Robert?

Robert looks up, and "unslumps" himself.

ROBERT

Ma'am?

There's an awkward pause while Robert tries to act cool. Ms. Campbell just waits.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

Scuse me, could you repeat the question?

CAMPBELL

Okay, Robert.

In Act Two, Scene Three of Macbeth, Macduff and Lennox come up to Macbeth's castle and knock on the gate. The porter -- probably half asleep and very likely hung over -- babbles to himself, pretending to be the porter at the gates of Hell.

Do you remember that part?

Robert could just tell her the answer, but that would be too easy.

ROBERT

Oh, sure! Who could forget?

CAMPBELL

Well, all right, Robert. This is the question: What is the purpose of the porter in this scene?

Robert offers an alternative to the "correct" answer.

ROBERT

Oh, hey. That's easy. The porter is in this scene to open the gate so Macduff and -- that other guy -- can come in and find the king that got whacked by Macbeth.

CAMPBELL

Very cute, Robert. What's the real reason, though? Come on, I think you know it. We talked about it yesterday.

A number of hands are raised elsewhere in the room. They apparently did discuss this, but Robert persists.

ROBERT

No. I'm serious. If this porter guy didn't open the gate, then Macduff and the other guy ...

CAMPBELL

Lennox.

ROBERT

Yeah, Lennox.

The time-honored changing-the-subject tactic.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

By the way, Ms. Campbell, how come he isn't a Mac-something too?

Ms. Campbell is not buying into Robert's game.

CAMPBELL

The question?

ROBERT

Oh, yeah. Well, if they hadn't come in, they wouldn't have discovered the king had been smoked, and then Macbeth couldn't become king and get his own head chopped off later.

Ms. Campbell isn't willing to let him get by that easily, so she pushes a little more.

CAMPBELL

Okay, let's do this. I'll accept your explanation for the moment, because it is true -- on the surface. It's much too easy, though. It's not enough to just say that the porter's not opening the gate would change the story.

Now she addresses the whole class. This is one of those "teachable" moments.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

We always have to accept any story the way it was written, and then we have to decide why the author -- or playwright -- wrote it the way he or she did.

You can't just say "it would change the story", because you can do that with every story ever written.

(MORE)

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
 Or any incident from real life, for that matter. Every choice in our lives can affect what happens to us afterwards...

For a moment she pauses and a look comes across her face, as if to say "including the choices I make for myself", but she shrugs it off and focuses on Robert again.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
 ...including whether we choose to correctly answer or not answer a question that we really do know the answer to.

No response from Robert.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
 So, who else would like a shot at this? What really is the purpose of this scene?

Several hands go up. Ms. Campbell chooses JANICE NORWOOD, 17, a chubby blonde-haired girl, who seems anxious to answer.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)  
 Yes, Janice.

JANICE  
 Can I go to the bathroom, Mrs. Campbell? I have to really bad.

Ms. Campbell sighs. Poor English and a disruption of the flow, par for the course. An ordinary day in English class.

CAMPBELL  
 Badly.  
 Yes, Janice. Go ahead.  
 Marcus, how about you?

MARCUS BROWN, 18, is wearing dark-rimmed glasses and a maroon polo shirt, and looks relieved that he finally got a chance to answer. As he begins to talk, Janice makes her way to the front of the room.

MARCUS  
 Uh, it's there for comedy relief. I mean comic relief.

CAMPBELL

Good. Relief from what?

MARCUS

Oh, in the scene before, it was very intense and serious because they had just killed the king and their hands were all bloody, and...

INT. HALLWAY, OUTSIDE MS. CAMPBELL'S ROOM -- DAY

Janice leaves Ms. Campbell's room.

Cynthia and Rochelle are outside the drama room, waiting their turn to do their improvisation. The custodian is at the other end of the hall, finishing mopping up the water.

Janice pauses and gets a folded piece of paper from her purse. She glances through it quickly, smiles, and folds it back up. One of the lockers just to the left of the smiley-face locker is her target.

As she comes closer, she folds the note again, until it is long and thin, then she slides it into one of the vents on her friend's locker, bending the end of the note so it catches on the vent and hangs out.

JANICE

There. She should see that.

Mission accomplished, she continues down the hall toward the bathroom. Cynthia and Rochelle watch her leave. As soon as she is in the bathroom, they head toward the locker.

Having finished his mopping, the custodian is wheeling his mop and bucket around the corner to put them away.

CYNTHIA

Do you really want to read it? She'll look for it when she comes back. She'll know we got it.

ROCHELLE

Hell, yes, I want to read it. Let's go for it. We can probably finish it before she gets her pants back up over that fat butt of hers.

CYNTHIA

Rochelle, that's a terrible thing to say -- even if it is true. Okay! Let's do it.

Both girls grab at the note. Rochelle gets it first and whips it open.

The custodian reappears and begins sweeping the hallway with a wide-headed industrial broom. Little clouds of powder swirl up as he sweeps. He's scattering as much of the powder as he's trapping. He's still muttering, but we hear him on the periphery of our senses, a drone in the background.

The girls read through the note uttering giggles, moans, and oaths of disbelief, but they also keep close watch on the bathroom door. As soon as they've read it, they put the note back and rush over to the drama room, where they sit down and try to look innocent. ELMER SANTOS and a FEMALE STUDENT, both 16, come out of Mr. Jennings' room.

ELMER

It's your turn.

Rochelle and Cynthia burst out laughing hysterically, and they continue all the way into the room, leaving Elmer and the girl looking quizzically at them as the door shuts.

The custodian keeps sweeping. He reaches the stairwell and takes a dustpan from his cart. He sweeps a sizable pile of dark grey powder into the dustpan, and starts to empty it into the trashcan. He notices something and stops. He pulls a couple of textbooks out of the trash and puts them on his cart, then dumps the dustpan into the trashcan. A puff of powder floats up from inside and a little bit flows over the top. He shakes his head and moves further down the hall.

On the other end of the hall, the girls' bathroom door opens, and Janice heads back down the hallway toward Ms. Campbell's room, but just before she reaches the first classroom, the door opens suddenly and James Knox nearly runs into her.

JANICE

Hey! Watch out!

JAMES

Well, . . . .scuse me.

JANICE

Jerk.

Janice stomps off toward Ms. Campbell's room. James is still holding the door. The VOICE OF DOOM comes from within.

ROSSBACH (O.S.)

James. Stop stalling.

(MORE)

ROSSBACH (O.S.) (CONT'D)

Take that down to Mr. Chambers. And stay there until he talks to you about it.

Instructions like these are nothing new to James, and he takes them in stride.

JAMES

Yes, ma'am.

When he reaches the stairwell, the hall CLOCK reads 8:35.

INT. STAIRWELL BETWEEN 1ST AND 2ND FLOORS -- DAY

James is coming down the stairwell, obviously in no big hurry. He practices a few martial arts moves, then he notices the powder rising up around him. He does a sort of tap dance, imitating Gene Kelley in "Singin' in the Rain", jumping up and down in the powder and using the wide steps as a curb. Finally, he slides the last few feet down the banister, ending up in the first floor hallway. The clock on the first floor reads 8:50, indicating that fifteen minutes have passed.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Once he's on the first floor, James stops for a drink of water and looks at a bulletin board, casually strolls past a sign that reads "Main Office", finally wandering inside, after holding the door open for a PARENT who is leaving.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

James hesitates, hoping no one will notice him.

SUSAN RANDLE, 30, the school's finance clerk is seated at a desk off to the side of the room, and ELLEN DAVIS, 25, the school's secretary, is front and center, at a desk just behind the counter. Ms. Davis is in her mid-twenties, stunning, always smiling. The office doesn't run without her.

RUTH STRAUSS, one of the school's assistant principals is talking to Ms. Davis. Mrs. Strauss is in her late 40's, short, thickly built, a drill sergeant. Highly businesslike, efficient, always on duty. She looks at James with disdain.

P.O.V. INSIDE JAMES' MIND -- WARTIME

James has a vision of Mrs. Strauss in a military uniform, sending him out of a foxhole, into enemy fire. A voice interrupts. "Ellen?".

BACK TO SCENE

Mrs. Strauss is handing some papers to Ms. Davis.

STRAUSS

Ellen, could you get these out for me by this afternoon. Also, make sure Sally Jacobs gets pulled from her P.E. class this morning so I can talk to her about her tardies.

DAVIS

Sure, no problem. Oh, don't forget you've got a two-o'clock appointment with Mrs. Mosley about the conflict her daughter is having with her English teacher.

Mrs. Strauss is already on her way out of the room. She calls back over her shoulder.

STRAUSS

Right, thanks.

Then she's gone.

James is at the counter now, and Ms. Davis and Mrs. Randle look up. When they see James, they both smile knowingly.

DAVIS

What is it this time, James?

P.O.V. INSIDE JAMES' MIND -- ON A BEACH

He and Ms. Davis are sitting in the sand. He is dressed in the jeans and t-shirt he has on now, but Ms. Davis is, of course, in a bikini, holding James' head in her lap while she strokes his hair.

JAMES

No one understands me. I'm really older than I look. I usually say what I think, but most people just don't get it.

But, you... you've always understood, Ms. Davis, Ellen...

DAVIS

James? Why are you here?

BACK TO SCENE

Back to reality.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

James?

JAMES

Hey, I really don't know, Ms. Davis. I think Mrs. Rossbach just doesn't like me. Anyway, she said to give you this discipline card and stay here until Mr. Chambers could talk to me about it.

Ms. Davis gets up from her desk and takes the card from James.

DAVIS

Just sit down on the bench there, James. I'll tell him you're here.

She turns to go. James leans his elbows on the counter, props his chin in his hands, and watches Ms. Davis' shapely tush disappear through the door leading to the assistant principals' offices.

JAMES

(to himself)

Ba-dunk-a-dunk.

ANGLE ON MRS. RANDLE AT HER DESK

Mrs. Randle hears this and glowers at James.

RANDLE

Sit.

BACK TO SCENE

JAMES

Sorry. I couldn't help myself.

He sits.

INT. MR. CHAMBERS' OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Chambers is at his desk, going through some of the paperwork that is liberally scattered across his desktop. There's a knock at the door.

CHAMBERS

Come in.

Ms. Davis opens the door and pokes her head in.

DAVIS

Ray, got something for you.

Ray is always looking for an opening for a joke.

CHAMBERS

Well, Ellen. Does this mean you finally came to see me because of my intense charm and good looks.

She holds out the discipline card.

DAVIS

You should be so lucky. No, strictly business. It's James Knox again.

CHAMBERS

Ah. Well, what else can you expect from a day that begins with getting up in the morning? Send him in.

Ms. Davis starts to leave.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)

No, wait. It's almost time for the bell. I need to go out and patrol the halls.

DAVIS

(joking)

Is that to give the appearance that you actually do something around here?

Ray plays along.

CHAMBERS

That's it. You caught me.

I'll be back after Second Period starts. Have him sit for a while -- maybe he'll have a really good excuse worked up by then.

DAVIS

Okay, Boss.

CHAMBERS

Hmm, Boss.

He savors the word.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)

Bosss.

I like the sound of that.

She leaves, laughing.

DAVIS

You idiot.

He opens a side door, and steps directly into the hall, after taking a moment to watch Ms. Davis walk away.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY, NEAR MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Chambers steps into the hallway. Bowie High's police officer, JOE FRANKLIN, 32, is coming towards him.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Hi, Ray. I'll take the first floor and the grounds.

CHAMBERS

Good. I'll do the top two floors. Thanks, Joe.

The CLOCK on the wall reads 8:54, but clicks to 8:55 immediately, followed by the ringing of the BELL to end First Period. The NOISE LEVEL in the hallway makes a quantum leap, and students appear from everywhere. Mr. Chambers looks both ways, then heads in the direction of the stairwell.

As he starts up the stairs, a few puffs of powder drift from under his shoes. Students coming down the stairs are raising an even larger cloud.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)

Did the custodians not sweep today?

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Students are escaping the classroom as rapidly as possible. Robert makes his way toward the door. He's past Ms. Campbell's desk. He's almost to the door...

CAMPBELL

Robert. Can you wait for a second?

Two more steps and he would have been free.

ROBERT

Yes ma'am.

He returns to her desk.

CAMPBELL

Robert, I'm worried about you. Your work has been really erratic lately. You know what I mean by erratic?

ROBERT

Sure, I do. It means kind of like all over the place.

CAMPBELL

Exactly. And you knew the assignment from Macbeth, too, didn't you?

ROBERT

Yes, ma'am. Well, I read it on my own last year. We were doing some scenes from Shakespeare in Mr. Jennings' class...

Ms. Campbell tenses at the mention of Mr. Jennings.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

...and I just got interested. I read a bunch of them.

Tina has appeared outside the door, and is waiting impatiently.

CAMPBELL

That's great, Robert. Look, I know you have to get to your next class, but I really need to see some improvement. You're too smart to let your grades start slipping.

ROBERT

Okay, thanks ma'am. I'll work harder. I've just been really tired lately.

CAMPBELL

All right. But let me know if you're having problems. Okay?

ROBERT

Okay.

He goes.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

TINA  
What did she want?

ROBERT  
Nothing much. Just school stuff.

Tina has lost almost a minute of her time with Robert, so she shifts into overdrive as they head into the stairwell.

TINA  
Man, you should have seen me in drama class, 'Berto!

INT. SECOND FLOOR HALLWAY, AT THE STAIRWELL -- DAY

Tina and Robert arrive on the second floor, and head down the hall, a few tiny puffs of powder coming from underfoot.

TINA  
And this scene I did was really great. I was pretending I was suicidal and wanted to kill myself and all.

Robert isn't listening to her. He does look tired.

ROBERT  
Yeah, sure.

TINA  
No, really. I think it was good. Everybody said that I...

Her conversation is replaced by Patti's and Jennifer's, who pass them in the hall going the opposite direction.

JENNIFER  
Well, so what if I am okay about going out with him. Did you have to handle it like that?

They are heading for the stairwell, laughing and giving each other a hard time all at once, as only true friends can.

PATTI  
Well, if I hadn't "handled it like that", he'd probably still be asking you out after you end up in the old folks home.

JENNIFER

Oh, come on. I was just unsure, that's all. I'm still a little unsure. Besides, it's a woman's right to keep men waiting, isn't it?

And they enter the stairwell, heading up to the third floor.

INT. STAIRWELL BETWEEN 2ND AND 3RD FLOORS -- CONTINUOUS

PATTI

Well, you have to actually be a woman to get that right, don't you?

Jennifer stomps her foot in fake protest.

JENNIFER

Be a woman? This coming from a child.

She notices a little wisp of dark powder swelling up around her sandals.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Aah! My new Jimmy Choos!

And they continue up the stairs.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- DAY

Patti and Jennifer approach the top of the stairwell. Yes, the powder follows them onto the third floor.

Jennifer removes her sandals and blows a thin layer of powder off them, then slips them back on again.

JENNIFER

What's with this place? Don't they ever clean?

PATTI

Stop thinking about your shoes for a minute. We're talking about important stuff. Men and women.

JENNIFER

Shoes are important.

Patti gives her a "get real" look.

JENNIFER (CONT'D)

Okay, fine. Talk.

PATTI

Well, the thing you forgot to mention is that it's also the man's prerogative to move on to better territory if they get fed up with their woman's idiocy.

JENNIFER

Now, wait a minute. I'm still not sure he's right for me, but I don't think I was all that bad.

PATTI

Oh, yes you were. Norman seems like a nice guy. He's cute, too. You could have lost him to some other hot babe -- like me.

As they head for their lockers, they're kidding around again.

JENNIFER

Well, I know you don't stand a hope in hell of getting him away from me, so I'll forget you said that.

PATTI

Oh ho, Miss Smart Ass, you better be nice to me or I'll... or I'll... I'll tell Norman you have an STD.

They are at their lockers now.

JENNIFER

Oh, yeah? If you do that, I'll have to tell him that you gave it to me. And that you got it from your brother.

Patti slams her books into her locker.

PATTI

Oh, yeah? Well, if you do that, I'll tell him you...

Now they can't think of things, and it's just getting silly.

PATTI (CONT'D)

...drink the milk from your cereal through your nose -- with a straw.

Jennifer has put her books away now too, so she slams her locker door and gets back into the fray. They are now nose to nose in their mock feud.

The smiley-face locker is visible behind them.

JENNIFER

Oh, yeah? Well, if you do that, I'll tell him you don't even use a straw. You just pour the cereal all over your naked body and get your Great Dane to lick it up.

PATTI

Oh, yeah? You wish. We don't even have a Great Dane. Bruiser's a Saint Bernard. They slobber better.

And they are marching away from the lockers, across the hall, towards Mr. Jennings' room. He is watching this whole display with great interest. Their "argument" degenerates rapidly.

JENNIFER

Oh, yeah?

PATTI

Yeah!

JENNIFER

Says who?

PATTI

Says me!

JENNIFER

Who?

As they pass by...

JENNINGS

Good morning, girls.

PATTI & JENNIFER

Good morning, Mr. Jennings.

He calls after them.

JENNINGS

Oh, by the way. Today's not Abuse Day -- it's Improvisation Day.

Patti stops and turns back to him with a big grin.

PATTI

That's the same thing, and you know it.

And she goes inside. Mr. Jennings stands at his doorway for a moment longer. The crowd in the hallway is beginning to thin a bit.

He hesitates, indecisive, then walks across the hall to Ms. Campbell's room. She is standing at her door also. As he gets closer, she glances inside her room apprehensively and speaks in an oddly formal, fairly loud voice.

CAMPBELL

Good morning, Mr. Jennings.

JENNINGS

Uh, good morning, Rita. What's the...

And a STUDENT leaves her room.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Oh, I get it. Discretion. Any more rugrats in there?

He peeks inside, see no one. He looks back at Ms. Campbell. She is not pleased. He tries to be endearing and puts on his best smile.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Hi, Rita.

CAMPBELL

Hi, Alan. I thought you said we were going to keep it strictly business here at school.

JENNINGS

Well, I know what I said, but after all, Spring is practically nearly almost right around the corner. You have to give me a little leeway.

CAMPBELL

I think I gave you plenty of -- leeway -- last night.

He tries to put his hand on her waist. She pushes it away.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

And we can't discuss this right now.

JENNINGS

Why? What are you doing right now?

CAMPBELL

It's my off-period. I'm going to do what I usually do with all my spare time. Grade essays.

JENNINGS

Not all your spare time.

She's not in the mood for playful banter right now.

CAMPBELL

Hide and watch.

He's still trying to kid around with her.

JENNINGS

Actually, Rita, nothing would give me greater...

She cuts him off.

CAMPBELL

Alan. You have a class. I'll talk to you later.

She steps back inside her room, closing the door.

JENNINGS

Okay. Right.

He's dejected at being rejected.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Later.

As he heads back toward his room, Cynthia and IRENE FOX, 16, come down the hall, heading for the stairwell. Cynthia glances back at Mr. Jennings.

CYNTHIA

Have you heard about them?

Irene looks around her.

IRENE

Who?

CYNTHIA  
 Jennings and Campbell, of course.  
 Everybody in the school has known  
 about them for weeks.

They are nearly to the stairwell.

GIRL  
 Well, I haven't heard. Give.

CYNTHIA  
 Well, you know Rochelle Dotson? She  
 saw them at a movie together about  
 three weeks ago, and you know what  
 else?

They are on their way down the stairs.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY, AT THE STAIRWELL -- DAY

IRENE  
 No! In the same car? Really? Here?

Cynthia is nodding her head "Yes" through all of this. They  
 walk a few more steps.

IRENE (CONT'D)  
 Are you sure?

And they pass the office, where James Knox is looking out  
 through the glass in the office door. His face is pressed  
 to the glass, and he's making steam faces with his breath.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- IMMEDIATELY AFTER

James leaves the door and returns to the counter in the  
 office, taking up his standard pose, gazing at Ms. Davis.  
 After a few moments, she senses his eyes on her.

DAVIS  
 Can I help you, James?

JAMES  
 I thought you'd never ask. You could  
 go out with me this weekend. That  
 would help me out a lot.

Ms. Davis has heard this kind of stuff before. She stifles  
 a grin, and pretends she didn't hear James.

DAVIS

Why don't you sit down, James? I know Mr. Chambers is anxious to talk to you.

James remembers why he's there, and makes an attempt at a reprieve.

JAMES

He's taking an awful long time. Maybe he's going to be too busy to see me today.

She's beginning to enjoy this game.

DAVIS

Well, he is a very busy man, but I heard him say specifically, "I want to talk to James about this, no matter what".

JAMES

Oh. Okay, okay. Wait. I got it. I can just go to Second Period, and then he can send for me when he has the time.

DAVIS

Let me see, do my job, or do what you want me to. Do my job, or what you want. Choices, choices. Nope. I don't think so. Just sit.

JAMES

(very serious)

Ms. Davis -- I shouldn't be missing class -- this is wasted time. Please? I even like Second Period.

DAVIS

Okay. I've got to hear this one. Why do you like Second Period, James?

JAMES

It's my teacher. Ms. Sampson. She inspires me to "be the best that I can be".

DAVIS

What you really mean is, Ms. Sampson is hot.

JAMES

Well... yes, she is very attractive, now that I think about it. But she's nothing compared to you, Ms. Davis ...may I call you Ellen?

DAVIS

James, the day you can call me by my first name, is the day armadillos will fly. Sit.

James waits for a few seconds, debating whether to give up or not, shrugs, and turns toward the bench, mumbling under his breath.

JAMES

Gah! Sit. Sit. That's all I hear around here.

He does sit, though, head down, apparently defeated.

JAMES (CONT'D)

They must think I'm a dog. That must be it. Here, James. That's a good boy. Sit, James.

Roll over, James.

Play dead, James.

After a moment, James' head lifts a little, and he checks Ms. Davis out to see if she's paying attention. An audible SIGH from him tells us she isn't. Suddenly the BELL for Second Period rings, and James leaps to his feet.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Oh, my god, my books! They're still in Mrs. Rossbach's class. You gotta let me go get them. Somebody'll steal them. I'll have to pay for them. My dad'll kill me. My life will be over. Please! You gotta let me go!

Ms. Davis shakes her head in resignation, and waves James away.

DAVIS

Go. Go.

James sprints for the door. Ms. Davis shouts after him.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

Two minutes, that's all you've got.

The door SLAMS.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

Don't run.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY, AT THE STAIRWELL -- DAY

James flies into the hallway, and spins on his sneakers, trying to keep his balance. He is on the stairs, headed for the third floor in seconds. Mr. Chambers arrives seconds later, just missing him.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY, AT THE STAIRWELL -- DAY

James zooms out of the stairwell, mumbling all sorts of things to himself, and heads for Mrs. Rossbach's room. He opens the door and stands in the doorway, panting.

INT. MRS. ROSSBACH'S ROOM -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

ROSSBACH

James! What are you doing here? I thought I sent you down to see Mr. Chambers. Surely he isn't through ripping your ears off yet.

James is suddenly meekness personified.

JAMES

Uh, no ma'am, he isn't through with me. I mean he hasn't seen me yet. I, uh, I just came to get my books.

ROSSBACH

Well then, what are you waiting for? Don't just stand there, get them and get out of here. Disrupting two classes in one day is just too much.

James works his way back to his desk, stepping on people, making a general nuisance of himself, and repeating the process as he returns to the door. He stops and turns toward Mrs. Rossbach, as if he wants to say something.

ROSSBACH (CONT'D)

Go.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- DAY

As James reaches the stairwell, his attention is distracted by a small plastic box on the wall. The Fire Alarm. James looks back and forth to see if anyone can see him. He stares at the Fire Alarm. It stares back at him. Good and Evil are obviously at war within him. The box is waist high, just about right for a karate kick.

JAMES

How would Jet Li do it? A roundhouse kick, sure.

James takes a practice kick, spinning on one leg. He misses by a mile. He shifts in place a little, warming up, then takes another pass at the box. He catches it on the edge, and the cover flies off, shattered in several pieces, but he also drops his books and grabs his foot.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ow. Ow. Ow.

He hops on his good foot for a few seconds, then tests his injury. He can walk. He'll be okay. But will the fire alarm? He faces off against the coverless alarm box.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Should I do this? If I get caught, I'll be on the dooky farm forever.

Right -- I shouldn't.

Evil wins this one, hands down.

JAMES (CONT'D)

But I'm going to anyway.

He throws the switch. A loud JANGLY ALARM sounds. James grabs his books and hurls himself toward the stairs.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Ms. Davis and Mrs. Randle hear the sound of the alarm, and look up, startled.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Ms. Campbell is grading papers, hears the sound of the alarm, and leans on her elbows, covering her face with her hands.

CAMPBELL

Why me?

INT. MRS. WATKINS' CLASS -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Mrs. Watkins is standing at the front of the first row in her classroom. She has just placed the test face down on the first desk. She snatches it back and retreats to her desk. She is clearly dismayed at the interruption. Her students are not unhappy at all, though.

WATKINS

That's a fire alarm. Let's go downstairs now. Be quiet, and line up outside. I'm right behind you.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY, AT THE STAIRWELL -- DAY

James races headlong into the hall, and heads for the office as fast as his feet will carry him. The alarm is just as loud on this floor, pulsing in a regular, urgent rhythm. Mrs. Randle opens the office door, and nearly runs into James.

RANDLE

Oh, excuse me, James.

She leans back inside the office and shouts.

RANDLE (CONT'D)

I'll go to the southeast corner, and make sure everyone gets out.

James holds the door for her, but steps inside as soon as she passes the doorway.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Ms. Davis is heading into the P.A. room. She sees James and stops speaks to him with urgency.

DAVIS

James, good. Put your books down and go with Mrs. Randle. She just passed you.

Go. Move it.

And she goes into the P.A. room. James grins, shrugs, and heads out the door.

INT. INSIDE DRAMA ROOM -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Mr. Jennings is at the door to the drama room, herding kids into the hallway with a bad German accent.

JENNINGS

Okay, mein liebenkinder, you know  
vere to go and vat to do, yah?

He sees Patti and Jennifer still frozen into a statue pose,  
hugging each other, giggling furiously.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Hey, you two. Statues can burn up,  
you know. Come on, let's go outside.

They unfreeze.

PATTI

Aw, Mr. Jennings. Can't we stay up  
here? It's just a fire drill.

JENNINGS

Nope. The rules say you have to go.  
Come on.

PATTI

We won't tell. Promise.

JENNINGS

Sorry. Now get out of here, you  
two. Out to the football field.

Patti and Jennifer head for the door.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Patti and Jennifer leave Mr. Jennings' room and head toward  
the stairwell. Ms. Campbell shuts the door to her room the  
same time as Mr. Jennings. He waits by the door for her.

She sees him and turns in the other direction, walking toward  
the stairwell at the other end of the hall. Mr. Jennings  
opens the door to his room, steps inside, unzips the outer  
pocket on his backpack, and gets his cell phone. Then he  
heads for the stairwell, following his students.

INT. BOYS' DRESSING ROOM -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Second Period has barely started, so some students can't  
decide whether to finish getting into gym clothes or get  
back into street clothes. Robert is already mostly dressed  
for P.E. He pulls on his t-shirt and leaves the dressing  
room, grabbing a basketball from the rack on the way out.

EXT. A HOUSTON STREET, NEAR BOWIE HIGH -- DAY

The Creep is sitting in his car, staring at the school, pounding out a nervous rhythm on the steering wheel.

He looks at his WATCH. It reads 9:05. He pulls a cell phone out of his glove compartment and starts to dial a number. He stops in mid-dial when he notices the students beginning to pour out of the building.

CREEP

Damn.

He is visibly angry. He gets out of the car and heads toward the school, mumbling in a barely discernible voice.

CREEP (CONT'D)

Damn fools. They're just as stupid now as they were then.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Parks, both assistant principals, and Ms. Davis arrive in the main office from their offices and the P.A. room at roughly the same time.

PARKS

What the hell is going on?

STRAUSS

I don't know. I don't have a fire drill scheduled for another week.

DAVIS

This one's apparently real. An alarm's blinking on the third floor.

CHAMBERS

I'll go check it out.

And he is gone.

DAVIS

I called 911. Was that the right thing to do?

PARKS

Oh, of course, Ellen. That's exactly right. Even if it turns out to be false, we always need to call them. Let's check the halls for stragglers.

And they're on their way.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Students and teachers are everywhere. Students are creating the constant fire-drill chatter that's not supposed to happen, but always does. Teachers are trying to get them quiet and maintain some form of order.

The Creep is watching from the opposite side of the street.

Ms. Campbell drifts along, continuing to read from the stack of papers she has balanced on her arm, occasionally scribbling a note. Mrs. Watkins is walking next to her.

WATKINS

Why do they have these fire drills, anyway? They never warn us, and all it does is disrupt our classes.

Ms. Campbell's concentration is focused on her papers.

CAMPBELL

Right, Viola.

WATKINS

Well, I'm certainly glad I hadn't given out my test on the Industrial Revolution yet. I would have had to completely redo it if any of them had seen it. I worked for weeks getting it ready.

CAMPBELL

Uh huh.

WATKINS

You're not listening to me, are you, Rita?

That's right, she's still in the ozone.

CAMPBELL

Right, Viola.

WATKINS

Well!

Highly offended, Mrs. Watkins stomps away. Ms. Campbell looks up, as if to say, "What did I do?". Her PURSE RINGS. She digs in it and pulls out her cell phone.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- SAME TIME

Mr. Jennings is with his Second Period students, near the football field. He has his cell phone to his ear.

JENNINGS

Come on, Rita. Answer.

She does.

CAMPBELL (FILTER)

Hello?

JENNINGS

Uh, hi. Since we've got a few minutes, I thought we could talk about -- well, you know.

CAMPBELL (FILTER)

Alan? Can your students hear you?

JENNINGS

Well, yes, I guess so. But they're not paying any attention.

CAMPBELL (FILTER)

Look, Alan. I do want to talk to about this -- situation we have, but not right now. Okay?

JENNINGS

Are you sure? I just want to...

Patti walks up to him, with a playful look on her face.

PATTI

Mr. Jennings, how long are we going to be out here?

JENNINGS

Okay, sir. I agree. Yes, sir. I'll call you later. Bye.

He hangs up.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

What is it, Patti?

She pretends to swoon from heat exhaustion.

PATTI

How long are they going to make us stand out here? I'm very fragile you know. I'll faint if I have to stay here in the blazing heat of the desert, waiting for Viggo Mortensen to rescue me on his valiant stud.

JENNINGS

That's valiant steed, and it's probably only seventy degrees right now. I think you'll live.

PATTI

Okay, but the humidity's gonna wreck Jennifer's hair. If she's out here another ten minutes we'll have to downgrade her to just excessively pretty instead of ravishingly adorable.

Patti bounces over to where Jennifer is standing, watching Robert and some other boys play basketball.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Ms. Campbell fiddles with her cell phone, clutching her papers under her arm. Furious with Alan, she nearly loses her grip on her papers, but finally gets a pocket of her purse open, and puts the phone away.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY, AT THE STAIRWELL -- DAY

Mr. Chambers arrives on the third floor, and sees the broken pieces of plastic below the fire alarm box.

He bends over to look at the plastic cover and notices smears of powder on the floor. He wipes his finger in the powder and sniffs it, then picks up a piece of the shattered plastic and examines it. Suddenly it dawns on him.

CHAMBERS

James.

Nah, it can't be. He's in the office.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL -- DAY

The students have moved to the outer perimeter of the school grounds, and are lined up on the sidewalk. The teachers are counting heads to make sure no students are missing.

The Creep starts moving down the sidewalk toward the corner where Norman is fiddling with the digital camera he got during First Period. Screamdog is watching Norman intently. Norman notices him, and tenses up a little when Screamdog comes closer. Screamdog leans over, studying the camera, and Norman flinches, expecting the worst.

SCREAMDOG

That camera's tight, huh?

A question, instead of a fist in the face, isn't what Norman expected. He also has to process some of Screamdog's slang, so he stops to think for a second before he answers.

NORMAN

Uh, yeah. It's kinda neat.

SCREAMDOG

Are you down with it yet?

NORMAN

Pretty much. It's got a memory card inside, and it stores pictures on the card. When you fill up a card, you can download the pictures to a computer, then take some more.

SCREAMDOG

So the camera just horks up the pics, then you can do a do-over?

NORMAN

Uh, right. Or you can just put a blank memory card in. That way you never run out of memory.

SCREAMDOG

I could use something like that for my brain. I do an lot of brain-farts.

This guy isn't so scary, after all.

NORMAN

Yeah, I know what you mean.

Norman shows Screamdog the view screen on the back of the camera. James walks up and stands near them, watching what they're doing.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

The neatest part is that you can look at this little LCD panel and see whether a picture is what you want, so you know whether to take it over again or not.

SCREAMDOG

When it's my turn, I'm gonna take close-up pictures of maggots.

NORMAN

Uh. Okay.

SCREAMDOG

That's what I want to call my band when I get one -- Dead Dog Maggots.

Before Norman can come up with a response, the Creep walks up behind them.

CREEP

What's going on? Why is everybody out here?

Norman, James and Screamdog turn toward the Creep.

JAMES

It's a fire drill, butthole.

Screamdog laughs. A hearty, full-of-gusto laugh.

The Creep is already angry, but this is too much. He tenses up, ready to punch James, but hesitates a moment too long. Ultimately he resorts to the only weapon he can afford at the moment, a juvenile retort.

CREEP

Well, thank you so much -- butthole.

Screamdog laughs again.

The Creep has his answer, so he heads back across the street, cursing incoherently. Norman watches him go for a second, then he steps out of line and starts to aim the camera.

P.O.V. OF THE DIGITAL CAMERA -- CONTINUOUS

The Creep steps into the street. The camera is focusing in and out. A picture snaps and captures him looking to the left, then he's walking away. The camera zooms in closer, focuses, and takes another shot as he gets into his car.

The Creep's face is marginally visible in the shot, but his hair covers it a little. The car's license plate is visible, but partially obscured by some shrubbery.

BACK TO SCENE

Norman shakes his head.

NORMAN  
Where do I know that guy from?

And then it comes to him.

FLASHBACK -- INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- THAT MORNING

Norman is happy. He has just been given the good news. He's going on a date with Jennifer. He spins, he turns, he jumps. He nearly collides with someone. It's the Creep.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Norman has a puzzled look on his face as he watches the Creep get back in his car. Norman can see the Creep banging on his steering wheel so hard the car shakes.

NORMAN  
What's he so pissed off about? And if he's a student, how come he gets to leave during a fire drill?

JAMES  
Huh? What the hell are you talking about?

NORMAN  
Nothing. Sorry.

Norman's expression shows that he clearly believes that something isn't quite right.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY, NEAR MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Chambers is coming down the stairs from the third floor. Mr. Parks and Officer Franklin round the corner from the other end of the hall. They meet near the office door. Mr. Chambers shows the piece of plastic to Mr. Parks.

CHAMBERS  
There's no fire, sir. One of our students probably needs to be roasted over the coals, though.

PARKS

They broke a fire alarm? Any ideas who?

CHAMBERS

I have a couple of potential candidates, one in particular.

PARKS

Let me guess, Screaming Puppy, or whatever he calls himself?

CHAMBERS

Screamdog. Yeah, Maybe.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Or James Knox?

CHAMBERS

Normally I'd place my bets on James in a heartbeat, but I think he was in the office at the time. Whoever it is, it'll be hard to prove.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

What about the security cameras?

CHAMBERS

They're running. I'll take a look at the tape, but I'm not sure they'll show anything well enough.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Let me guess. The camera that points in that direction is at the other end of the hall, so all you'll see is a blur because it's so far away.

They move toward the office door.

CHAMBERS

That's about the size of it.

PARKS

I've been telling the district for years that we need two cameras at each corner, not just one in each corner, pointed in one direction.

CHAMBERS

True. But with budget cuts all over the place...

PARKS

I know. Well, see what you can do. You could use the old "we've got witnesses" routine, see if it gets you anywhere.

They start inside.

CHAMBERS

Maybe so. Worth a try.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Mrs. Strauss and Ms. Davis have already returned from their check of the halls, and are anxiously looking out of the windows. Mr. Parks takes charge of the situation.

PARKS

Ellen, call the fire department back right away. See if it isn't too late to cancel. Let's get back to business as quickly as we can.

They scatter to their jobs. Mr. Chambers tries to make light of the situation.

CHAMBERS

Well, just another ordinary day.

Mr. Parks isn't listening.

PARKS

I hate it when things go wrong.

CHAMBERS

(sighing)

Yeah.

A BUZZER sounds to signal the students to return. Ms. Davis looks up from the phone.

DAVIS

They say it's too late. The fire engine is...

A fairly LOUD SIREN is heard outside.

DAVIS (CONT'D)

...on its way.

Mr. Parks groans.

PARKS

I'll go down and talk to them, but they're not going to like it. Does anybody have any Maalox?

Ms. Davis reaches in her desk drawer and tosses some plastic-sealed tablets to him.

PARKS (CONT'D)

Thanks.

He turns to go. Mr. Chambers looks around the office. Someone is missing.

CHAMBERS

Ellen -- where's James?

DAVIS

I sent him outside with Susan.

INT. FIRST FLOOR HALLWAY, NEAR MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

Mr. Parks opens the office door and heads toward the stairs. Mrs. Randle arrives with James in tow. Several other students, Norman among them, are moving into the stairwell, heading for the third floor. The puffs of powder are getting smaller as the students spread the powder over a wider area.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY, AT THE STAIRWELL -- DAY

Norman comes out of the stairwell, heading for class. When he gets close to Jennifer's locker, he stops and looks around for a few seconds, hoping to see her. When she doesn't appear right away, he moves on.

Kathryn Myers is at her locker. A BOY is leaning on the smiley-face locker, talking to her. Mrs. Watkins passes by, taps him on the shoulder, and motions him into her room. Kathryn rummages through her locker for a notebook, then SLAMS the locker door shut several times, VERY, VERY HARD, trying to get it to stay shut.

INT. MRS. WATKINS' CLASS -- DAY

Mrs. Watkins hears the LOCKER SLAMMING in the hallway, goes to her door and shuts it to block out the sound. She starts handing out the test.

One FEMALE STUDENT begins flipping through the pages. Her jaw drops farther and farther as she realizes that it is three, four, five, no -- six pages long. She sighs, resigns herself to it, and settles down to work.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ms. Campbell is seated at her desk, grading papers. Kathryn passes by the open door and pops her head in.

KATHRYN

Ms. Campbell? Hi! That essay that's due today? Does it have to be two whole pages?

How many times does she have to explain it to these kids?

CAMPBELL

Was that the assignment, Kathryn?

Kathryn comes in the room, holding a sheet of paper. She looks at it, then holds it up for Ms. Campbell to see.

KATHRYN

Well, yes ma'am. You made us write it down. Two pages.

CAMPBELL

Then that's what it needs to be, isn't it?

KATHRYN

Okay, I guess so.

And, as she walks away, thinking Ms. Campbell can't hear her, she says...

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

Well, eat me, I'm sure.

Ms. Campbell looks up sharply.

CAMPBELL

What did she say?

She marches to the door. Kathryn is nowhere in sight.

There are just too many interruptions.

She gathers up her papers from the desk, and carries them to a table at the back of the room, then turns to face the door. She can still see the hallway through the door window.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

That's no good.

She drags the table against the wall that's next to the hallway and looks again. This time she can't see into the hallway. She goes and fetches her MP3 player and some noise-canceling headphones from her desk. Then she goes to the door, opens it, and looks out into the hall. Nobody in sight. She locks the door, then steps back inside.

ANGLE ON KATHERINE IN HALLWAY

Kathryn is coming back from the stairwell. She sees Ms. Campbell shutting the door to her room.

BACK TO SCENE

Ms. Campbell returns to the table. Breathing a sigh of relief, she slips the headphones on, turns on the MP3 player, and cranks up the volume.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- DAY

Kathryn goes to Ms. Campbell's door. It's locked. She bangs on it.

KATHRYN

Ms. Campbell. Ms. Campbell.

Kathryn looks through the window. She sees Ms. Campbell scoot her chair closer to the table and disappear from sight.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

I need a pass to get to class, dammit.

Patti and Jennifer come out of Mr. Jennings' room to prepare for a scene. They start to cross the hall to their lockers. Patti veers off course and walks up to Ms. Campbell's door.

PATTI

Hi, Kathryn. Watcha doin'?

KATHRYN

None of your damn business.

And she leaves.

JENNIFER

There goes the Queen Bitch of the Universe. What was she doing banging on Campbell's door anyway?

PATTI

I don't know.

(MORE)

PATTI (CONT'D)

Ooh, did you hear the rumor about Mr. Jennings and Ms. Campbell?

They peek through the window into Ms. Campbell's room. They can't see her.

JENNIFER

What rumor?

PATTI

That they're doin' it?

JENNIFER

Eww, gross. They're old.

PATTI

Not so old. They're in their 30's, I think.

JENNIFER

Yeah. That's like twice as old as us.

PATTI

Hey, did you know if you married Mr. Jennings, your name would be Jen Jennings?

JENNINGS

Well, did you know if you married Michael Jackson, your name would be Patti Stupid?

PATTI

Tell me about it.

They sit directly below the smiley-face locker.

JENNIFER

Why do you suppose Mr. Jennings wants us to be married sisters who are sick of each other's kids?

PATTI

I don't know. I guess just to bring some conflict into the scene.

JENNIFER

Maybe it's to make us realize that sometimes teenagers are little farts,  
(MORE)

JENNIFER (CONT'D)  
so we'll appreciate what he has to  
put up with every day.

PATTI  
What do you mean, "sometimes"?

Jennifer smiles. Life is better when you have a friend.

JENNIFER  
He certainly couldn't have been  
thinking about us.

PATTI  
Well, not me anyway.

Social time is over, time to get down to classwork.

PATTI (CONT'D)

Okay. Let's figure out what to do.

JENNIFER  
Let's just be our moms. My mom hates  
my cousins. I could so pretend to  
be my mom.

PATTI  
Well, I'm gonna have to be somebody  
else. Our family gets along pretty  
well. Does your mom really hate  
your cousins?

JENNIFER  
No. It's more like she gets sick to  
her stomach when they visit.

PATTI  
Oh. Okay. So can we use that?

INT. MR. CHAMBERS' OFFICE -- DAY

James is sitting across the desk from Mr. Chambers, who is  
leaning back in his chair, rotating the piece of plastic  
from the broken fire alarm between his thumb and forefingers.

CHAMBERS  
This look familiar, James?

This is way too simple.

JAMES  
A piece of plastic?

CHAMBERS  
Very good. This is a special piece of plastic, though. Somebody in Mrs. Rossbach's classroom saw how it got broken. How do you suppose it got broken, James?

James thinks about it. Can you see the fire alarm from Mrs. Rossbach's room?

P.O.V. INSIDE JAMES' MIND -- MRS. ROSSBACH'S ROOM

James is standing in the middle of the room. The door is open. His vision zooms through the door. He sees himself standing by the shattered alarm with a sledgehammer.

Just as suddenly he's back into the room. A student is whispering in Mrs. Rossbach's ear, she nods her head vigorously "Yes". Everyone in the room turns and looks at James. He starts to sweat buckets.

INT. MR. CHAMBERS' OFFICE -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

James isn't actively sweating, but he is starting to bead up a little bit. Trying to remain calm, he says...

JAMES  
Is this why I'm here -- to play Twenty Questions?

Realizing he doesn't know that James set off the alarm, Mr. Chambers reverts to the original reason James was sent here.

CHAMBERS  
No. Just one question for now.

He holds up the discipline card Mrs. Rossbach sent with James.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)  
You've read Mrs. Rossbach's discipline card, I presume.

James sits up straight and answers politely. He's prepared.

JAMES  
Oh, yes sir.

CHAMBERS  
Did you really call Andrea Gibson  
that?

James has a look of shocked innocence on his face.

JAMES  
Andrea? Oh no, sir. I was talking  
about the circus.

Okay, he's got to hear this one.

CHAMBERS  
The circus?

JAMES  
Yeah -- I was talking about those  
acrobatic kinds of dogs. I wasn't  
calling Andrea a "flipping bitch".

Mr. Chambers just shakes his head in disbelief, not really  
sure what to do next. At that moment, the intercom buzzes.  
He punches a button and picks up the phone.

CHAMBERS  
Ray Chambers.  
  
What? You're kidding! Okay, I'll  
be right there.

He hangs up the phone and gets up.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)  
Come on, James.

They leave.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

Mrs. Randle and Ms. Davis look up quickly as James and Mr.  
Chambers arrive. James picks up his books from the office  
bench. The two women are anxious and unsure about something.

DAVIS  
Ray, he said that he...

Mr. Chambers stops her quickly with an upraised hand, then  
he escorts James to the door.

CHAMBERS  
Okay, James. Two weeks detention.  
With Mrs. Rossbach. Starts tomorrow.

James turns to face him.

JAMES  
Two weeks? For what?

CHAMBERS  
(deadly serious)  
For putting down the circus -- now  
get back to class.

James opens his mouth to say something, thinks better of it, and leaves. Mr. Chambers makes sure the office door is completely closed, then he turns to the two women.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)  
A bomb?

They both nod "Yes".

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)  
Where's Mr. Parks?

They both shrug their shoulders as if to say, "Who knows?".

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)  
Oh, crap.

He takes a deep breath.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)  
Okay. It's probably just a prank like the fire alarm, but we have to go by the book. Ellen, find Mr. Parks and Officer Warren. Susan, get Mrs. Strauss in here. I'll call the district.

They both leave. Mr. Chambers picks up the phone.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ms. Campbell is sitting at the table, staring at the wall in front of her. She looks at the stack of papers in front of her, and wriggles in her seat, frustrated about something.

CAMPBELL  
Damn him.

She gets her cell phone out of her purse, and stares at it, as if she expects it to ring any second.

When no ring comes, she sets it on the table, puts on her headphones, and picks up another essay. Heaving a sigh, she yawns, then begins to read.

INT. MRS. WATKINS' CLASS -- DAY

Mrs. Watkins has resumed her position as Chief Test Administrator, and is making up for lost time. Students have their heads bent over their tests and are working away.

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- DAY

There's a serious discussion going on.

DAVIS

He said he put a bomb in the school.

PARKS

Right after this other alarm? It has to be a prank.

STRAUSS

But what if it isn't?

PARKS

If the kids find out they can dismiss school anytime they want, it'll be hell around here for the rest of our careers -- which may not be too long.

RANDLE

I'm worried, though. Do we have the right to ignore a bomb threat?

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Not if we follow the book. Ellen, exactly what did this guy say?

DAVIS

Well, he sounded really angry, and the first thing he said was "You stupid A-holes". Okay, he didn't say "a-holes".

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Sure. Anyway.

DAVIS

Then he said something very specific, he said "This morning I put a bomb

(MORE)

DAVIS (CONT'D)  
in the school. It's going to blow  
the crap out of all of you if you  
don't find it." All right, he didn't  
say "crap", either.

Then he said -- and this is the really  
odd part -- he said "You would have  
had at least an hour to find it, but  
you probably wasted twenty minutes  
with that stupid fire drill".

Officer Franklin looks out the window.

OFFICER FRANKLIN  
He must have been watching us.

CHAMBERS  
Sure sounds like it.

PARKS  
He didn't say anything else? Where  
the bomb was, what kind of bomb, how  
it was going to detonate, anything?

DAVIS  
No. He was shouting, and he said it  
really quickly. I asked him where  
it was, and he just said, "Shut up,  
bi..." -- the "b" word -- "your time  
is almost up". Then he hung up.

PARKS  
How much time did he say?

DAVIS, STRAUSS & CHAMBERS (LINES OVERLAP)

DAVIS  
Well, he didn't. He said...

STRAUSS  
I can't believe that someone would  
deliberately...

CHAMBERS  
Shouldn't we be thinking about finding  
out if there really is a...

Officer Franklin interrupts the nervous outbursts.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Wait a minute. We can analyze this outside, but we need to evacuate the building first.

PARKS

Right. You're right. I'll call the district. Ellen, you call 911. Ruth, switch on the alarm.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

No, wait. No alarm. If there is a bomb, electricity could trigger it.

CHAMBERS

But we just had a fire alarm go off, and it didn't affect it.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

I know, but it's always a possibility. Procedure says no alarm, no radios no walkie-talkies. Just make a loud-speaker announcement. Say that we need everyone to return to their fire-drill locations to finish the drill. But whatever you do, don't use the word "bomb".

PARKS

What else?

OFFICER FRANKLIN

I'll call in the 911 on my cell phone. One of you needs to call the district, but some of us also need to stay in place here until we make sure everybody gets out of the building. That means we need to make a sweep of halls and restrooms and classrooms.

If any of you don't want to, I understand.

STRAUSS

I'll go make the announcement.

CHAMBERS

Do we each take a floor, or what?

INT. INSIDE DRAMA ROOM -- DAY

Jennifer and Patti are finishing their improv about the quarreling sisters.

JENNIFER

All right! If that's the way you feel about it!

PATTI

It is.

JENNIFER

Then I just won't bring Billy and Suzie over anymore.

PATTI

Fine.

JENNIFER

Fine, but what started all this?

PATTI

Oh, it's the way Billy jumps all over the furniture and grabs at you. And he creeps me out with that really stupid whiny, gravelly voice.

Jennifer imitates "Billy".

JENNIFER

You mean this voice?

PATTI

Yeah. That's the one. I hate that. And he's always saying things like "Bless us and splash us, my pretty". What's that all about?

JENNIFER

"My precious". It's "my precious".

PATTI

What is?

JENNIFER

He's pretending to be Gollum.

PATTI

You mean the little guy from the Lord of the Rings?

JENNIFER

Yeah.

PATTI

Oh. So, I'll bring the kids over tomorrow? Like ten o'clock?

JENNIFER

Okay, sure. You didn't recognize Gollum?

PATTI

I've got six kids. When do I get a chance to go to the movies anymore?

JENNIFER

Oh. Right.

And they bow. The audience applauds and makes so much noise that they don't hear the announcement for a few seconds.

JENNINGS

Whoa, everybody get quiet.

STRAUSS (FILTER)

...need to complete the last drill.  
Thank you for your cooperation.  
Please begin exiting the building...

Mr. Jennings shouts to get louder than the loudspeaker.

JENNINGS

All right, everybody. Back outside.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ms. Campbell is still at the table, trying to work while she listens to music on her headphones. She does hear something, though, and pulls her headphones off.

STRAUSS (FILTER)

...follow your teachers to the appropriate location outside.

Teachers, take your attendance books and verify that all of your students are with you once you're outside.

CAMPBELL

What? Not another one!

INT. INSIDE DRAMA ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

As they are marching out, he speaks to Patti and Jennifer.

JENNINGS

A very good skit, girls. Is this your fault? Maybe you made Mrs. Rossbach explode with your yelling, and now they can't find her and that's why we're doing this again.

PATTI

Mr. Jennings, you're so weird.

JENNINGS

I know.

He does a bad Elvis impersonation.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Thank you very much. The Drama class has left the building.

He grabs his backpack on the way out the door.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

She goes to her door and looks out into the hall. Students are moving past the door, heading for the stairwell. She goes back to the table and picks up her purse and starts for the door, but stops.

CAMPBELL

No! This is ridiculous. I'm not going out there for who knows how long when I could be working.

She marches back to the table ranting about life in general.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

I've got too much work to do as it is, over a hundred more essays to grade and not enough time to do them.

She sits down heavily in her chair.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

And I'm so tired. I didn't get any sleep last night. I need a break.

She notices her cell phone is still sitting on the table. She picks it up and looks at the speed dial list she has taped on the back of the phone.

ANGLE ON HER PHONE

Number Two is labeled "Mom", Number Three is "Bowie", and Number Four is "Sweetie".

BACK TO SCENE

She smiles and flips the phone over, her finger resting on the Four button, but she doesn't press it. She sets the phone down before she presses it.

She rubs her eyes and holds her head in her hands for a few moments, then she shrugs it off and picks up another essay. She pulls her headphones back on and turns her MP3 player up even louder.

EXT. A HOUSTON STREET, NEAR BOWIE HIGH -- DAY

The Creep is in his car, watching the students pour out of the building. He's grinning with delight this time, drumming on his steering wheel to some forceful internal rhythm.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Boys from the gym class are playing basketball on the outdoor courts nearby. Patti and Jennifer are watching Robert play. He's very good, spinning and charging past some of the other students with ease.

Robert notices the two girls and tosses the ball to another student. He starts walking toward them, but Jennifer walks away. He comes up to Patti.

ROBERT

Why won't she even talk to me?

PATTI

Hi, Robert. I don't know. She says it's because you quit the football team, but I just don't understand why that would make a difference.

ROBERT

I had to quit. The coaches wanted me to play basketball too, but I just can't.

PATTI

Why not? What's the matter?

ROBERT

I tried to tell Jennifer, but she wouldn't listen. She actually did the "talk to the hand" thing with me. Pissed me off.

PATTI

Well, why did you quit the team?

ROBERT

My dad got real sick. My parents won't tell me exactly what it is, but I think it's some kind of cancer.

PATTI

Oh, Robert. I'm so sorry.

ROBERT

I can't afford to play sports right now. I'm working weekends and three or four nights a week in my family's store because my dad can't do it right now, or maybe ever again.

There is an awkward silence.

ROBERT (CONT'D)

I mean I love sports, and I want to play, but some things are just more important. And I'm so tired now from working all the time, that I don't think I'd do the team much good anyway.

PATTI

Are you still planning to go to college?

ROBERT

Maybe, but I don't see how. I was hoping to get a sports scholarship, but I don't know what's going to happen now.

Another silence.

PATTI

Well, I hope things work out for you, Robert. If you ever want to talk about... well, about anything, I'll be glad to. Okay?

ROBERT

Thanks, Patti. That means a lot.

PATTI

Well, I'm gonna go see if I can get that stick out of Jennifer's butt.

Robert laughs.

ROBERT

Okay. You do that. Bye.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- DAY

Mr. Chambers is heading down the hallway, checking classrooms. He comes to Ms. Campbell's door and sees that it's locked. He peeks through the window, but doesn't see anyone.

CHAMBERS

These doors are supposed to stay unlocked during a drill.

He's pulling his keys out when Officer Franklin comes around the corner.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Everyone else has cleared the building. How are you doing?

CHAMBERS

Well, everything aches in the morning, and I can't drink a whole six-pack anymore, but other than that I'm doing all right.

OFFICER FRANKLIN

Very funny, Ray. The building?

CHAMBERS

I'm about done.

He takes another peek inside Ms. Chambers' room, and can't see anything.

CHAMBERS (CONT'D)

Yeah, I think everybody's out. Let's get out of here.

They head for the stairwell.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Ms. Campbell thought she heard something in the hallway. She lifts her headphones for a second, but hears nothing, so she drops them back in place and picks up another essay.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Norman is with his class. He and Screamdog are looking at the camera, reviewing some of the pictures Norman has taken.

SCREAMDOG

That's an awesome picture of Mrs. Watkins. She looks totally pissed off about something.

The pictures of The Creep appear on the LCD screen.

SCREAMDOG (CONT'D)

Now, him. He is one creepy mofo. And that ain't no compliment.

NORMAN

There's definitely something different about him.

SCREAMDOG

What was that you said a while ago, about him being a student? I don't know much, but I know that guy ain't no student.

A fire engine rounds the corner and pulls up in front of the school.

NORMAN

But he was in the school this morning, and he had schoolbooks with him.

SCREAMDOG

Man, haven't you ever been somewhere you weren't supposed to be? Just because you get backstage at a concert don't mean you're no musician.

(MORE)

SCREAMDOG (CONT'D)

But it would be pretty cool.

What was I talkin' about?

NORMAN

About being somewhere you didn't belong?

SCREAMDOG

Yeah, that's it. And that guy don't belong.

NORMAN

I guess you're right, uh, Screamdog.

SCREAMDOG

Aw, you can call me Johnny. I just use Screamdog to piss off the teachers.

A police car arrives, followed by a police van. They pull up to the curb, near the fire engine.

NORMAN

Okay. Johnny. I'm Norman.

SCREAMDOG

Cool.

Norman extends his hand to shake. Screamdog does a series of movements that Norman can't possibly follow, but somehow it ends up in a handshake. Screamdog then points to himself.

SCREAMDOG (CONT'D)

John Quincy Smith.

Norman smiles.

SCREAMDOG (CONT'D)

Yeah, when you got a name like John Smith, you just gotta do somethin' different.

NORMAN

Hey, I understand. Well, I'll be back. I have to go take a picture of a girl.

SCREAMDOG

Hey, go for it, man.

Norman waves goodbye, and starts walking toward the back of the school.

EXT. A HOUSTON STREET, NEAR BOWIE HIGH -- DAY

Police cars begin arriving in force now, followed by a police van. The Creep is in his car, watching, hunched behind the wheel. A police car pulls onto the same street and parks.

CREEP

Whoa. That's a little too close.

The Creep starts his car, and it rumbles into life. He backs slowly into a driveway, then pulls out onto the street again, heading in the other direction.

EXT. FRONT ENTRANCE, BOWIE SR. HIGH SCHOOL -- DAY

WARREN MILLER and ANN SCHWARTZ, two police officers with bomb-sniffing dogs, get out of the police van and enter the building. This really gets the crowd interested. Some of the students want to move closer. Teachers and administrators start working the crowd to get them to stay back.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL -- IMMEDIATELY AFTERWARDS

Screamdog sees the dogs go inside and thinks aloud.

SCREAMDOG

I wonder if my stash is at home. I don't remember. Aw, damn, I'm gonna get busted for sure.

Don Robinson, looking scholarly in his white shirt and tie, has been standing near Screamdog, watching everything.

DON

No, they're not looking for drugs.

SCREAMDOG

Huh?

DON

Yeah, whenever they do a drug sweep, they lock the doors with us inside the classrooms, so we can't go to our lockers and get rid of our stash.

Screamdog looks at Don in a whole new light.

SCREAMDOG

Hey, that's right! I forgot that.  
How'd you know that?

DON

Oh, I know stuff.

SCREAMDOG

Mmm.

DON

Yeah, I'm pretty sure they're looking  
for something dangerous or they  
wouldn't keep us out here. It has  
to be something like a bomb.

This sparks Screamdogg's interest. He shouts enthusiastically.

SCREAMDOG

A bomb! Sweet!

And whispers start spreading down the row of students.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Mr. Jennings spots Mr. Chambers walking by, studying the  
school's exterior, and motions him over.

JENNINGS

What's going on?

CHAMBERS

Don't let this spread, but we've had  
a bomb threat. I don't know if  
there's anything to it, but it sounded  
real. Just keep the kids calm, and  
whatever you do, don't mention bombs.

Almost before the words are out of Mr. Chambers' mouth, a  
ripple of noise works its way from the front of the building.  
The message Don and Screamdogg inadvertently started has been  
passed from student to student until it reached here.

GIRL

There's a what, a bomb?

Panic ensues. Cell phones whip out and kids begin dialing  
numbers. Some phones ring in the crowd. Cacophony ensues  
as half the students are talking either to one another or to  
their parents. Mr. Chambers keeps moving.

EXT. A HOUSTON STREET, BEHIND BOWIE HIGH -- DAY

The Creep parks his car on a little side street, behind the football field. He can't see anything from there, so he gets out and walks to the edge of the school grounds. The movement and general air of panic is exciting to him. He smiles, and stands there by the chain link fence, watching.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Norman arrives and sees that the panic is growing worse. He takes a few pictures of people in the crowd. Teachers are desperately trying to keep everyone calm. The orderly rows begin to gradually disintegrate, and the students move farther and farther from the building.

Mr. Jennings is working with his students, trying to calm them down, but it's impossible to hear what he's saying because of the crowd noise. A look, a premonition perhaps, flashes across his face. He slides his backpack off his shoulder, pulls his cell phone from the front zip pocket, and dials a number. He steps away from the crowd a little, holding his hand over one ear to block some of the noise.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING

Ms. Campbell's phone rings. She can't hear the ring, but she sees the face light up and flash the name "Sweetie" on Caller ID. She hesitates, but picks it up.

CAMPBELL

Yes, Allen.

Mr. Jennings is shouting into the phone.

JENNINGS (FILTER)

Rita? I need to talk to you. Where are you?

CAMPBELL

Alan, why are you shouting? I told you already, I don't want to talk about this now.

She turns her phone off and puts it in her purse, then tosses the purse on top of a student desk behind her. She looks at her watch. It reads 9:40.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Fifteen minutes left in the period.

She looks at her papers, and yawns.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

I'm so sleepy. Have to rest my eyes  
for a minute. Just for a minute.

She lays her head down on the table.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

The panic is settling down a little. Mr Jennings dials Ms. Campbell's number again, but doesn't reach her.

RECORDED VOICE (FILTER)

You have reached the voice-mail of  
Rita Campbell. Please leave a message  
at the sound of the...

He hangs up.

JENNINGS

This is ridiculous.

He looks around at his group of students, and sees Patti talking to Jennifer. He pulls Patti aside.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Patti, I'm going to put you in charge  
for a few minutes. I have to go  
talk to somebody, and it can't wait.

PATTI

Oh, are you going to see Ms. Campbell?

JENNINGS

What? Uh, yes, I need to talk to  
Ms. Campbell. How did you...

PATTI

Mr. Jennings -- everybody knows.

He laughs in surprise.

JENNINGS

That's great! That's just great. I  
won't be very long. Mrs. Rossbach,  
Patti's in charge of my students. I  
have to go do something very  
important, but I'll be right back.

And he leaves, heading toward the front of the building,  
looking through the crowds for Ms. Campbell as he goes.

ROSSBACH

What does he have to do that's so important?

PATTI

Potty break.

ROSSBACH

Oh.

PATTI

Six cups of coffee.

ROSSBACH

Oh!

PATTI

Well, we'll be right over there.

Patti rejoins her group, and starts talking to Jennifer again.

INT. FIRST FLOOR OF THE SCHOOL -- DAY

The bomb dogs are going crazy. Everywhere they sniff, they smell black powder residue. The powder has been scattered widely enough that the scent is everywhere.

OFFICER MILLER

It's everywhere. Either there's a helluva lot of explosives in here, or somebody doesn't want us to know where the actual bomb is. We need to get out of here and regroup. Everybody, let's go!

The police and dogs leave the building.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Norman has arrived, and finds Jennifer and Patti having a disagreement. He stops about thirty feet away, and takes their picture with the zoom lens, then moves close enough that he hears them speaking.

JENNIFER

Wouldn't Robert rather be with me instead of working at a stupid convenience store?

PATTI

Jennifer, his father is sick.

JENNIFER

Well?

Patti sees Norman standing there. Her face lights up and she waves at him.

PATTI

Hi, Norman!

He comes over to them.

NORMAN

Hi. Lots of excitement, huh?

PATTI

Do you really think there's a bomb?

NORMAN

I don't know, but apparently the school thinks there is. There are a lot of police cars out front, and a police van, but only one fire engine.

PATTI

Wow. I hope they don't close school.

JENNIFER

Oh, right. Like I'm sure you really mean that.

PATTI

No, I do. I like school. I've been thinking lately of becoming a teacher.

NORMAN

I'll bet you'd be pretty good at it.

Patti smiles when she hears him say that.

JENNIFER

But no matter how good you are, it's still a crappy low-paying profession.

Norman notices something on the other side of the football field, and begins focusing the camera in that direction.

PATTI

Jennifer, everything isn't about money.

JENNIFER

Everything that counts.

Norman takes a quick shot of the Creep, and Patti notices.

PATTI

What are you doing?

NORMAN

I'm taking a picture of that guy.  
See him, over there? There's  
something creepy about him, and he's  
been hanging around all morning.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Mr. Jennings has made his way to the front of the school,  
and still hasn't found Ms. Campbell.

JENNINGS

Where is she?

He sees Mrs. Watkins and walks over to her.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Hi, Viola. Have you seen Rita?

WATKINS

She was right here during the first  
fire drill, but I haven't seen her  
during this one. I'm going to have  
to do my test all over again.

His mind is on Ms. Campbell.

JENNINGS

That's too bad, Viola.

WATKINS

Why do they have these dumb fire  
drills, anyway? There's no reason  
for them, and all they do is keep us  
from teaching.

He is looking around him, trying to spot Ms. Campbell.

JENNINGS

Uh huh.

WATKINS

I worked hard on that test, and now  
it's completely spoiled.

CAMPBELL

That's too bad.

WATKINS  
You're not listening to me, are you,  
Mr. Jennings?

JENNINGS  
Sorry, Viola. Gotta go.

And he keeps moving, trying to spot Ms. Campbell.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

NORMAN  
I'm going to go over and talk to  
him. I'll be right back.

PATTI  
I'll go with you.

NORMAN  
Okay.

PATTI  
Jennifer, you're in charge. We're  
supposed to stay close to Mrs.  
Rossbach's class. Okay?

JENNIFER  
Whatever.

PATTI  
Jennifer?

JENNIFER  
Okay. Go.

Norman and Jennifer start across the football field. The Creep is pressed close to the chain link fence, watching the action, and doesn't see Patti and Norman. Norman snaps a picture of him from about twenty feet away, then shouts.

NORMAN  
Hey, are you a student here?

The Creep runs back to his car. Norman shouts at him.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
Hey. Wait a minute.

Norman gets a few more shots as the Creep drives past.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

Very strange. He was in the school this morning.

PATTI

What, you mean inside the building?

They start walking back to their group.

NORMAN

Yeah, it was right after I talked to you and Jennifer. I was walking to First Period and...

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL -- DAY

The two police officers, Officer Miller and Officer Schwartz, are having a discussion with the school's administrators. The dogs still seem a little freaked out.

OFFICER MILLER

There definitely is some kind of explosive material inside, but the dogs couldn't pinpoint it.

PARKS

Why not?

OFFICER MILLER

They smelled something instantly, in fact, almost too quickly. There is either so much of it, or it's in so many places that the dogs can't get a fix on a specific location.

CHAMBERS

What do we do now?

Officer Schwartz is cleaning a dark powder residue off the paws of one of the dogs.

OFFICER SCHWARTZ

Well, there are a few possibilities.

She sniffs at the powder.

OFFICER SCHWARTZ (CONT'D)

I think this is just gunpowder, but there's a lot of it in there. Ms. Davis, you said the caller didn't give you a specific time when the bomb would go off.

DAVIS

No, but he said we had less than an hour, and we wasted time with our first fire drill.

OFFICER SCHWARTZ

What time did he call?

DAVIS

About 9:20. Thirty minutes ago.

OFFICER SCHWARTZ

So we could be close to an hour now.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Patti and Norman are returning from the football field.

NORMAN

So, what's with Jennifer and Robert?

PATTI

What?

NORMAN

I heard the two of you talking. Something about him not dating her because he needs to work?

PATTI

Sort of. Why?

NORMAN

Just curious. Anyway, right now we need to look at these pictures. The view in the LCD screen on the camera is too small to see if they're any good. I need to get to a computer.

They're almost there. Patti sees that Mr. Jennings has returned.

PATTI

Mr. Jennings! Did you find her?

JENNINGS

No. I've circled the whole building, and I don't know where she is.

NORMAN

Hi, Mr. Jennings.

JENNINGS

Hi. Norman, right?

NORMAN

Yeah. Is there really a bomb in the building?

Mr. Jennings takes Norman and Patti aside, so no one can hear them.

JENNINGS

Truthfully, I don't know whether there is a bomb or not, but it looks like it's a possibility. That's why I need to find Ms. Campbell. She should be in the crowd, but I can't find her anywhere.

PATTI

Are you sure you've looked everywhere?

JENNINGS

Yeah, I've covered the whole school grounds.

PATTI

Could she still be in the building?

JENNINGS

I really doubt it, Patti, not after the announcement. And they always check the rooms to make sure no one's left behind.

He looks up at the building. Could she still be inside? A seed of doubt has been planted.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

I thought maybe she left campus, but I looked in the teachers' lot, and her car's still here.

NORMAN

Mr. Jennings, if there really is a bomb in there, I might have pictures of the guy who did it.

JENNINGS

What?

PATTI

Yeah, a guy has been hanging around the school all morning, and Norman saw him inside the building before school started.

NORMAN

But I need a computer to download the pictures from this camera.

Mr. Jennings slips his backpack off his shoulder.

JENNINGS

Oh, hey. Problem solved. I have my laptop with me. Do you need special software or anything?

NORMAN

What operating system do you have?

JENNINGS

Windows XP. Will that do?

NORMAN

Sure, that'll be fine. I shouldn't need to install anything. I've got the memory card reader in my pocket. It should just recognize it.

Patti gives him a look like "You keep computer equipment in your pockets?". Norman explains.

NORMAN (CONT'D)

We just got the cameras in Journalism this morning.

PATTI

Oh. Cool.

JENNINGS

I'll give you the password now and change it later.

He whispers the password in Patti's ear. She giggles.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

That's with an "ie", not a "y", all lower case. Don't tell anybody.

Patti zips her mouth and locks it. Norman pushes the power button on the laptop. A Windows XP Pro logo appears as the computer begins to boot.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL -- DAY

The police officers are finishing their conference with the school administrators.

OFFICER MILLER

We need to bring in a specialized crew to handle this, and we need to do it fast. Now that we know there are explosives in there, maybe a lot of them, we need to clear the area. How far back do you think you can move the kids?

CHAMBERS

How about Chicago?

Officer Miller laughs.

OFFICER MILLER

No, about two more blocks ought to do it. But you need to do it as quickly and quietly as possible, and keep everybody calm.

Officer Miller pulls his radio from his belt clip.

OFFICER SCHWARTZ

Warren, wait. Bomb. Radio.

He gives her a thumbs up, and gets out his cell phone

OFFICER MILLER

This is Warren Miller, HPD badge number 8247. We need an 11-87 at Bowie High School. We believe there are explosives on site, and we're moving the perimeter further away from the school.

ANGLE ON OFFICER SCHWARTZ AND MS. DAVIS

DAVIS

What was that all about? With the radio.

OFFICER SCHWARTZ

We don't use radios if there's a strong possibility of a bomb.

DAVIS

Why not?

OFFICER SCHWARTZ

If the bomb is radio controlled, we could set it off, although that's not the main reason. It's also because all the TV stations monitor police scanners. If we used our radios, this place would be swarming with camera crews in five minutes.

DAVIS

And we wouldn't want that, right?

OFFICER SCHWARTZ

Definitely not.

BACK TO SCENE

The administrators split into different directions, and start going from group to group. Mr. Chambers stops at the first group he comes to.

CHAMBERS

We need you to take your students and walk with them over there, about three blocks away. It's nothing to worry about, but they need to get some more fire trucks in close, and they want everyone to be safe. Okay?

The teacher nods and turns to her students.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Norman and Patti are sitting on a bench by the basketball courts. Some students, Kathryn Myers among them, are watching what Patti and Norman are doing with the computer.

ANGLE ON LAPTOP COMPUTER MONITOR AND KEYBOARD

The laptop's logon screen has "ajennings" displayed as the username, and "BOWIE" displayed as the domain. Patti types the letters "s w e e t i e" in the password field. We only see asterisks in the field, but she types them slowly enough that some of the girls standing nearby figure it out.

SEVERAL GIRLS (VARIOUS COMMENTS)

Awww. Sweetie. That's so cute.

BACK TO SCENE

PATTI

Hey, no peeking.

She hands the computer over to Norman. He plugs the card reader into the laptop's USB port.

Mr. Jennings is nearby, talking to Mrs. Rossbach.

JENNINGS

I have to go again, could you please watch my students?

ROSSBACH

Sure, no problem.

He walks toward Patti and Norman at the bench.

ROSSBACH (CONT'D)

He sure does have a weak bladder.

Mr. Chambers comes from around the side of the school, and approaches Mrs. Rossbach.

CHAMBERS

Mrs. Rossbach, hi. We need to move everyone further back from the building. All the way to the other side of the football field. Okay?

ROSSBACH

Okay, sir. Whatever you say.

And she begins to move her students back toward the chain link fence at the very back reaches of the school grounds.

Mr. Jennings touches Patti on the shoulder to get her attention.

JENNINGS

I'm going to take one more walk around the school, and ask some more people if they've seen Ms. Chambers.

KATHRYN

I've seen her.

JENNINGS

When? Where?

KATHRYN

In her room, just a while ago.

JENNINGS

She's up there now?

KATHRYN

Yeah, I think so. She was grading papers and locked the door on me.

JENNINGS

Damn. Why didn't you tell somebody?

And he's off and running.

KATHRYN

It's just a stupid fire drill.

Dozens of students and teachers turn and look at her.

KATHRYN (CONT'D)

What?

Mr. Chambers comes over to them.

CHAMBERS

Everybody, we need to move over to the other side of the football field.

Grumbles and groans, but they start moving. Patti helps Norman carry the laptop and the rest of Mr. Jennings' stuff.

EXT. TEACHER'S PARKING LOT -- DAY

One police officer, MIGUEL GARCIA, is in the lot, with a small group of teachers and students. Mr. Jennings rounds the corner, running full out, and rushes past the police officer, heading towards the entrance.

OFFICER GARCIA

Sir, stop.

He keeps moving.

JENNINGS

Someone's still in there.

OFFICER GARCIA

Sir.

Mr. Jennings is already inside the building. The police officer shouts to the nearest teacher.

OFFICER GARCIA (CONT'D)

Keep moving the students back.

And he follows Mr. Jennings inside.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Everyone has been moved back to the outer reaches of the football field. Norman and Patti are kneeling in the grass at the far edge of the field.

ANGLE ON LAPTOP COMPUTER DISPLAY

They've finished downloading the images to the laptop, and are scanning through them.

PATTI

Ooh, look at that one. He really looks angry.

NORMAN

He was. His hair's in the way, though, and he's moving too much. It's a little blurry.

BACK TO SCENE

They keep looking.

PATTI

Mrs. Watkins doesn't look too happy in that one, either.

NORMAN

(joking)

Maybe we should get the two of them to go out on a date.

PATTI

(playing along)

But who would chaperone them?

NORMAN

Well, it would either have to be you and me or the police.

PATTI

I vote for the police.

NORMAN

Look at this one we took when he was on the other side of the fence.

PATTI

He looks creepy. But that's a good shot. It's really clear.

He scrolls back through the pictures to one he took earlier, in the front of the school.

NORMAN

And we've got most of the license plate on this shot.

PATTI

Norman, you need to get these to somebody.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- DAY

Mr. Jennings arrives at Ms. Campbell's door, with Officer Garcia right behind him.

OFFICER GARCIA

Sir. Stop. It's dangerous in here, let us handle it.

JENNINGS

This is her room.

He pulls on the door handle.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

It's locked.

They look through the window, and can't see her.

OFFICER GARCIA

Sir, there's no one in there.

JENNINGS

No. Look. There's her purse. She never goes anywhere without her purse.

He bangs on the door.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)

Rita. Rita. Open up.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

She's asleep, her head on her students' papers. She stirs slightly and mumbles, barely audibly.

CAMPBELL

Go 'way.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- DAY

OFFICER GARCIA  
Sir, we need to go. I'm sure she's  
outside somewhere.

Mr. Jennings heads toward the stairwell.

OFFICER GARCIA (CONT'D)  
Oh, good.

Instead of going down the stairs, Mr. Jennings grabs the  
large trashcan and heads back to Ms. Campbell's room.

OFFICER GARCIA (CONT'D)  
Oh, no.

Officer Garcia tries to grab Mr. Jennings, but he is just a  
fraction of a second too late. Mr. Jennings raises the  
trashcan over his head and runs full force toward Ms.  
Campbell's door, smashing in her door window.

INT. MS. CAMPBELL'S CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

Ms. Campbell wakes up, jerking the headphones off.

CAMPBELL  
What the hell?

JENNINGS (O.S.)  
Rita. Quick, open up.

She rushes to the door and opens it. Alan and Officer Garcia  
are in the hall.

CAMPBELL  
What are you doing? Damn it, Alan!

OFFICER GARCIA  
Ma'am, you have to leave.

She hesitates.

OFFICER GARCIA (CONT'D)  
Now!

She takes a step toward the table.

CAMPBELL  
I need my purse.

Officer Garcia grabs her arm.

OFFICER GARCIA

There's no time, ma'am.

The three of them hurry toward the stairwell.

INT. IN THE STAIRWELL, A FLOOR DOWN -- MOMENTS LATER

They have gone down only a few steps when the BLAST occurs.

INT. THIRD FLOOR HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

Lockers fly violently apart amid smoke, dust, and noise.

EXT. REAR OF BUILDING -- DAY

Several windows blow outward, followed by fire and smoke. Students and teachers react in panic.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL -- DAY

Panicked looks in the front of the building. Minor chaos.

EXT. BEHIND THE SCHOOL -- DAY

More panic in the back. People trying to run. When the explosion stops with that one set of windows, though, people slow down and watch the building warily.

INT. STAIRWELL ON THE SIDE OF THE BUILDING -- DAY

As soon as they see that the walls aren't falling on them, they keep moving down the stairs.

EXT. TEACHER'S PARKING LOT -- DAY

The door bursts open as Officer Garcia leads Mr. Jennings and Ms. Chambers out of the building. They move across the street to the group of students and teachers.

CAMPBELL

Alan, what...

JENNINGS

We'll talk about it later.

And he takes her in his arms and gives her a long, slow, very serious kiss. The students around them are momentarily stunned, but they soon release a volley of cheers, mingled with applause and "whoop, whoop, whoop" sounds.

Mr. Parks comes running by, heading toward the back, and stops when he sees them, then shrugs and keeps going.

Norman and Patti arrive just before the kiss finishes. Patti glances at Norman and grins. Mr. Jennings and Ms. Campbell finish the kiss, realize a sizable crowd has gathered, and look around them sheepishly.

PATTI  
Ms. Campbell. All right.

Ms. Campbell is at a loss for words.

CAMPBELL  
Uh, hi, Patti. Hi, Norman.

NORMAN  
Hi.

PATTI  
Mr. J., Ms. C. -- you guys rock!

They both grin and blush, but stay in a clinch.

NORMAN  
Mr. Jennings! We've got pictures.

CAMPBELL  
Of us?

NORMAN  
Uh, no.

He raises his camera and flashes a quick shot.

NORMAN (CONT'D)  
We do now, though.

No, I mean pictures of the creep.  
Good ones, very identifiable.

JENNINGS  
Oh, great! Officer. Officer.

Officer Garcia comes over.

JENNINGS (CONT'D)  
Officer, this is Norman Cooper. He thinks he has some pictures of the guy that set the bomb.

Police officers don't often get a break like this.

OFFICER GARCIA

Oh. Uh, why don't you show me, son.  
Actually, better yet, let's go show  
my captain.

Officer Garcia, Norman and Patti walk together toward the front of the school. Mr. Jennings and Ms. Chambers follow hand in hand. Norman turns back to Mr. Jennings and Ms. Campbell as they walk.

NORMAN

About that picture of you two. What  
do you think, newspaper or yearbook?

JENNINGS

How about on my desk instead?

NORMAN

Cool.

EXT. OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL -- DAY

James comes up to Ms. Davis, looking a little panicked.

JAMES

Ms. Davis?

DAVIS

Yes, James?

Speaking with the desperation of someone who is certain he will be blamed for this.

JAMES

Ms. Davis, you gotta believe me.  
This wasn't me. I didn't have  
anything to do with this, I mean I  
didn't know anything about it.

He is clasping his hands together now, in supplication. He looks like he might even drop to his knees any second now.

DAVIS

Well, James. You don't exactly have  
the best track record.

JAMES

I know. I know. But I promise I'm  
gonna be better.

(MORE)

JAMES (CONT'D)

I did set off the fire alarm and I did call Andrea a flipping bitch and I did dump over the trash cans in the restrooms last week, but I didn't do this. You gotta believe me.

He's almost crying now. Ms. Davis takes a step toward him and puts her arm around his shoulder.

DAVIS

That's okay, James. It's going to be all right. Don't worry, we'll figure it out. Okay?

JAMES

Okay.

Ms. Davis gives his shoulder a little squeeze, but thumps him on the forehead when he tries to lay his head on her breast.

JAMES (CONT'D)

Ow.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. MAIN OFFICE -- A WEEK LATER, AFTER SCHOOL

Mr. Chambers and Ms. Davis are relaxing at the end of a regular, uneventful, unexciting day.

CHAMBERS

It's hard to believe the bombing was barely a week ago.

DAVIS

I know.

CHAMBERS

I've never seen the district move so fast. We were back in the building in only two days. There was some damage to Ms. Campbell's room, but it was mostly to that one wall.

DAVIS

So that's why they only brought in one temp building?

CHAMBERS

Yeah, that's all that was needed. They've sealed off her room while they work, and the other classes on third floor were just fine.

DAVIS

Is she going to be able to use her room again this year? She's not too happy about being out in that temp building all by herself.

CHAMBERS

It'll be late in the Spring for sure, maybe April or May. She might as well stay where she is. The temporary buildings aren't so bad. I've spent some time teaching in them.

DAVIS

Oh, back when you actually worked? Was that the eighteenth or the nineteenth century?

CHAMBERS

Listen, between dealing with people like James and that creep, I feel that old sometimes.

DAVIS

Well, you don't look a day over seventy.

CHAMBERS

Gee, thanks. You're so good to me.

DAVIS

Better than you deserve.

So, what was the guy's name again?

CHAMBERS

The creep? Danny Bolzer. He went here about six years ago. Never finished.

DAVIS

Why did he do it?

CHAMBERS

He said it was to get back at "Old Man Thompson" for being mean to him.

DAVIS

The math teacher? The one who retired last year?

CHAMBERS

Yup. The one who used to be in Ms. Campbell's room.

When they told Mr. Thompson about it, he said "Thank God the little bastard made bombs about as well as he solved algebra problems".

DAVIS

What kind of bomb was it?

CHAMBERS

Homemade. The explosive was inside a paint can, and the rest of the can was filled with nails and screws.

DAVIS

How horrible. We were all so lucky.

CHAMBERS

And it did hurry the district up. We got more cameras.

DAVIS

I know, but it's starting to feel more like a prison now, with all the extra security.

Mr. Chambers heaves a reluctant sigh of acceptance.

CHAMBERS

Yeah. But that's what seems to be happening all over.

Well, I'd better go see how James is doing in Ms. Rossbach's detention.

EXT. TEACHER'S PARKING LOT -- AFTERNOON

Ms. Campbell is sitting in her car. Mr. Jennings is standing outside the driver's window, holding her left hand, playing with her fingertips.

JENNINGS

One little piggy, two little piggies...

CAMPBELL

Wait a minute! I resent my fingers being compared to barnyard animals that are fattened for the express purpose of being slaughtered. Besides, you're supposed to do the little piggies thing with your toes, aren't you?

JENNINGS

If I do anything with your toes right now, we'll be in a world of trouble.

CAMPBELL

You're bad. I like that in a boyfriend.

JENNINGS

Okay, I'll start over. One little, very delicate, extremely slim, bare wisp of a representation of a very tiny piglet who will remain our friend and confidant and never ever be turned into juicy strips of bacon. Two little, very delicate...

CAMPBELL

Stop it. I've got to get home and freshen up. A very handsome, but extremely strange, man is taking me out to dinner tonight.

He leans in through the window and gives her a quick peck on the cheek.

JENNINGS

Well, don't let me keep you then.

He stands up straight and starts to turn away.

CAMPBELL

Come back here right now. Don't send me away with that measly little peck on the cheek.

He comes back and gives her a thorough farewell kiss.

CAMPBELL (CONT'D)

Mmm. That's much better. Now go get cleaned up.

JENNINGS

Yes, ma'am. Pick you up at seven.

INT. MRS. ROSSBACH'S ROOM -- AFTERNOON

James is serving detention in Mrs. Rossbach's class. Wait. He has a smile on his face. Is he actually enjoying himself?

JAMES

So, what kind of student were you, Mrs. Rossbach?

ROSSBACH

Oh, pretty ordinary, I guess. I didn't even realize I wanted to teach until I was nearly through college. I think a lot of the kids my age were a bit confused about life too.

JAMES

That was back in the 1960's?

ROSSBACH

Mm-hmm, the late sixties. It was a very different time. We were changing the rules, but we didn't have our parents or teachers to look to for guidance. We were just making a lot of it up as we went along.

JAMES

So, the sixties, huh? Sex, drugs and rock-n-roll. I bet you were a heartbreaker, weren't you, Mrs. R.?

She's laughing.

ROSSBACH

Oh, stop it, James. You're too much.

JAMES

You mean "far out", don't you, Mrs. Rossbach.

ROSSBACH

Yes, James. You're definitely far out.

JAMES

Thank you, ma'am.

The door opens, and Mr. Chambers sticks his head in.

CHAMBERS

Everything going all right in here?

ROSSBACH

Pretty far out, Mr. C. -- pretty far out.

Mrs. Rossbach and James laugh. Mr. Chambers scratches his head and shuts the door.

INT. FIRST FLOOR OF THE SCHOOL, HALLWAY -- AFTERNOON

Norman and a couple of other boys leave a classroom and start walking down the hall. Behind them, further down the hall, a door opens, and Patti and Jennifer come into the hallway. Jennifer waves and heads toward the boys.

JENNIFER

Norman. Norman. Wait.

The boys turn to see who it is. Being somewhat geeky, the others stare unbelievably and open mouthed at this vision of loveliness actually addressing one of their kind by name. One of the boys reaches over and gives Norman a congratulatory pat on the back, and they keep walking.

NORMAN

Hi, Jennifer. Hi, Patti.

PATTI

What were you here for?

NORMAN

Computer Club. You?

PATTI

Prom Committee.

NORMAN

Mmm.

JENNIFER

Norman, I'm sorry I rescheduled our date. What with the crazy bomb guy and everything, I just couldn't deal. Anyway, about tomorrow night?

NORMAN

Yes?

JENNIFER

Could we take my car?

NORMAN  
Why, Jennifer?

As if he didn't know the reason already.

JENNIFER  
Well, because yours is so old I  
thought it would be better if we  
went in mine.

NORMAN  
Ahh.

Jennifer. Look, I'm sorry, I don't  
mean to be rude, and I know I pestered  
you for a really long time, asking  
you to go out with me...

JENNIFER  
Yes?

NORMAN  
I hope you won't be mad at me, but I  
just don't think we should go through  
with this date.

There's a momentary look of hurt on Jennifer's face, and  
maybe a touch of anger, but she composes herself quickly.

JENNIFER  
Well, thank God. Somebody around  
this place finally wised up.

NORMAN  
You're not upset?

JENNIFER  
No, of course not. We would have  
gotten on each other's nerves. We're  
too different.

NORMAN  
Okay. Well, I'm glad you're not  
upset.  
(to Patti)  
Is she upset?

PATTI  
She'll get over it.

Jennifer wipes a mock tear from her eye.

JENNIFER

No, I'm good. Really, I'm okay.

Well, we have to go now.

And she starts walking away. Patti starts to follow.

NORMAN

Uh, Patti. Before you go, could I talk to you for a minute?

Jennifer spins back to face them, hands on hips. She tries to be angry, but she just can't. A big grin spreads across her face.

JENNIFER

Aha! That's just like a man. You couldn't even have a decent mourning period.

Okay, Patti, I'm leaving in five minutes -- with or without you. Be good.

Jennifer walks ahead.

PATTI

I rode to school with Jennifer this morning.

NORMAN

I'll take you home -- if you don't mind riding in my car.

PATTI

No, Norman, I wouldn't mind that. I wouldn't mind at all.

And they walk down the hall together. After a few steps, she links arms with him and looks up at his smiling face.

PATTI (CONT'D)

So. Are you going to quote me some Shakespeare, or are you just going to get right down to business?

FADE OUT: