

SIDEWALKERS

Episode 1x01
"Fake Identity"

by

Anthony Collins

COLD OPEN

EXT. EASTSIDE HIGH SCHOOL, FOOTBALL STADIUM - EVENING

A TEENAGE GIRL'S FOOT slams into a SOCCER BALL, sending it hurling into a goal. The CROWD CHEERS.

ANNOUNCER

Score for Northwest's Nat Wyatt,
only a sophomore and already a
star on the varsity team!

NAT WYATT (16, mixed Black/White, pretty and tomboyish) smiles as her teammates celebrate with her.

A camera snaps a picture of her. AARON WALKER (15, Black, geeky) stands on the sidelines taking pictures. Around his neck is a PRESS PASS.

MAX

(snatches his camera)
Hey, loser! Getting any good
shots?

MAX JENSEN (17, white, bully) flips through pictures on Aaron's digital camera, laughing with his TWO MORONIC FRIENDS.

AARON

Give it back, Max!

MAX

Give it back, Max! Yo, why are you
taking so many pictures of the
enemy team, you fucking weirdo?

Max holds up the camera, showing Aaron the close-up shot of a beaming Nat. Aaron tries to snatch his camera back, but Max pulls it away.

MAX (CONT'D)

Come and get it!

Max and his friends run off. Aaron chases after him.

EXT. BEHIND THE BLEACHERS

Aaron chases them all the way behind the bleachers, where Max and his goons toss the camera back and forth like hot potato.

AARON

Please, stop!

Max "accidentally" doesn't catch the camera when it comes to him, and it falls to the ground with a loud SMASH.

MAX
Oops, my bad!

Aaron runs to his camera and picks it up. The LCD screen is CRACKED severely. Aaron's blood boils as the other boys laugh in the background. Aaron turns, marches to Max, then PUNCHES him hard in the face.

Max stumbles back a bit, grabbing his bloody lip. He composes himself, and glares at Aaron like a raging bull.

MAX (CONT'D)
Oh, you're dead.

Max swings back at Aaron, even harder.

CUT TO BLACK.

ACT ONE

INT. BEDROOM - MORNING - TWO WEEKS LATER

AARON sleeps peacefully in his bed. His bedroom is a typical teen boy disaster, cluttered with pizza boxes, game controllers, Sci-Fi action figures and movie posters.

BEEP BEEP BEEP.

Aaron's screeching alarm clock jolts him awake, his puffy afro flattened on one side. 6:30 AM. He leans over to shut it off, but winds up knocking it to the ground. It continues beeping and he groans in misery.

INT. BATHROOM

Aaron stares in the mirror at his scrawny shirtless body. He FLEXES, as much as he can, then sighs. Leaning forward, he investigates a small cut on his face.

TRINA (O.S.)
(pounds on the door)
Aaron, hurry up!

INT. HALLWAY

Aaron steps out of the bathroom to find his little sister TRINA (12) standing outside the door, holding a towel.

TRINA

Finally. Geez, try all you want,
bro, but you can't cure ugly.

Aaron flips her off as she closes the door.

INT. BEDROOM

Aaron flips through clothes on the ground. He grabs a T-shirt and slips it on. It's got a huge graphic of KYLO REN and DARTH VADER on it. He sighs and takes it off.

INT. KITCHEN

Aaron sits down at his kitchen table eating a bowl of cereal and scrolling through his phone. Across from him, his mother TRACEY (40s, black, stern but loving) and step-father GLENN (40s, black, chubby) stare at him.

AARON

Why are you two looking at me like
I'm dying?

TRACEY

Glenn and I are just curious to
know how you're feeling. Nervous
about your first day?

AARON

I was thinking maybe I could just
skip the whole education thing.
Just throw me straight into the
workforce. I'm ready.

GLENN

You're getting a diploma, Aaron.

TRACEY

He was joking, honey.

Aaron cheekily smiles at his step-father.

TRACEY (CONT'D)

(touches Aaron's face)
Your face is almost healed.

AARON

(shirks back)
I know.

TRACEY

Listen, if something goes wrong today, don't hesitate to call me. I will be at that school in a heartbeat.

GLENN

You know your mama. She'll smack a kid if she has to.

AARON

I'll be fine.

TRACEY

Just remember, be yourself!

AARON

Because that's worked out so well in the past.

GLENN

Hey, I could always home school you while I look for a job.

AARON

Let's log that idea far, far away. Thanks for the pep talk, guys.

Aaron puts his bowl in the sink, grabs his bag, then heads out of the room.

TRACEY

Bye, Aaron! Have a great day!

GLENN

Fight back if you have to!

Tracey smacks Glenn in the chest.

EXT. OUTSIDE AARON'S HOUSE

Aaron walks out the door and unlocks his BICYCLE from the front porch. He carries it down the steps to the street, then hops on and pedals off.

EXT. SEATTLE STREETS

Aaron explores the city on his way to school. It's a typically cloudy day in SEATTLE. He passes through the grungy urban sprawl; filled with traffic, graffiti, bars, cafes, hipsters, bums, street musicians, shops, etc.

He reaches an overpass, looking out at the busy freeway traffic and the downtown skyline. The SPACE NEEDLE stands tall in the sky. Aaron BRAKES. He holds his camera up to his eye and takes a picture of the view.

He looks at the CRACKED screen, disappointed.

EXT. NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL, STUDENT PARKING LOT

The parking lot of the school is filled with TEENS of all walks of life congregating. Aaron watches from across the street. He takes a deep breath, then pedals forward.

He notices a group of girls in athletic gear kicking a SOCCER BALL around in the grass. ONE GIRL catches Aaron's attention. It's NAT WYATT, the same girl Aaron saw at the fateful soccer game weeks before. He's transfixed.

JUSTIN

Whoa, watch it!

Aaron's bike screeches to a halt as he narrowly avoids crashing into a student, JUSTIN JAMESON (16, white, a shaggy-haired, longboard-wielding hipster).

AARON

My bad, I totally spaced out!

JUSTIN

(starts
hyperventilating)

Oh shit! I think you've triggered
my anxiety!

AARON

It's okay, man! I have anxiety
problems too. Just breathe.

JUSTIN

My chest feels tight. My arm feels
numb. Oh God, I'm seeing white!

AARON

I-I'll go get the nurse!

Suddenly Justin starts cracking up.

AARON (CONT'D)

You're screwing with me, aren't
you?

JUSTIN

You must be new around here. Take
it easy, Evel Knievel.

AARON

Who?

Justin laughs as he scurries off towards his grungy friends, a GRUNGY GIRL and SKATER BOY, sitting in the grass. He immediately starts wrestling with the boy.

Aaron, weirded out, furrows his brow, then looks back over for Nat. She's gone.

INT. HALLWAY

Aaron enters the school, peering around at the sea of STUDENTS chattering amongst one another. He keeps his head down, but takes little nervous peeks as he meanders through the hall. It's clear he doesn't fit in with other kids.

INT. MAIN OFFICE

Aaron walks through the door, looking around. Not noticing, he accidentally bumps into a PAMPHLET STAND, knocking some over. Everyone in the room stares at the commotion.

As Aaron scrambles on the ground, a pair of OXFORD SHOES approach him. He looks up and sees HANA CHOI (16, Korean, preppy) towering above him.

HANA

You must be the new kid.

AARON

(stands up)

Yeah, that's me. Aaron Walker.
Clumsy oaf.

HANA

(shakes his hand)

Hana Choi, sophomore class president. The administration asked me to escort you to your first period.

AARON

Sweet, I'll finally be a woman.

Hana cringes with embarrassment.

AARON (CONT'D)

That was a, uh -- that was supposed to be a joke.

HANA
(deadpan)
I'm dying on the inside.

INT. HALLWAY

Aaron and Hana walk down the hallway as the first BELL RINGS. Students scurry as they make their way to class.

HANA
Northwest is your pretty standard high school. We have a less-than-stellar football team, popular kids who are currently in the *peak* of their lives, and an overabundance of lazy stoners.

AARON
(sarcastic)
Sounds riveting.

HANA
Sarcasm! I like.

AARON
It's how I relate to people.

HANA
Ugh, don't even bother here. Honestly, only about 2% of the student body is worth tolerating.

AARON
Kind words coming from class president.

HANA
Okay, don't get too snarky. Not cute. Listen, I need to cut to the chase, Aaron. I know all about your sad backstory.

AARON
They told you why I transferred?

HANA
Actually, I read your student file. I know -- it's supposed to be confidential. But being class prez *and* assistant editor of the newspaper comes with its sneaky little perks.

AARON

Oh, I used to do newspaper, too.

HANA

Yeah, I saw your pictures. Despite the shortcomings of the writing and layout design--

AARON

(laughs)

Tell me about it.

HANA

You were a diamond in the rough. You should seriously consider joining *The Northwest Issue*. It'll look great on your college applications.

AARON

Eh, I kind of wanted to hold off on joining clubs for a bit.

HANA

Why? Because of the whole bully thing?

Aaron is quiet, looking away, embarrassed.

HANA (CONT'D)

Sorry for opening up closed wounds. Don't worry. We don't have that much of a bully problem here.

A GEEKY FRESHMAN bolts down the hall as a couple of UPPERCLASSMEN JOCKS chase after him.

HANA (CONT'D)

That's just freshman harassment. It's par for the course.

AARON

(skeptical)

Sure.

HANA

Listen, Aaron. We could really use your help on the paper. You have talent and an impressive academic record. I know you'd make a great addition to our staff.

AARON

I'll think about it.

HANA

Well, you kind of need to think fast because we're having a meeting after school today in the library, and if you valued your future, I'd highly recommend listening to me.

AARON

(intimidated)

Okay, I'll be there.

HANA

Good boy! Now this is History, and so is our conversation. Ciao!

Hana leaves Aaron outside of his History classroom.

INT. HISTORY CLASSROOM

Aaron walks inside to a room full of students. He elicits a few stares and whispers as he makes his way to a seat.

The bell rings. MR. DENNING (teacher, 30s, hip for his age) gets up from his desk and walks over to the board, where a blank projector screen is drawn down.

MR. DENNING

Alrighty, class. Who's ready for today's lesson on--

Mr. Denning flips on a switch. On the screen flashes a grotesque image of a foot wound up like a burrito.

MR. DENNING (CONT'D)

Chinese foot-binding?!

A collective groan erupts through the class.

MR. DENNING (CONT'D)

I know, I know. You're all pumped. But before the fun begins, guys, I believe that we have a new student with us today!

All eyes immediately turn to Aaron. He can feel the stares stabbing into him like nails.

MR. DENNING (CONT'D)

It's Aaron, right?

Aaron timidly nods yes.

MR. DENNING (CONT'D)
Great to meet ya, buddy. I'm Mr. Denning. If you don't mind, how 'bout you stand up and introduce yourself?

Aaron sucks up the courage to stand up.

AARON
Hi, my name is Aaron Walker. I just transferred here from Eastside High School.

CLASS
Booooooooooooo!

MR. DENNING
Guys, stop. He's a Falcon now.

AARON
Yeah, uh...go Falcons.

MR. DENNING
Aaron, why don't you tell us a little something interesting about yourself?

AARON
I don't know if there is anything interesting about me.

MR. DENNING
Of course there is! What kind of stuff do you like to do?

AARON
I like photography, and movies.

MR. DENNING
Cool! What's your favorite film?

AARON
Probably *The Empire Strikes Back*.

JOCK STUDENT
(pretends to cough)
Nerd!

Some students laugh, others scoff. Aaron, embarrassed, slowly sits back in his desk.

MR. DENNING
Hey, who said that? Not funny! Thank you for sharing, Aaron.

Suddenly, the door swings open. In walks NAT. Aaron's eyes widen in youthful enchantment.

MR. DENNING (CONT'D)
You're late again, Nat.

NAT
(rushes to her seat in
the front)
My apologies, Mr. D. We had an
early soccer practice this morning
and I had to change my clothes.

MR. DENNING
Next time a note, please. Also,
this is our new student Aaron.

Nat turns to Aaron and waves hello. He blushes.

INT. CAFETERIA

A clump of meatloaf PLOPS onto Aaron's plate as he stands in the lunch-line.

AARON
Thanks.

The LUNCH LADY flashes him a fake smile. Aaron turns to find the room packed with students. He holds his tray, staring aimlessly looking for somewhere to sit.

He spots a familiar face, and his eyes spark. NAT sits alone at a table, eating an apple and quietly scribbling in a notebook. She looks in his direction and smiles.

Aaron smiles shyly, then starts to walk over towards her, until someone rushes past him. It's HANA, who marches to Nat's table and sits down with her. The two girls instantly start chatting and laughing. Aaron is frozen, dispirited.

JOCK STUDENT
(bumps into him)
Move it, Eastside.

Aaron's lunch tray drops to the floor with a loud BANG. The jock and his group of friends walk off laughing. Some other students laugh, whisper, and act shocked, but no one does anything to help. He sees Nat and Hana staring at him.

HANA
Tragic.

He scurries to pick up his tray, then tosses the whole thing in a nearby trashcan as he rushes out of the room.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD, DUGOUTS

Aaron mopes in the dugout listening to music and playing on his phone, as rain pours down around him. Suddenly his phone battery dies. With a heavy sigh, he takes his headphones out. Immediately, he hears LAUGHTER.

He looks up across the field at the opposite dugout, where JUSTIN passes around a joint with his two friends BLAKE GARCIA, (16, Latino/Native-American, handsome skater boy) and MOLLY MURPHY (16, White, blonde grungy girl).

Intrigued, Aaron reaches into his backpack and pulls out his camera. He zooms in on them and snaps a picture. Molly looks over and notices him. She nudges Blake, and the two start angrily marching over towards him.

MOLLY

Hey! Creep!

Aaron scrambles to put his stuff away, but it's too late.

BLAKE

The fuck you doing taking pictures of us? You some sort of narc?

AARON

No, I was just--

MOLLY

Or are you just a gross little pervert? Huh? Pervert?!

AARON

(protects his camera)

I'm not! I mean -- no more than the average teenage boy?

JUSTIN

(approaching)

Hey, it's the new kid who tried to run me over this morning.

BLAKE

Wait, new kid? He's totally an undercover cop!

AARON

I'm not a cop! I'm only 15!

MOLLY

Then give us one good reason why we shouldn't smash your camera into a million pieces.

BLAKE

Yeah, and then your face!

JUSTIN

We're not hitting anyone in the face, Blake. You're so extra!

BLAKE

You're extra! You still whine about me scratching your GTA disc.

JUSTIN

(shouting)

I didn't even beat it yet!

Aaron scrunches his face, weirded out and amused.

MOLLY

Boys, shut up! The fact of the matter is we have some rando here with evidence against us. Why were you taking pictures?

AARON

I don't know! I like taking pictures and you guys seemed interesting.

JUSTIN

If you need a muse, man, just ask. I'm happy to oblige.

MOLLY

Yeah, why didn't you just ask us?

AARON

It's my first day. I'm shy.

BLAKE

Wow. That's actually kind of sad.

JUSTIN

So you're not a narc. Or a perv. You're just a weirdo.

AARON

(looks down)

Yeah...that's me.

JUSTIN

It's cool. We're weirdos, too.

(points at his friends)

Molly, Blake, and--

(points at himself)

Justin, like the Biebs.

MOLLY

We'll cut you some slack since you're new but if you ever pull that voyeur shit on me again, I think that I *will* smash your face. Understood?

AARON

Got it.

JUSTIN

(re-lights the joint)
So, weirdo. You smoke ganja?

AARON

I, um--yeah, all the time!

Justin passes Aaron the joint. He grabs it, holds it up to his mouth and inhales. Immediately, he starts COUGHING profusely. The three other kids laugh and clap. As Aaron struggles to gain his breath, he smiles at his new friends.

END ACT ONE.

ACT TWO

INT. MATH CLASS - EARLY AFTERNOON

Aaron blinks and squints at the board as the teacher, MRS. FERGUSON (50s, shrewd and bitter) writes complicated math equations on it. Slowly and quietly, Aaron slips pieces of candy into his mouth.

MRS. FERGUSON

So it goes $x = \text{negative } b \text{ plus or minus the square root of--}$

The numbers on the board get hazy, so he closes his eyes, puts his head on the desk and continues eating discreetly.

JUSTIN

(whispers)
Dude!

Aaron jumps, startled.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Are my eyes super red?

AARON

Uh--not really. Yo, have you looked at the board? It's really tripping me out right now.

JUSTIN
(laughs)
You're fucking toasted, man.

MRS. FERGUSON
(interrupting)
Mr. Jameson, this is math class,
not *Showtime at the Apollo*.

JUSTIN
I'm sorry, Fergie, but you lost me
with that one.

MRS. FERGUSON
For the thousandth time, it's Mrs.
Ferguson.

JUSTIN
Yeah but Fergie's got so much more
of a younger vibe, you dig?

Some students in class laugh.

MRS. FERGUSON
Thank you, Justin, but please,
respect my classroom and be silent
while I'm teaching.

JUSTIN
Yes, ma'am!

Justin shuts up. Ferguson continues ranting about the quadratic formula in the background. Aaron sits quiet for a moment before he shouts.

AARON
Oh, I get it!

MRS. FERGUSON
Excuse me, Mr. Walker?

AARON
Fergie! Like the singer! That's so
funny! You're funny, dude.

JUSTIN
(laughs and looks away)
Oh my God!

MRS. FERGUSON
Mr. Walker, I *just* told Mr.
Jameson to stop disrupting the
class.

AARON
Why do you keep calling us Mr. and
Ms. like we're filing our 401K's?

The class bursts into laughter.

MRS. FERGUSON
It might be your first day, Mr.
Walker, but--

AARON
Guys! There she goes! She's doing
it again! Who is *Mr. Walker*? I
don't know who that is. My name is
Aaron. Double A, Ron. Get with it.

The class laughs even more.

MRS. FERGUSON
That's it! Detention now!

AARON
(gathering his stuff)
Fine, I'll go to detention.
Detention sounds fun. See ya
later, Fergie!

Students clap and cheer as Aaron marches out of the
classroom. Justin's mouth is wide open in shock.

CLASS
Aa-ron! Aa-ron! Aa-ron!

INT. HALLWAY

Aaron steps out of the classroom. When the door shuts
behind him, he leans against it, his face frozen in
disbelief.

AARON
Oh my God, Aaron, what did you
just do? Oh my God, you're crazy.

He starts walking off down the hall, continuing to mutter
to himself.

INT. MATH CLASS

JUSTIN
(raises his hand)
Um, Mrs. Ferguson?

MRS. FERGUSON
What now, Justin?

JUSTIN
I was also disrupting class, so I think that I should also go to detention. I believe that proper justice should be served.

MRS. FERGUSON
(rubs her temple)
Sure, yeah. Go.

Justin smirks, grabs his stuff, and runs for the door.

INT. HALLWAY

Justin bursts in to the hallway, but Aaron is GONE.

JUSTIN
What the hell?

CUT TO:

Aaron slowly wanders down another side of the empty hall. He stops by a POSTER of a student holding a thumbs-up sign. Someone's graffiti'd a PENIS into the student's hand. Aaron giggles and pulls out his camera to take a picture.

NAT
You're a fan of my art?

He turns and accidentally snaps a picture of Nat. The flash shoots her in face. Startled she holds up her hall pass.

AARON
Whoa, I'm sorry! I'll delete that.

NAT
Keep it. I bet you got a great derpy face out of it.

AARON
(laughs nervously)
Yeah, uh -- so you drew this?

NAT
I designed the poster. I wish I drew the dick though. Genius.

AARON
Ha-ha, yeah. Do you uh...so you do graphic design?

NAT
I'm on the paper. Graphics editor.
I also do our press passes. See?

Nat hands Aaron her press pass. He reads it. NATALIA WYATT.

AARON
Natalia?

NAT
Call me "Nat".

AARON
Like the bug!

Aaron immediately cringes at himself.

AARON (CONT'D)
My bad. I didn't mean--

NAT
No, I'll take it as a compliment.
It's Aaron, right?

AARON
Uh--yeah! That's my name. Aaron.

Aaron cringes again. Nat raises her eyebrow in suspicion.

NAT
Are you stoned right now?

AARON
What? No, no-- It's that obvious?

NAT
Don't stress. I mean, smoking weed
on your first day. Pretty ballsy.
Just try to sober up by the
newspaper meeting or Hana will
choke you out.

AARON
Oh, she talked to you about me?

NAT
She told me she invited you to the
meeting. You'll be there, right?

AARON
Yeah, I think so--

Justin turns around the corner, spotting them.

JUSTIN

Dude, there you are! You are a legend for what you said to Fergie. Hey, Nat.

NAT

What did he say to Fergie?

AARON

Yeah, I kind of blacked out there.

JUSTIN

You said, and I quote "Fergie, piss off, you ancient twat!"

AARON

I definitely didn't say that!

JUSTIN

I'm paraphrasing, whatever. You're on a hot streak right now and there's no way we're gonna melt our brains in detention when we can set the world on fire, baby!

NAT

Wow. Poetic.

AARON

You're saying we should ditch school?

JUSTIN

Yeah, come on. I know you have before, right?

AARON

(lies again)

Well yeah, lots of times.

NAT

I can cover for you with Hana.

AARON

Really? Thank you, Nat.

JUSTIN

Clock's ticking on our escape plan, amigo. You in or out?

AARON

In.

Justin grabs Aaron's arm and they sprint off. Aaron turns and waves at Nat, who laughs and waves back.

EXT. CITY PARK

The sun shines as Aaron, on his BIKE, and Justin, on his LONG-BOARD, ride down the sidewalk in a public park.

They see a REGGAE BAND playing music, with a small CROWD forming around them dancing. Justin jumps in and dances. Aaron stands on the sidelines laughing and taking pictures.

CUT TO:

The boys lie down in the grass and stare up at the sky.

JUSTIN

So, not bad for your first day,
huh?

AARON

It's been a lot better than
Eastside, that's for sure.

JUSTIN

I've heard so many horror stories
about the douchebags there.

AARON

Yup, don't miss it one bit.
Northwest has much cooler people.

JUSTIN

I mean, like, you're lucky you met
me and all, but Northwest isn't
the best place either. If I'm
being honest you're the first real
new friend I've made all year.

AARON

You? Mr. Funny Guy? I doubt that.

JUSTIN

People at school just treat me
like a clown. Nobody takes me
seriously, ever. Not teachers, not
even Molly or Blake.

AARON

Hey, you got me to ditch school. I
think I take you pretty seriously.

JUSTIN

And that's why I like you--
(catches himself)
In a strictly platonic way.

AARON
(laughs)
I figured.

JUSTIN
(changing the topic)
Hey, do you want to go to this
punk show with us tomorrow night?

AARON
But it's a school night.

JUSTIN
They're the opening act! We don't
have to stay out too late. Just
tell your folks you're working on
a project at my house.

AARON
Who's playing?

JUSTIN
It's this amazing band called
Needle Dick.

AARON
(laughs)
That's for real their name?

JUSTIN
Yes, and they're future rock gods!
I have to see them! The only thing
is it's 21 and over.

AARON
Is there some sort of exception
for tenth graders?

JUSTIN
Already got it covered, bucko.
Molly's cousin can score us fake
I.D's today.

AARON
Nice! Count me in.

JUSTIN
Sweet. School's out. I'm gonna
call Molly.

Justin pulls out his phone and dials. It rings for a
moment, before Molly's voicemail answers.

MOLLY (O.S.)
 (voicemail)
 Sorry. The number you've dialed
 doesn't care about you. Bye!

JUSTIN
 (hangs up)
 Well screw you too, Molly. Come,
 my friend. It's adventure time!

Justin runs off. Aaron shakes his head, but follows.

INT. NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL, LIBRARY

NAT and a bunch of smartsy STUDENTS crowd around tables in a corner of the library, talking amongst one another and flipping through copies of the SCHOOL NEWSPAPER. HANA stands in front of them all, scanning the room obsessively.

Nat notices Hana and walks up to her.

NAT
 What ya doing, Snoopy?

HANA
 I'm looking for Aaron Walker. He
 said he was gonna be here.

NAT
 Oh, he--

HANA
 (shouting)
 Attention, everyone! Has anyone
 seen Aaron Walker?

NEWSPAPER STUDENT
 Who's Aaron Walker?

The chatter continues. Nat pulls Hana aside.

NAT
 Aaron was in my last period, and
 he left sick. Probably his body
 getting adjusted to our gross
 cafeteria food.

HANA
 Aaron's last period is Math.
 Your's is Bio.

NAT
 Maybe he walked in the wrong
 classroom? First day confusion.

NEWSPAPER STUDENT #2

Is that the new kid with the afro?
I saw him hanging out with Justin
Jameson at lunch.

HANA

Justin "perma-stoned" Jameson?

Hana looks over at Nat suspiciously. Nat smiles and shrugs.

EXT. OUTSIDE MOLLY'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH/SIDE

The boys stand outside a SMALL, DINGY HOUSE in a crappier side of town. LOUD PUNK MUSIC blares from inside. Justin knocks on the door.

JUSTIN

Molly, open up! It's me.
(knocks again)

Molly, I know you're in there! We
have plans, remember?!

He sighs and turns to Aaron.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Let's go look in her window.

AARON

Molly's already made it clear to
me that she's not a fan of Peeping
Toms and I kind of value my face,
so I might sit this one out.

JUSTIN

Dude, I need your help. I can't
reach it on my own. I thought we
were friends.

AARON

Friends don't lead friends to
their death.

JUSTIN

(grabs his hand)
Oh don't be such a goob, Aaron.

AARON

A goob?

EXT. OUTSIDE MOLLY'S HOUSE, SIDE ALLEY

Justin runs over to the side of the house. Aaron rolls his eyes and follows after him. Justin stands outside Molly's window, about eight feet off the ground.

JUSTIN

Okay, I'm gonna give you a boost
and you see if she's in her room.

AARON

No way! I'm not peeking into
Molly's window. I'll give you a
boost.

JUSTIN

Dude, your arms are smaller than
mine. No offense but I can't trust
them.

AARON

That's bullshit! She's *your*
friend! Do your own dirty work!

JUSTIN

Okay! Calm down, Sassy Pants!

AARON

My bad. Anxiety, remember?

JUSTIN

Alright. I get it. But you'd
better not drop me.

Aaron holds his hands out, Justin takes a step into them and reaches for the ledge of the window. Aaron struggles. Justin peers his head over the ledge and looks inside.

He sees MOLLY and BLAKE lying on the bed, shirtless, making out, and straddling one another.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

What the fuck?!

Justin stumbles, causing him and Aaron both to plummet to the ground, CRASHING into a nearby set of trashcans. Both boys lie on the ground in pain. Blake runs to the window and opens it, looking down at his friends in disbelief.

MOLLY (O.S.)

(shouting)

What is it?!

BLAKE
(sighs)
Crack addicts.

EXT. OUTSIDE MOLLY'S HOUSE, FRONT PORCH

All four kids stand around on the porch. Molly SMACKS Justin in the arm.

JUSTIN
Ow!

MOLLY
What the hell are you doing
creeping outside my window, you
fucking freak?!

She smacks Aaron next.

MOLLY (CONT'D)
And you! What did I tell you?!

AARON
It was his idea!

JUSTIN
Did you forget we're supposed to
pick up fake IDs today from your
stupid cousin?

MOLLY
Don't call my cousin stupid! You
know she dropped out because she
got pregnant!

JUSTIN
Who cares?! My two best friends
are hooking up and I am mortified!

BLAKE
It's not a big deal, you cry-baby.

JUSTIN
If it's not a big deal then why
didn't you just tell me?

BLAKE
Because we knew you'd make it a
big deal.

AARON
(raises his hand)
I don't really think it's a big
deal.

BLAKE
Thank you, new kid.

JUSTIN
How long has this been going on?

MOLLY
Remember when we went camping last summer?

JUSTIN
We all slept in the same tent!

BLAKE
(laughing)
You're a really heavy sleeper.

Blake and Molly snicker at one another. Justin is frozen.

MOLLY
Really though, it's not a big deal. Blake and I are just hooking up. It's not like we're together.

JUSTIN
You say that now but soon someone's gonna catch the feels and then it's bye-bye, Justin.

MOLLY
You think I'd ever consider dating a sleazy fuckboy like Blake?

BLAKE
I'm sitting right here, you know.

JUSTIN
Screw it. This is a conversation for another day when I don't have Needle Dick on my mind.

Aaron, Molly, and Blake all start laughing hysterically.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Whatever! Molly, can your cousin still hook us up today?

MOLLY
Yeah, about that. Turns out the one she made for me is the first one she's ever made and she wants me to try it out before she makes any more.

AARON
Like a guinea pig?

MOLLY
It's totally legit. I think.

Justin presses his head against a wooden beam.

EXT. OUTSIDE LIQUOR STORE

Aaron, Justin, and Blake hide behind a bush, peering out ahead of them. Molly turns to them, winks, then struts on inside the store.

AARON
Wow, Molly is really hot. My bad,
Blake. Is that cool if I say that?

BLAKE
Go ahead. Why should I care?

JUSTIN
Because you're in sick Lannister
love with her.

BLAKE
No one gets your nerdy references,
ass-hat.

AARON
I--I got it.

INT. LIQUOR STORE

Molly peruses an aisle in the store. She grabs a bottle of vodka. She walks up to the counter, tossing her blonde hair back and forth. The CASHIER is a pimply-faced guy who looks like he hates his job.

MOLLY
Hey, cutie pie!

CASHIER
(monotone)
Hi.

MOLLY
(handing him the vodka)
Just this, please.

The cashier scans the bottle, then eyes Molly up and down.

CASHIER
Are you old enough to be
purchasing this, ma'am?

Molly starts fake-laughing, tossing her hair back and forth to get the cashier's juices flowing. He remains dead-faced.

MOLLY
No, but seriously, I'm a grad
student at UW. People think I'm a
high schooler like all the time.
Curse my cute baby face, I guess.

CASHIER
Can I see some ID, please?

MOLLY
Of course!

Molly reaches into her pocket and hands him her fake ID. He looks down at it for a moment, then back up at her.

CASHIER
This is the worst fake ID I've
ever seen.

MOLLY
(laughs nervously)
What? What do you mean?

CASHIER
There's no watermark, no driver's
license number, not even an
expiration date. I think I know a
store better suited for you, Miss-
(reads her ID again)
Snodgrass. A little place called
Hot Topic. I heard they just got a
new My Little Pony collection.

The cashier drops her card into a trash can. Molly gasps, then looks up at the cashier.

MOLLY
Did they really?

EXT. OUTSIDE LIQUOR STORE

The cashier shoves Molly out the door.

MOLLY
(kicking the door)
Go watch a ProActiv commercial!
It'll change your life!

Molly curses silently under her breath, but stops when--

COP

A-hem.

MOLLY

(shocked but smiling)

Oh...hi!

CUT TO:

The BOYS watch from behind their bush.

JUSTIN

Shit, it's the 5-0. We gotta bail!

BLAKE

What about Molly?

JUSTIN

You wanna go rescue your princess,
go right ahead!

BLAKE

I'm gonna punch you.

JUSTIN

Bring it, you little bitch!

AARON

You guys, wait! I have a plan.

CUT TO:

COP

Alright, little girl. I think it's
time we gave your mother a call.

MOLLY

Excuse me, *little girl*? I'm a grad
student at UW. Go Huskies!

COP

Oh yeah? What's your major?

MOLLY

Women's Studies, so I can learn to
topple the patriarchy.

COP

(ignoring her, writing a
ticket)

That's great, sweetheart.

Suddenly, loud swearing comes from the guys' direction. The cop looks over and sees Blake with Justin in a head-lock.

COP (CONT'D)
(to Molly)
Don't move.

The cop runs over to the boys. Molly immediately walks away. She stops when she sees Aaron, on his BIKE, ready for her at the street corner. She smiles and hops on.

CUT TO:

The cop pulls Justin and Blake apart.

COP (CONT'D)
Hey, hey! What's going on here?

JUSTIN
This guy just harassed
me...sexually!

BLAKE
What the fuck?!

COP
Is this true?

BLAKE
No way!

JUSTIN
He slapped my ass and called me
sweet-cheeks.

BLAKE
Where do you even come up with
this stuff?

JUSTIN
I'm not mad that he hit on me.
It's 2017, like come on. But, in
today's climate, this scumbag
needs to be educated on the
concept of consent!

BLAKE
Officer, this is...what do you
call it when someone makes up
stuff about you?

COP
Slander.

BLAKE
Officer, this is slander! And I'd bet you it's race-related.

JUSTIN
What? I'm not racist!

COP
Yeah, let's not take it that far, kid.

BLAKE
Surprise surprise. White man's gotta defend his own.

COP
(rubs his temple)
Listen, whatever it is, settle it with your words, not your fists, alright? Now, I've got a situation to handle--

The cop turns around to find Molly gone.

COP (CONT'D)
What the--?

He turns back around and sees Blake speeding off on his skateboard, Justin SPRINTING behind him. The cop rubs his eyes in annoyance.

EXT. SEATTLE STREETS, SUBURBAN AREA

The kids cheer as they ride down an empty residential street: Molly and Aaron sharing his bike, Blake on his skateboard, and Justin long-boarding. The sun shining on him, Aaron's face beams with excitement.

END ACT TWO.

ACT THREE

EXT. AARON'S NEIGHBORHOOD - EARLY EVENING

Aaron and Justin walk down the street together, past rows of upper middle-class homes on a tree-covered street. They're sharing earbuds, listening to PUNK MUSIC.

JUSTIN
Great, right?

AARON
Yeah, Needle Dick is bad-ass!

JUSTIN
(takes his earbuds out)
Dude, so are you! Talking shit to
Fergie, running from the cops. How
did you get to be so cool?

AARON
Guess I was just born this way.

JUSTIN
I have this weird
feeling--never-mind.

AARON
What?

JUSTIN
It just feels like I've known you
all my life. Like maybe we were
friends in a past life or
something.

AARON
Aren't you philosophical?

JUSTIN
Hey, man. I can get pretty deep.

AARON
Well, I know what you mean. And I
feel the same way.

The boys share an endearing smile. Aaron stops in front of
his HOUSE.

AARON (CONT'D)
Well, this is my place.

JUSTIN
Alright, brother. Since Molly's
cousin was a flop, I need you to
brainstorm ideas for how we can
get fakes in the next 24 hours.

AARON
Sir, yes, sir!

TRACEY
Aaron!

Aaron turns to see his MOTHER standing in the doorway, arms
crossed, angry.

JUSTIN
Whoa, is that your Mom?!

Justin whistles. Aaron jabs him in the arm.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hi, I'm Justin! Your son is rad!

Tracey flashes him a fake smile that immediately disappears.

TRACEY
Aaron, inside now!

JUSTIN
Good luck, man.

AARON
See you on the other side.

Justin gives Aaron daps, then hops on his longboard and rides off. Aaron gulps as he walks his bike slowly towards his house.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE, FOYER

Aaron walks in through the front door and spots TRINA sitting on the stairs, smirking.

TRINA
You're gonna get it.

AARON
Shut up, Trina.

Tracey barges in to the room. Glenn follows behind her.

TRACEY
(shouting)
Aaron Jamar Walker! Where have you been all day?!

AARON
I was just hanging out with some new friends. Sorry, my phone died.

TRINA
Friends? He's lying, Mommy.

GLENN
Trina, go to your room.

TRINA
But Daddy, I want to watch the drama!

GLENN

Now, Trina.

Trina rolls her eyes and runs up the stairs.

TRACEY

I got a call from your school today. Any guesses for what they wanted to talk about?

AARON

That I'm an exemplary student and possibly a future president?

TRACEY

Don't you play with me right now, boy. I am not the one.

AARON

Okay, so I messed up today. I'm sorry. It won't happen again.

TRACEY

Messed up? You got detention on your *first day*, and then proceeded to skip said detention to gallivant around town doing god-knows-what with god-knows-who! What is going on with you?

AARON

Nothing.

TRACEY

Uh-uh, boy. You better tell me what's going on right now.

AARON

You don't know what it's like!

TRACEY

Don't know what what's like?

AARON

Being me! For the first time in my life people treated me like I was a real person, not just some loser. Yes, I got kind of caught up in it all, but my new friends, Mom...they're great people, and--

TRACEY

Oh, I bet they're so great, especially when they wind up getting you thrown in juvie.

AARON
As if I'm going to juvie for
skipping school. Come on.

GLENN
Aaron, you need to watch how you
talk to your mother.

AARON
What do you care, Glenn? I'm not
even your kid.

Glenn's face drops, hurt. Aaron immediately feels guilty.

AARON (CONT'D)
Glenn, I--I didn't mean that.

Glenn glares at Aaron and then back at the ground.

TRACEY
I don't know what kind of madness
is going on in your head right
now, but I'll be damned if my son
is going to turn into another
statistic.

AARON
What, do you think I'm gonna turn
into one of those bullied
psychopaths who shoots up the
school?

TRACEY
Aaron, enough! Stop with the
jokes, stop with the smart mouth!
Look at yourself! You are a young
black man! This world is *not*
designed for you to be messing
around doing whatever you want! I
won't let you wind up in jail, or
worse! So for once in your life,
just listen to me!

Aaron wipes his eyes as they start to well up.

TRACEY (CONT'D)
(toning down her voice)
Now you're grounded for the rest
of the month.

AARON
What?!

TRACEY
You want to try for longer?

Aaron marches up the stairs to his room. Tracey sighs, turns back to Glenn and gives him a hug.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM

Aaron lies on his bed staring up at the ceiling. He sighs and reaches over into his backpack, and pulls out his CAMERA.

He turns it on and shuffles through photos from the day. MOLLY and BLAKE sitting on the curb, flipping off the camera. JUSTIN trying to kiss a squirming Blake on the cheek. Justin dancing with the REGGAE BAND in the park.

Aaron laughs. He clicks over to the next picture, a blurry shot of NAT in the hallway. Her mouth hangs open slightly, unprepared for the photo but beautiful nonetheless. Aaron smiles, then looks up, as an idea hits him.

EXT. NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL, PARKING LOT -- THE NEXT MORNING

Aaron rides into the parking lot like the morning before. As he locks his bike up, he looks over and sees two girls whispering about him and smiling. He smiles back modestly.

He walks across the front lawn of the school. A SKATER KID passes him by and high-fives him.

SKATER KID

'Sup, new kid. Heard what you said to Ferguson. You're a boss.

AARON

(shocked)

Thanks?

Aaron, clearly feeling himself, struts towards the school.

EXT. FRONT LAWN

JUSTIN, MOLLY, and BLAKE sit in the grass goofing around. Aaron approaches them.

AARON

Hey, guys.

JUSTIN

G'day, mate! How's that crafty little mind of yours? Come up with any more ideas? Because these two sure didn't.

AARON

Yeah, actually. I think I've got a solution, but I don't think I can go out anymore. I'm grounded.

Molly bursts into laughter. Aaron is confused.

MOLLY

Oh, sorry, I just didn't know that was still a thing.

JUSTIN

Yeah, I've never been grounded.

BLAKE

White folks don't ground their kids. I feel your pain, brother.

AARON

(not knowing how to respond)

Right.

JUSTIN

Aaron, you have to come out with us tonight! We fought the law over this!

AARON

I mean I can try, but none of us are going anywhere without fakes.

MOLLY

Alright then, smart guy. What's your solution?

AARON

Well, it's kind of a long shot.

INT. HALLWAY

NAT and HANA chat at their lockers. Aaron and Justin watch from across the hall.

JUSTIN

So you gonna talk to her or just Ted Bundy out over here?

AARON

Hana Choi scares me.

JUSTIN

She's not so bad. Watch.

Justin marches over towards the girls. Aaron follows.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hello, ladies!

HANA
Fuck off.

JUSTIN
(grabs Aaron)
Okay, your turn.

AARON
Uh, hey, Nat. Hey, Hana.

HANA
Oh, hey! I heard you had a little
tummy ache and couldn't make it to
the newspaper meeting yesterday.

Aaron and Nat share a guilty look.

AARON
Yeah, I'm feeling better though.

HANA
Must be, or else how could this
have happened?

Hana holds up her cell phone, showing an Instagram SELFIE
of the boys in the park the day before.

HANA (CONT'D)
Thankfully one of my newspaper
birdies showed me this. Now I know
not to associate with you, you
flaky--

NAT
Please forgive my friend. She
hasn't taken her meds today.

Hana rolls her eyes.

AARON
Look, Hana, it was wrong of me to
ditch the meeting. I'm just--

HANA
Just what? Too afraid to join
newspaper because you might get
your ass kicked again?

JUSTIN
Wait, what's she talking about?

AARON

You know what? Forget this. I just came over to ask Nat a favor. You said you make press passes, right?

NAT

You need a fake ID?

JUSTIN

Whoa, how'd you do that?

NAT

You guys aren't the first to exploit my talents. I have a template saved and everything.

AARON

Awesome! Can you make four for us after school?

JUSTIN

I'll pay you whatever you want. Money, weed, sexual favors--

NAT

Money's fine.

HANA

Ooh, she's busy after school today. See, we have a newspaper deadline and no time to run around playing little games of druggie make-believe. I mean if you'd rather shirk your responsibilities to help out this phony then by all means, Nat, go ahead.

JUSTIN

Who you calling a "phony"?

AARON

No one, just forget it. Let's go.

Aaron grabs a confused Justin and walks away with him.

HANA

(turns to Nat)

Sometimes, Nat, I swear you and I are the only decent people in this entire school.

Nat looks at Hana, then at the boys as they walk off, thinking to herself.

INT. HISTORY CLASS

A video on Imperial China plays on the projector screen. Aaron sulks at his desk. Nat sits at the front of the room, scribbling on a piece of paper. She folds it, turns and passes the paper to the student behind her.

NAT
(whispering)
Pass this to Aaron.

HISTORY STUDENT
Who?

NAT
The new kid.

The kid passes the note back to the KID behind him and relays the message. The next kid passes it back to Aaron behind him. Aaron grabs it and opens it up. It reads: I'LL HELP YOU. Aaron looks up at Nat, who smiles back at him.

INT. LIBRARY - AFTER SCHOOL

Newspaper students crowd in their usual corner of the library. Nat works on her laptop, facing away from everyone else, as she formats fake IDs. Hana sits at the computers with another student, TRISHA.

HANA
Christ, Trisha! You call this photojournalism? All these pictures are blurry!

TRISHA
Maybe we could put a filter on it?

HANA
Great idea! Let's put a filter on your brain next.

Trisha starts crying, grabs her stuff and storms out of the room, but stops in her tracks when she runs into BLAKE, who enters the area with a bouquet of flowers. All eyes in the room turn to his chiseled face.

HANA (CONT'D)
What are you doing here?

BLAKE
I was wondering if I could borrow Nat for a little bit?

All the other students go "woo" like a sitcom audience.

HANA
No chance, playboy. We have a paper that we need to send to print by 5:30.

NAT
(whispering)
Hana, it's Blake Garcia.

HANA
(whispering)
So? Blake Garcia is an idiot.

NAT
(whispering)
But he's so cute, Hana!

HANA
Ugh, fine, thirsty. But hurry up!

Nat kisses Hana on the cheek and runs over towards Blake, giddily grabbing his arm as they strut out of the room.

EXT. HALLWAY

Once they exit the library, Nat immediately lets go of Blake, who tosses the flowers into a nearby trash can.

NAT
Where did you even get those?

BLAKE
Stole them from Special Ed.

NAT
(laughs)
We're going to Hell.

They turn a corner, when AARON, JUSTIN, and MOLLY suddenly pop up and scare them. They all laugh and the boys sprint off down the hall. Molly links arms with Nat.

MOLLY
Finally some more female energy around here. Why didn't I know you were such a bad bitch, Nat Wyatt?

NAT
(winks)
Cat's outta the bag.

Molly lets out a girly squeal of excitement and holds Nat tighter as they run to catch up to the boys.

INT. COMPUTER LAB

Aaron lines Justin, Molly, and Blake up and takes their pictures one-by-one.

Justin makes a goofy face at first, and then a serious one. Molly blows a kiss at the camera, then goes serious. Blake holds up his middle finger, then puts it down quickly and cheeses.

CUT TO:

Nat holds Aaron's camera as she takes a picture of him.

NAT

Smile!

Aaron flashes a quick smile, before Nat snaps the shot.

CUT TO:

Nat rapidly edits the IDs on a computer, Aaron sitting next to her watching her work.

INT. HALLWAY

Down the hall, Justin stands watch checking the corners to make sure no one catches them.

INT. SUPPLY CLOSET

Molly and Blake make out feverishly. Blake pushes Molly against the wall, knocking a mop onto her head.

MOLLY

Ow! Blake!

BLAKE

Are you okay?

Molly grabs his face and starts tonguing him some more.

INT. LIBRARY

Hana stares at the clock as her fellow newspaper students work around her. Fed up with waiting, she bolts from her seat and marches out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY

Hana walks into the hallway. She spots the BOUQUET that Blake brought tossed in the trash, and continues down the hall.

INT. COMPUTER LAB

Nat and Aaron stand by a printer as IDs slide out.

AARON

I can't believe you can just get away with this.

NAT

Low-key, this school doesn't pay much attention to the nerdy kids. The band geeks are alcoholics, the drama team is just one big orgy. It's a shit-show, t-b-h.

The last ID prints out. It's Aaron's. Nat grabs it.

NAT (CONT'D)

(hands it to him)

All yours. Enjoy.

AARON

Thanks a lot, Nat. Have you made one of these for yourself?

NAT

Indeed I have. Is this your subtle way of inviting me to the show tonight?

AARON

Maybe.

NAT

I'd love to. Obviously all of this can be our little secret.

AARON

Yeah, no offense, but your friend Hana is kind of intense. Why do you put up with it?

NAT

She's my best friend. I don't know. We've been through everything together.

(MORE)

NAT (CONT'D)

And sometimes the person you present to the world isn't really who you are deep down, know what I mean?

AARON

(looks away)

Yeah...I know.

Suddenly there's a loud bang on the window. Nat and Aaron jump, then look over at Hana, who glares at them angrily.

INT. HALLWAY

Aaron and Nat walk out into the hallway. Justin comes running up to them, panting.

JUSTIN

I tried to stop her but she shoved me into a locker and it hurt!

HANA

Nat, did you honestly concoct some ridiculous scheme just to sneak behind my back?

NAT

I'm sorry, Hana, but I knew if I told you I wanted to help these guys out you'd just give me hell.

HANA

You think? This is foolish, Nat.

NAT

Hey, guess what? I'm my own person. I don't need your approval over who I hang out with.

HANA

You're right. You don't need my approval. But as your *best friend* it is my job to tell you when you're making a huge life mistake.

AARON

What do you have against us, Hana? You don't even know me or my friends.

HANA

Oh, I think I know you a little bit, Aaron Walker.

AARON

What's that supposed to mean?

HANA

Your file! Remember? Does anyone else here besides the three of us know what's inside it?

AARON

Wait...three of us? Nat, did she tell you?

NAT

Yeah, she did. And it's not your fault what happened to you, Aaron.

JUSTIN

Dude, what are you guys talking about?

HANA

Do you want to tell him or should I?

NAT

Hana, stop.

HANA

Before Aaron came to Northwest, he was a spineless geek who got the shit kicked out of him on a weekly basis, most likely because his insecurities are written all over his face. I mean why do you think he even transferred to this school? Because he's a walking kick-me sign who couldn't tough it out at Eastside. I don't know where this cool boy reputation that I've heard so much about comes from, but just about everything he's told you, Justin, is a stone cold lie.

JUSTIN

Is that true, man?

AARON

Yeah, it's true.

HANA

Aaron Walker was and always will be a loser.

AARON
 (shouts)
 Fuck you!

Aaron bolts down the hallway, away from everyone. Molly and Blake turn a corner and find everyone else.

MOLLY
 Damn, what did we miss?

NAT
 (shakes her head)
 Way to go, Hana.

Nat runs off after Aaron, leaving Hana awkwardly alone with the rest of the gang.

EXT. NORTHWEST HIGH SCHOOL, ENTRANCE

Nat bursts out the front doors of the school, running down the steps. Looking out at the street, she sees Aaron quickly pedaling away on his BIKE.

NAT
 (shouting)
 Aaron!

Aaron keeps pedaling. Nat's face drops.

EXT. OVERPASS

Aaron reaches his usual overpass, stopping halfway. He gets off his bike and leans over the rail, sticking his head in his arms as he starts to CRY.

BIKERS
 On your left!

Aaron turns as a flurry of bikers pass by. He watches them pedal away and can't help but laugh.

END ACT THREE.

ACT FOUR

EXT. BUS STOP

JUSTIN, MOLLY, and BLAKE sit at a bus stop.

JUSTIN
 Do you guys think it was messed up
 that Aaron lied to us?

BLAKE

Meh, I don't really care.

MOLLY

I kind of like the kid. He's nice,
and funny, and cute.

JUSTIN

Yeah. I like him too. A lot.

BLAKE

Aw, does Justie-poo have a wittle
crush on the new kid?

JUSTIN

(smacks Blake's leg)

Shut up!

As Molly chastises Blake, Justin looks down, thinking.

INT. LIBRARY

Nat packs up her notebooks and things into her backpack.
Hana slowly walks into the room looking guilty.

HANA

Hey.

Nat turns to look at her, then back at her things. She zips
up her bag and marches past her.

HANA (CONT'D)

Nat, wait!

NAT

What? Do you want to rip me to
shreds next?

HANA

I know, what just happened was
dark, even by my standards. And
you know, like the smallest part
of my soul regrets it.

NAT

Don't tell me that. Tell Aaron.

HANA

I will. Tomorrow. I have cello
lessons.

Nat rolls her eyes and walks away.

HANA (CONT'D)
 What more do you want from me?

NAT
 (turns back around)
 I want you to stop ostracizing us from everyone in the school! I want you to stop acting like some Regina George monster just because you think you're better than everyone.

HANA
 We, Nat! We're better than everyone!

NAT
 We're not! And until you realize that, you're no better than the jerks who beat up Aaron.

Hana looks away, feeling guilty.

NAT (CONT'D)
 (sighs)
 Look, I know a way that you can redeem yourself.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM

Aaron lies on his bed, staring gloomily at his FAKE ID. Someone KNOCKS, and he quickly hides it under his pillow. Tracey enters the room.

TRACEY
 Aaron, you're grounded. This door needs to stay open til bed time.

AARON
 (sighing)
 Yes, ma'am.

TRACEY
 Huh, no smart mouth today. What's the matter?

AARON
 Nothing.

TRACEY
 You seem depressed.

AARON

I'm not depressed, Mom. You can't psychoanalyze me like your patients.

TRACEY

Ah, there it is. Did something happen at the newspaper meeting?

AARON

Uh, no. It was fine.

TRACEY

Is this about your new friends?

AARON

I don't have any friends, Mom.

Tracey looks sad. She goes to sit down next to him and strokes his hair gently.

TRACEY

I'll always be your friend, baby.

AARON

Even when I'm grounded?

TRACEY

Especially when you're grounded. It means we get to spend a lot of time together.

Aaron smiles at her. The DOORBELL RINGS from downstairs.

TRACEY (CONT'D)

Now, who could that be?

Tracey walks out of Aaron's room and heads down the stairs. Aaron sits on his bed, listening. Tracey opens the door and says a few words to the visitor.

TRACEY (O.S)

Aaron, it's for you!

Aaron scrunches his face, confused, and gets up.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE, FOYER

Aaron walks down the stairs and peers out the door. It's NAT, who smiles at him.

AARON

Nat? How do you know where I live?

NAT
 (in a creepy voice)
 I followed you home.
 (back to normal)
 No, actually Hana used her completely unwarranted access to student files to show me your address. She feels really bad, just so you know.

AARON
That's believable. Besides, I don't blame her for getting mad.

NAT
 Do you wanna maybe go somewhere and talk about it?

AARON
 I can't. I'm grounded.

TRACEY (O.S)
 Just go!

Aaron turns around and sees TRACEY and GLENN standing in the hallway.

TRACEY
 But you've got one hour.

AARON
 Thanks, Mom.

Tracey smiles at them as they walk outside.

GLENN
 I always thought he'd bring home a white girl.

TRACEY
 That's why I let him leave!

They cackle and high-five.

EXT. GASWORKS PARK - SUNSET

Aaron and Nat lean over a railing overlooking LAKE UNION, the picturesque Seattle skyline sprawled in front of them.

AARON
 I sure made a mess of things, didn't I?

NAT

Nothing you can't come back from.

AARON

But I'm a liar. I wouldn't want to be my friend again. Truth be told, Hana was right about me.

NAT

I don't mean to sound harsh, Aaron, but you seem like the kind of guy who takes comfort in your own self-pity.

AARON

Not harsh, that kind of hits the nail on the head.

NAT

I'm not blaming you. I mean, my life is far from perfect. But you gotta believe things can get better. Otherwise, what's the point?

Aaron looks out at the water, quiet for a moment.

NAT (CONT'D)

I want you to tell me what you like about yourself.

AARON

You sound just like my mother right now.

NAT

Well she seems like a very lovely and intelligent woman.

(tapping his arm)

I mean it, though! Come on. If you and I are gonna be friends, then I don't want to hear you being down on yourself all the time.

AARON

Okay, fine. Something I like about myself...I like my hair.

NAT

Be serious, Aaron.

AARON

I am serious! My mom put coconut oil in it, shit's all big and bouncy.

NAT

Okay, so how about this sense of humor you seem to be so proud of? That's obviously something you like about yourself.

AARON

Well, I am pretty hilarious.

NAT

Alright, respect. That's good. We'll start from there and work our way up to 100% self-confidence. Don't worry, you'll be feeling yourself in no time.

AARON

You know, Nat -- I really appreciate you being so nice to me. I mean it.

NAT

There! That's another good thing about you. You're sweet. Own that, Aaron. Own who you are. It's all about perspective, you know? You can always change things, make the future better.

AARON

You're wiser than your years, Nat.

NAT

Oh, I'm actually a 300-year-old witch. When you've been around a while, you learn a lot, you know?

AARON

And you told me to be serious.

Nat chuckles as she pulls her phone out of her pocket. She checks the time.

NAT

Hey, you should probably head back home soon. I don't want to get you in trouble. I wish you could come to the show tonight, though.

AARON

(thinking)

Yeah, me too.

INT. AARON'S HOUSE, ENTRANCE/LIVING ROOM

Aaron creeps in through the front door. He walks into the living room and finds TRACEY and GLENN on the couch, both fallen asleep watching game shows. Glenn SNORES loudly.

AARON
Mom, I'm home.

TRACEY
(mumbling, half awake)
Hi, Trina.

AARON
It's Aaron. I'm going to bed now.
Super tired.

TRACEY
Uh-huh.

Aaron sprints away quickly.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM

At his desk, Aaron scribbles quickly on a sheet of paper.

AARON (V.O.)
Dear Mom--

Aaron grabs his fake ID and puts it in his wallet. He looks in the mirror and picks out his afro.

AARON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
If you're reading this, then
you're aware that I've snuck out,
despite me being grounded. A
thousand apologies for my
disobedience, but you must
understand it was an act of sheer
self-empowerment, not rebellion.

He rummages through piles of clothes. He grabs his KYLO REN/DARTH VADER T-SHIRT, lifts it over his head, looks in the mirror, and smiles.

AARON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
I proudly accept whatever further
punishment you deem necessary.
Just know I'll be a lot happier
after tonight. Love, Aaron.

EXT. OUTSIDE AARON'S HOUSE/NEIGHBORHOOD - NIGHT

Aaron climbs out onto the roof outside his bedroom, then slides down a pole. When he lands, he stumbles and falls to the ground with a loud THUD.

He picks himself up and quickly runs over to the window and sees his PARENTS still sleeping. He grins.

CUT TO:

Aaron speeds off on his BIKE, into the night.

EXT. OUTSIDE MUSIC VENUE, LINE

A long line forms outside of a music club. Loud PUNK MUSIC blares from inside. JUSTIN, BLAKE, and MOLLY wait in line.

JUSTIN

I'm freaking out. Blake feel my hands. I'm shaking.

BLAKE

(joking)

Aww, you want to hold my hand?

JUSTIN

Yeah, I figured since you're giving it up to homies now I should be next in line.

MOLLY

(whispering)

We are next in line. Look alive!

The person in front of Molly is cleared through, now she's up. The BOUNCER is a burly and intimidating woman, standing with arms crossed. Molly hands her her fake ID. The bouncer eyes her up and down.

BOUNCER

Wow, you have the most beautiful blue eyes, sweetie.

MOLLY

Thank you!

Beaming, Molly struts inside. Blake is next, looking calm and collected as usual. He hands the bouncer his ID.

BOUNCER

Alright, you're good.

Blake smiles and walks through. Justin's up. He flashes his goofy grin to the bouncer as he hands her his ID.

JUSTIN
Hello!

BOUNCER
What are you? 12? Next!

JUSTIN
Rude! I'm 16!

Molly and Blake, watching from inside, both face-palm.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Shit. I mean...21?

She pulls out a pair of scissors from her pocket and CUTS Justin's fake ID in half.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hey, you can't do that!

BOUNCER
(laughs)
In my 10 years of working this crummy job I have never encountered such stupidity.

JUSTIN
You know what? You're just on a power trip, lady! You...you're not very nice.

BOUNCER
Next!

Justin pushes his way out of the line. Some of the other patrons laugh at him as he marches away angry.

EXT. OUTSIDE MUSIC VENUE, STREET CURB

Justin sits on the concrete, silently cursing to himself. Suddenly, a bike SCREECHES to a halt next to him, causing him to jump. It's AARON.

JUSTIN
Jesus, dude! Do you have a hit out on me or something?

AARON
(hops off his bike)
Just wanted to make an entrance.

Justin jumps off the ground. He runs to Aaron and gives him a huge HUG, squeezing him tight in momentary silence.

JUSTIN
I'm happy you're here, buddy.

AARON
You're not mad at me?

JUSTIN
(lets go of him)
Meh, that's high school shit.

AARON
(laughs)
Yeah, fuck high school. Hey, what are you doing out here alone?

JUSTIN
The psycho bouncer cut up my ID, Molly and Blake are probably banging in the bathroom, and I'm about to miss my favorite band's show! How do I go on from this, Aaron?

AARON
Perspective, my friend.
(looks around)
There's gotta be some way we can sneak you in.

Aaron looks around. He spots a few VENUE WORKERS moving stage equipment from a TRUCK into a side door.

AARON (CONT'D)
Do you have any weed on you?

JUSTIN
Ooh good idea, let's smoke.
That'll help us think!

AARON
No, I might need it for bribery purposes.

JUSTIN
My weed, Aaron?

AARON
I know, it's crazy.

JUSTIN
No...crazy's good.

EXT. OUTSIDE MUSIC VENUE, ALLEY

Justin hides behind a dumpster in the alley, watching as venue workers bring equipment through the side door.

JUSTIN

Crazy's good, Justin. Wait in this dark alley by yourself, Justin. Get axe-murdered, Justin.

EXT. OUTSIDE MUSIC VENUE, LINE

Aaron steps up to the bouncer and hands her his ID, trying to look as nonchalant as possible. She examines it closely. His mind is wrought with tension.

BOUNCER

Enjoy the show.

Aaron smiles, grabs his ID and rushes inside.

INT. MUSIC VENUE

Aaron pushes through a CROWD OF HIPSTERS, heading towards the backstage entrance, where VENUE WORKERS are moving equipment from. He spots one, a 20-YEAR-OLD STONER GUY, lazily carrying cords.

AARON

Hey, excuse me?

STONER VENUE WORKER

(walks closer to him)

What's up?

AARON

How much weed could I pay you to let me borrow your t-shirt?

STONER VENUE WORKER

Bro. Do you think I'm stupid?

Aaron looks worried for a moment.

EXT. OUTSIDE MUSIC VENUE, ALLEY

Aaron and the venue worker burst through the side door. Justin peers from behind the dumpster, spotting Aaron, who waves him over. Ecstatic, Justin sprints towards the door.

AARON

Thanks for doing this, man.

STONER VENUE WORKER
I was told there'd be bud.

JUSTIN
Here's a nug.

Justin pulls out his bag of weed from his pocket.

STONER VENUE WORKER
I want the whole sack.

JUSTIN
The whole sack?! You son of a--

AARON
Justin. It's for Needle Dick.

Justin sighs and reluctantly hands the whole bag over.
Aaron pats him on the shoulder and they rush inside.
Another VENUE WORKER walks out past them.

VENUE WORKER #2
Did you just let two kids inside?

STONER VENUE WORKER
They gave me weed, bro!

INT. MUSIC VENUE, BACKSTAGE

Justin and Aaron rush through the backstage area trying not to get noticed. Justin stops when he peers inside the LOUNGE AREA, spotting a bunch of PUNK MUSICIANS hanging around drinking alcohol.

JUSTIN
(awestruck)
Needle Dick.

AARON
(grabs him)
Come on!

INT. MUSIC VENUE

MOLLY and BLAKE stand by the stage, surrounded by dozens of other concertgoers.

BLAKE
When is this lame band supposed to start anyway? Don't they know it's a school night?

MOLLY
It's a 21 and over show.

BLAKE
Oh, yeah.

NAT
Hey, people I know!

They turn and see NAT approach them.

MOLLY
(hugs her)
Hey, girl! I'm so glad you came!
We wouldn't be here without you!

NAT
Couldn't miss it! Where's Justin?

JUSTIN
Ta-da!

Justin and Aaron barge in to the group.

NAT/MOLLY/BLAKE
Aaron!

Everyone bum-rushes Aaron with hugs and affection, ignoring Justin, who shrugs.

NAT
Did your mom let you out?

AARON
She didn't not let me out. I just didn't ask.

NAT
Ever the troublemaker, Aaron Walker.

BLAKE
(to Justin)
How did you get in? Did you flash the bouncer and they thought you were Needle Dick's mascot?

JUSTIN
Ha-ha. Very funny.
(grabs Aaron's shoulder)
But all the glory goes to Seattle's finest right here. And to think you jerks doubted him.

BLAKE
I never doubted him.

MOLLY
You called him a narc!

BLAKE
You called him a perv!

AARON
As much as I'm enjoying these
compliments, I think there's a
show about to start.

Suddenly the crowd starts cheering. The gang looks to the stage and sees the members of NEEDLE DICK grabbing their instruments and getting ready. Justin SCREAMS excitedly.

LEAD SINGER
Hello, Seattle! We're Needle Dick
and we're here to ruin your life.

He starts violently strumming on the guitar. The CROWD roars with excitement. The DRUMS pick up and roll into a loud, fast-paced punk song. Everyone starts DANCING. Aaron looks over at Nat, dancing freely under the neon lights.

His gaze stays fixated on her for a moment, until Justin grabs him, and the two boys dance and cheer together as the music goes on. Aaron looks around with wonder at all of his new friends, his new life.

EXT. OUTSIDE AARON'S HOUSE

The night is over. Aaron SKIDS his bike to a stop, setting it down on his porch. He tiptoes over to his living room window, and spots TRACEY and GLENN still asleep. He shakes his fist triumphantly, his mission a success.

INT. AARON'S BEDROOM

Aaron lifts the window and quietly climbs inside his dark bedroom. With a sigh of relief, he takes off his jacket and walks over to his LIGHT SWITCH. He flips it on.

TRINA
(holding up the letter)
Hey, big brother.

AARON
Oh...fuck.

END.