

SNAPSHOT

Written by:
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Genre:
Supernatural Family Drama

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE, BACKYARD - DAY

FRANKIE CHANDLER (12) a pushover, adjust his glasses to connect two wires to the poles of a 9-volt battery leading to the engine of a model rocket ten yards away.

He glances suspiciously from side to side, sees no one.

A young child's play area is nearby with dolls and furniture inside a toy princess castle made of plastic.

FRANKIE

Here goes.

Frankie turns the ignition switch as a gust of wind sweeps across the lawn. The rocket tilts, flies into the play area.

The rocket explodes with a BANG. The castle catches fire.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Oh no.

Frankie dashes to the play area, douses what remains of the castle with sand. He test the melted plastic with a brief touch, pulls out a Rapunzel doll; her face and hair are melted, her outfit scorched.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Uh-oh.

Frankie quickly picks up the castle, doll, and melted furniture, races to a trash can in the neighbor's back yard.

He lifts out a garbage bag, dumps everything into the can, covers it with the bag.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, ATTIC - DAY

Dust scatters in sunlight and shadows.

An old dresser, tattered suitcases, a cedar chest, and cardboard boxes are crammed in the corner.

Frankie wears a baseball cap, opens the cedar chest, tosses aside faded letters and photos, pulls out a veteran's leather jacket.

JEFF HALL (12) personable, stocky, a cropped haircut, sets a flashlight down, digs deeper, grabs a WWI helmet, puts it on.

JEFF

Rad.

Frankie RAPS on the helmet.

FRANKIE
Told ya'.

Frankie opens a large box, shoves aside Easter decorations, removes a 'Happy Birthday' sign.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
That was easy.

Jeff takes off the helmet, rummages through the top drawer of the dresser, puts on an old, baseball mitt, smells the leather, punches it.

JEFF
How'd they catch anything with this?

Jeff sets the mitt down, opens the second drawer, finds a baseball in a plastic holder next to an old, Brownie camera. He starts to open the plastic case. Frankie pulls Jeff's arm.

FRANKIE
Wait! That's an old Series ball.

Jeff shines the flashlight on the signatures of the ball.

JEFF
What year?

Frankie shrugs his shoulders.

FRANKIE
Uhhh... not sure. I'll ask my dad.

Jeff picks up the camera. There's a roll of film beside it.

JEFF
What's this?

Frankie motions with his hands as if taking a photograph.

FRANKIE
Duh?

Sounds of an electric garage door SQUEAKS as it opens o.s.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Speaking of dad.

Jeff closes the drawer, stuffs the film in his pocket, picks up the mitt and ball case. Frankie grabs the camera and sign.

They scurry to the stairs. The exit's closed, the ladder's up. Frankie sets the camera aside, POUNDS on the stairwell platform.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

(yells)

Mom! Mom! We can't get out. Mom!
Jeff and I are stuck up here.

FOOTSTEPS echo in the hall o.s. The stairwell CREEKS as it opens. Agitated, Frankie looks down.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

By any chance... is Lena in her
room?

KITCHEN

A Disney theme cake, matching cups and plates, a helium balloon, and gift bags on the table. Neat, tidy.

Classic stainless steel appliances are between oak cabinets.

SHARON CHANDLER (32) who wears the pants in the family, petite, attractive, enters behind Frankie and Jeff.

Frankie puts away the flashlight, sets the camera and birthday sign on the table. Jeff wears the old mitt, carries the ball case.

FRANKIE

We're gonna' ask dad something.

Frankie and Jeff shuffle out. They bump into LENA CHANDLER (7) cute but mischievous, running full speed inside.

SHARON

Hold on! Lena. Slow down.

Lena sweeps her finger across the icing, licks it off, skips from the kitchen into the hall.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Lena. You know better.

EXT. CHANDLER HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - DAY

CHRIS CHANDLER (34) an optimist, wearing jeans and plaid, pulls a covered box toward him from the back of the van. Frankie and Jeff meander up.

CHRIS

Hi, boys. Have a good game?

Both boys look down, discouraged.

FRANKIE

I got on base... twice. Jeff scored.

Chris gives the boys fist bumps.

CHRIS
Not half bad. You'll get 'em next
time.

The boys' eyes light up when a GOLDEN RETRIEVER PUPPY peeks
his head from the box. The puppy SQUEALS.

FRANKIE
Dad! What did you get?

Chris, a finger over his lips, tucks the puppy's head down.

CHRIS
Shhhhh. Not a word to Lena or mom.

Chris tucks the puppy back inside, lifts the box.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
Jeff, grab the puppy chow in the
front seat. Frankie, the carrier.

Jeff holds up the case and signed baseball.

FRANKIE
Dad, we wanted to ask you about the
Series ball.

Chris strolls to the shed in the backyard.

CHRIS
It's your mom's.

Jeff opens the front door, sets the glove and ball down. Jeff
lifts the bag of puppy chow. Frankie pulls out the carrier.
Frankie and Jeff scurry toward the shed.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

The camera sets on the table. Frankie holds the glove. Jeff
views the signatures on the ball. Sharon cleans up the party
mess.

SHARON
That glove was my granddad's... Stu
Taylor. He played double-A ball but
never made it to the majors.

FRANKIE
How'd he get the ball?

SHARON
His friend pitched in the '24
Series.

JEFF

Cool.

Jeff sets the series ball aside, picks up the camera, gazes through the viewfinder.

SHARON

I got that camera from him when I was Lena's age. I loaded a roll of film and took a few shots but lost interest. Never had the film developed.

Sharon wipes the counters.

SHARON (CONT'D)

It probably has the same old film I used; been gathering dust ever since.

Jeff hands the camera to Frankie. He views the transparent red dial on the top.

FRANKIE

What's with the number ten?

Sharon rinses out the washcloth. She counts with her fingers.

SHARON

There's three shots left on the roll.

FRANKIE

Can we use it?

Sharon nods. Frankie and Jeff leap from their chairs. Sharon blocks their path.

SHARON

It's not digital but take care of it. It's one-of-a-kind, the last model they rolled off the line.

FRANKIE

We'll figure it out.

SHARON

Don't get your hopes up. For some strange reason, oil tends to seep out around the seams.

JEFF

Let's take a picture of Lena's puppy.

Frankie nods, shoves Jeff back onto the chair.

FRANKIE
Beat ya' outside.

JEFF
I don't think so, slow poke.

The boys shove and hold one another, scramble out the door.

KITCHEN - LATER

Chris lifts a garbage bag from the trash can. Sharon glances out the window at Lena chasing her puppy in the yard.

LAUGHTER and puppy BARKS filter into the kitchen, then a HIGH PITCHED SCREAM o.s.

Lena STOMPS into the kitchen, CRIES.

Sharon reaches for a tissue, kneels, wipes Lena's tears.

LENA
(between sobs)
Frankie and Jeff grabbed Cisco and ran off.

Sharon glares at Chris with hands on her hips.

CHRIS
I'll take care of it.

Chris hurries through the door to the garage. Lena SNIFFLES.

LENA
He's my puppy, not Frankie's.

SHARON
I know sweetheart.

Chris opens the door; Frankie and Jeff enter followed by Chris. Frankie hands Cisco to Lena. Jeff holds the camera.

FRANKIE
We haven't gotten' to play with him... even a minute.

Chris stares at Jeff.

CHRIS
It's time for Jeff to be heading home.

JEFF
We'll take a picture of our team before practice. See ya'.

Jeff scurries outside.

SHARON
Frankie, it's Lena's birthday.

Lena whimpers with an up-turned nose and a smug expression.

LENA
Told Ya'!

Frankie HUFFS, turns, marches down the hallway.

LENA (CONT'D)
I'm not lettin' you play with him.

Lena sticks her tongue out at Frankie.

CHRIS
(a stern look to Lena)
I saw that.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, FAMILY ROOM - DAY

Sharon and Chris sip coffee on a love seat. Chris wears a tie, dress slacks.

SHARON
Their saving the last photo for his
team... to bring 'em luck. They
face the cubs.

Chris sets down his coffee cup.

CHRIS
The cubs? They got beat by twelve
runs the last time they played.
(beat)
The film's, what... thirty, forty,
years old?

SHARON
Or more.

Chris stands, grabs his coat.

CHRIS
Where's the ball?

SHARON
Oh no! You're not putting it on
e-bay. That's Frankie's ball.

CHRIS
(sighs)
I had to ask.

EXT. CHANDLER HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - DAY

Frankie rides his bike back and forth. Jeff pedals up, slips off his bike, holds up his arm. His left wrist is in a cast.

JEFF

Yep. Broke it. Clean through.

Frankie peddles over.

FRANKIE

I can see that.

JEFF

Fell plum off my bike, trying a new trick. Riden' backwards.

FRANKIE

You're a stunt rider now?

JEFF

Carrie was the first to sign it.

FRANKIE

I'll believe that when I see it.

Jeff pulls a marker from inside his cast, points at her signature.

JEFF

Told ya'!

FRANKIE

How'd ya' pull that off?

JEFF

(grins)

You're such a pushover. I signed her name myself.

(beat)

I got the idea when I saw her at the medical center with the other cheerleaders when they came in for their physicals.

Frankie slaps his forehead.

FRANKIE

I should'a known. There's two "r's" in Carrie's name.

Frankie grabs the marker, crosses through Carrie's signature before he signs his name.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

You're mom still let's you ride?

JEFF
 Yeah. Jus' says, be more careful.
 (snickers)
 Boys 'll be boys.

FRANKIE
 Let's pick up the pictures.

Jeff hops on his bike, races away.

JEFF
 I'll beat your butt past Mrs.
 Johnson's dried-up, garden patch.

Frankie puts the pedal to the metal, chases after him.

FRANKIE
 I'll let ya' win. You're
 handicapped.

Both boys haul full speed down the road.

EXT. PHOTO SHOP - DAY

Frankie passes a black and white photo to Jeff. They're on a bench; their bikes lean against a post.

FRANKIE
 This is s-o-o-o-o weird.

Jeff and Frankie have befuddled expressions.

JEFF
 Supernatural weird.

Frankie lifts Jeff's left arm, hands him a photo.

FRANKIE
 Jeff, buddy... your arm.

ON PHOTO: Jeff wears a baseball jersey with his glove on his hand overlapping the cast.

BACK TO SCENE

JEFF
 My wrist wasn't broke at Lena's
 party.

Frankie passes a second photo to Jeff.

FRANKIE
 Look! Look at this!
 (beat)
 You won't believe it.

ON PHOTO: Cisco chews a baseball mitt while lying on a tablecloth. Shards of a vase are scattered nearby.

BACK TO SCENE

JEFF

We took Cisco's picture chasing
Lena in the back yard.

FRANKIE

Yeah. Before I grabbed him and she
ran off tattling.

(nods)

No back yard. No Lena. And I've
been wondering what happened to
that glove.

Frankie crams the photos in the envelope, shoves it loosely
in his back pocket. They climb on their bikes, pedal away.

EXT. FOUR LANE HIGHWAY - DAY

Cars and trucks travel along the highway. Frankie does a
wheelie on the sidewalk.

FRANKIE

Can't top that!

Jeff lifts up his cast, rides ahead.

JEFF

Backwards... wait 'til I get this
off.

Frankie does another wheelie, comes down hard on a curb with
his back wheel. The envelope falls from his pocket, spills
onto the road.

The boys pedal ahead, unaware.

A bus drives by, sweeps the envelope down the highway. A
concrete truck runs over it.

Four photos fly out, scatter, and settle hidden in a field of
tall grass.

Frankie and Jeff cross the highway, ride on the adjacent
sidewalk in the b.g.

SIDEWALK

Frankie and Jeff ride bikes, search the area and sidewalk.
There's very little traffic.

JEFF
 This is where you started doing
 wheelies... they've got to be along
 here.

Frankie frowns, spits on the ground, slaps his thigh.

FRANKIE
 Should'a put 'em in my front
 pocket.

They ride beside a field of high grass.

JEFF
 We better be headin' back.

They climb off their bikes, search the field near the lost
 photos.

FRANKIE
 There goes our proof.

JEFF
 What'd you gonna' tell your mom?

Frankie and Jeff get on their bikes.

FRANKIE
 (shrugs)
 The truth.

Jeff wrinkles his eyebrows, speaks with a DEEP, LOW TONE.

JEFF
 She can't handle the truth.

FRANKIE
 (laughs)
 Good one, Jeff. At least we know
 about the camera.

Jeff and Frankie scan the area, ride away slowly.

EXT. CHANDLER HOUSE - DAY

Sharon pulls the van in the driveway. The garage door lifts.
 Lena unbuckles, hops out, searches for her puppy.

LENA
 Cisco? Cisco? Come here boy.

Sharon peers around the garage.

SHARON
 I'm sure he's around here. Lena,
 check the back yard.

Lena scampers to the backyard out of view. Sharon searches the side of the house, passes the garage, notices the back door to the kitchen is ajar.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Uh-oh!

The golden retriever puppy bounds through the door. He brings a torn table cloth to Sharon, wags his tail.

Lena races into the garage, lifts Cisco; he licks her face.

LENA

Where have you been, little boy?

Sharon inspects the tear in the tablecloth.

SHARON

And what have you gotten' into?

Sharon and Lena enter the kitchen through the garage door.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Wildlife posters cover one wall. Above the door in bold letters: SCIENCE RULES! A corn snake is curled up in the corner of an aquarium.

A Science Olympiad trophy lays on a shelf. Attached to the mirror: a photo of Frankie in a boy scout uniform.

Frankie and Jeff compare baseball cards on the edge of the bed. Sharon enters, carries a laundry basket.

FRANKIE

Mom, you believe us, don't you?

Sharon sets the basket by the closet, shakes her head, puzzled.

SHARON

You've two have cooked up a whole lot worse.

Jeff sets down the baseball cards, THUMPS his cast.

JEFF

The picture showed my broke wrist.

FRANKIE

And a picture of Cisco next to the broken vase.

SHARON

Oh really?

JEFF
We ain't making it up. Cisco had
that old ball glove in his mouth.

Sharon shakes her head, rubs her hands together.

SHARON
Frankie. Tell me the truth. You
struck out... the film was too old?

Frankie throws several baseball cards in the air, STOMPS his
foot on the floor.

FRANKIE
No mom. Really... honest.

Sharon spots Frankie's dirty clothes scattered around the
room, flips his ball jersey on his lap.

SHARON
And according to the photos... you
win your last game?

Jeff glances at Frankie, nods.

JEFF
Yep. The scoreboard had us way
ahead in the top of the seventh.

SHARON
Against the cubs? We'll see, won't
we?

Sharon stops at the door before she exits.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Fill that laundry basket before you
leave your room.

FRANKIE
Yes ma'am.

Frankie wads up his ball jersey, winds up, tosses it at the
laundry basket. The jersey falls on the floor.

JEFF
Ball one. Low and outside.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD, LITTLE LEAGUE - DAY

A slow drizzle.

PLAYERS on both TEAMS, gathered near their dugouts, search
the clouds painted gray.

ON SCOREBOARD: Cubs - 1, Tigers - 5; Top of the 7th inning.

Two outs.

BACK TO SCENE

MARK ABRAMS (42) built like a tank with a heart of gold, stands near home plate beside a noodle-shaped UMPIRE with a chest protector as tall as he is strapped on his shoulder.

Mark's in a Tigers jersey.

They wander toward Frankie's dugout. Frankie wears a batting helmet, leans on a bat in the warm-up circle.

FRANKIE

Ump, ya' gonna' call it?

The umpire checks his watch, speaks in a VOLUME and TONE like he's calling balls and strikes.

UMPIRE

Ten minutes!

The umpire strolls to the other bench.

MARK

It's going to let up.

The sun suddenly breaks through the clouds. The drizzle slows, stops.

FRANKIE

Dog-gone-it! We had it in the bag.

Sound of car doors OPEN and SLAM shut o.s.

FAMILY MEMBERS of all ages scamper for a seat in the stands in the b.g.

PLAYERS from the other TEAM emerge from the dugout, take the field, warm up.

INFIELD

The umpire sweeps off home plate, strolls behind the catcher, leans in.

UMPIRE

Two outs. Batter up. Play Ball!

Jeff stands behind the dugout, wears his team ball cap.

JEFF

Good eye. Good eye.

Coach Abrams claps his hands together in the coach's box, gives signals.

MARK

Come on, Frankie. Start us off.

Frankie wipes his glasses using his uniform, steps into the box, digs his cleats in the clay, takes a practice swing.

The wind up. The pitch. A fast ball. Right down the pipe.

Frankie smashes a line drive to the fence. In stride, he rounds first, slides safely into second.

Frankie's TEAMMATES leap from the bench, CLAP vigorously.

TEAM

(simultaneously)

Yeah! Way to go, Frankie. Woo-who!
Good hit. You ripped it.

Coach Abrams scoots to the foul line, cups his hands.

MARK

Nice work, Frankie.

Frankie dust himself off; his face beams. The NEXT BATTER steps into the box.

FRANKIE

(yells)

Randy, come on... hit me around.

On the first pitch, Randy pops up the ball near home plate. The CATCHER lays out, snags it.

UMPIRE

Out!

Frankie jogs toward his dugout. Coach Abrams pats Frankie on the back.

MARK

Way to be a hitter, son.

Jeff gives Frankie a fist bump as Frankie skips from the dugout with his ball glove.

JEFF

We've got this!

BLEACHERS

ON SCOREBOARD: Bottom of ninth inning. Cubs - 6, Tigers - 5.

A short BATTER from the Tigers steps in, fouls off a few balls, then swings and misses in the b.g.

UMPIRE (O.S.)
Stee-riike three!

Lena sits between TWO GIRLS (7) three bleachers below Sharon and beside ASHLEY HALL (33) who munches on popcorn.

Ashley's hair color, tan, and fingernails didn't happen naturally but she still looks like she could use a make-over.

ASHLEY
I can hear it now. If they lose,
they'll blame the weather.

Another Tiger PLAYER steps into the batter's box, hits a long fly ball deep to left. It's caught in the b.g.

Ashley offers the bag to Sharon who grabs a few kernels, nibbles.

SHARON
Enough's enough.

Another TEAMMATE of Frankie's comes to the plate in the b.g., grounds to the Cubs SECOND BASEMAN. The ball takes a bad hop. The ball dribbles into right field. The batter's safely on first.

ASHLEY
If they win, we'll never hear the
end of it.

Ashley stands for a moment, stretches, sits back down, takes a bite of popcorn.

SHARON
You don't really believe their
story, do you?

A Tiger PLAYER pops the ball to shallow left in the b.g. The Cub FIELDER races in, reaches for it. It falls for a hit. Two PLAYERS on base, first and second.

ASHLEY
Not one bit.

Sharon finishes the popcorn, wads up the bag.

SHARON
This foolishness about that camera
is about to end. It's going back in
the attic where it crawled out of.

Lena climbs up the steps, holds out her hand to Sharon.

LENA
 Mom, can I have a sprite? Naomi and
 Carol got one.

Sharon gets two dollars from her purse, hands them over.

SHARON
 Get one for me, too.

Sharon's eyes are glued on Lena as she descends the steps,
 meanders to the concession stand, purchases two soft drinks.

ASHLEY
 Wait 'til they're teenagers.

The next Tiger BATTER walks on four straight pitches in the
 b.g. He jogs to first base. Bases loaded.

Ashley views the infield.

ASHLEY (CONT'D)
 Whoa. How'd this happen?

Frankie swings a bat in the warm-up circle in the b.g. His
 TEAMMATE steps in the batter's box, swings the bat a few
 times.

The first pitch. A ball, high and inside.

Sharon keeps a look-out on Lena as she slowly ascends the
 bleachers with cups in her hands. She glances at the infield.

SHARON
 Frankie's up next.

INFIELD

The PITCHER from the Cubs throws a wild pitch. The Tiger
 RUNNER on third takes off, slides into home, clearly avoids
 the tag.

The umpire whips his arm down, hand in a fist.

UMPIRE
 You're out!

Frankie drops his bat, throws his helmet in the dirt.

FRANKIE
 Ump. Come On! Get some glasses.

The Cub CATCHER scampers to the mound, surrounds his team in
 an AD LIB of victory.

Frankie meanders to his dugout, head down, dejected.

MARK

Chin up Frankie, we 'bout knocked
off the top team.

(beat)

Our team's meeting at Pizza Hut as
soon as we gather up the gear. You
comin'?

Frankie gathers the bats, puts them in a burlap, sports bag.

FRANKIE

I'll ask my mom.

MARK

Pizza's on me. You can pile in my
Expedition with me if need a ride.

Jeff gathers the practice balls in the dugout, tosses them to
Frankie who holds open the bag. Sharon, Lena, and Ashley
stroll through the gate into view.

SHARON

Thanks, Mark. I overheard. You can
go.

(to Jeff)

What about you, Jeff?

JEFF

(to Ashley)

Can I?

Ashley nods. Sharon grabs her cell phone from her purse,
hands it to Frankie.

SHARON

Call me when you're about done.
I'll bring Jeff home.

ASHLEY

Have fun.

INT. PIZZA PARLOR - NIGHT

Ten players in Tiger uniforms sit at tables, gorge on pizza
and soft drinks, TALK boisterously.

Frankie and Jeff sit across from Mark at a table. One slice
of pepperoni pizza in a deep dish pan lies between them.

MARK

It's gettin' cold.

Jeff and Frankie glance at one another.

FRANKIE
I'm stuffed.

JEFF
(a long sigh)
Me too.

MARK
(to Frankie)
I noticed your picture in the paper
last week with your scout troupe.
What do you like most?

Frankie sits up straight in his seat.

FRANKIE
The projects. A lotta' of them
involve science stuff.

JEFF
He's a science nerd.

Jeff bumps Frankie.

FRANKIE
You like science, too.

JEFF
(nods)
Yeah, but my life doesn't revolved
around it, like yours.

MARK
I was an eagle scout. Loved it...
... the camping, the adventure, the
comradery... even learned how to
start a friction fire using a
spindle, rope, and a fireboard.

FRANKIE
I've done that. It's not that easy.
(to Jeff)
See there.

Frankie bumps Jeff.

MARK
Scouting was one of the reasons I
became a firefighter.

FRANKIE
Cool.

Mark scoots his chair back, surveys his ball players.

MARK
 Okay, guys, looks like everyone's
 about finished. Anyone need to use
 my cell?

Mark pulls a cell phone from his pocket, holds it up.

MARK (CONT'D)
 Keep up the scouting, Frankie.
 (to Jeff)
 It's not too late to jump in.

FRANKIE
 Thanks coach. I'll be needen' your
 phone.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

The box camera sits on the top shelf beside a few books, a
 baseball cap, and a wiffle ball.

Frankie scampers in the room, moves the camera over, grabs
 his cap and wiffle ball. He searches his closet, finds a
 plastic bat, races out.

FRANKIE
 (yells)
 Mom. Practicin' in the back yard
 with Jeff.

ON SHELF: A thin, noticeable layer of oil glistens where the
 camera had been.

EXT. CHANDLER HOUSE, BACK YARD - DAY

Jeff and Frankie play pitch and catch with a wiffle ball. A
 plastic bat lays on the grass.

FRANKIE
 You heard the latest?

Jeff pitches the ball back and forth into his glove. Frankie
 motions for Jeff to throw him the ball. Jeff holds it, shakes
 his head.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 The words out. You... and...
 (a long beat)
 ... Carrie.

Jeff throws a fast ball toward Frankie. He stretches; the
 ball flies over his head.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Better watch it. Your arm.

JEFF
So? What if I do?

Frankie jogs, retrieves the ball, loops it back to Jeff.

FRANKIE
You think you got any chance?

JEFF
(shakes his head)
I'll have my cast off and be ridin'
backwards before we hook up.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, STAIRS - DAY

Lena tiptoes down the steps, peeks around the corner, spots Frankie and Jeff in the den.

Lena pulls her head back out of sight, sits on a step.

DOWNSTAIRS DEN

Furniture is casual and comfortable: a couch, two recliners, end tables, a big-screen flat TV, and a video game console.

Jeff, on the couch, tosses a tennis ball up and down, barely misses the ceiling. Frankie leans back on a recliner, scrolls through the channels.

JEFF
We should of won.

FRANKIE
That ump has toes for eyeballs.

JEFF
So?

The tennis ball bounces off Jeff's cast, rolls on the floor beneath an end table.

FRANKIE
We use the other roll of film we found.

Jeff retrieves the ball, shrugs.

JEFF
Uh... maybe?

Frankie turns off the TV, sets the remote on the cushion.

FRANKIE
What happened?

JEFF
I think it's in my room, somewhere.

FRANKIE
(sarcastic)
Great! The black hole.

JEFF
No worse than yours.

Frankie grabs the tennis ball in midair, bounces it off of Jeff's noggin, catches it again.

FRANKIE
Try'n find it, knucklehead... would ya!

JEFF
Big-shot, BMX biker. Who lost the photos?

FRANKIE
Who broke his wrist?

STAIRS

Lena sneers, rubs her hands together, slowly edges up the steps. A board SQUEAKS; she hustles up the stairs.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, DINING AND LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Frankie scans the table, searches chairs in the dining room.

He bolts into the living room, searches the coffee and end tables, behind sofa pillows and the piano.

FRANKIE
Mom, have you seen my camera? I had it in my room on my bookshelf.

SHARON (O.S.)
You're planning to take more pictures?

FRANKIE
Jeff and I loaded it with another roll of film.

SHARON (O.S.)
Good luck with that.

LENA'S BEDROOM

It's decorated in Disney princesses - a matching bedspread, lamps, and curtains. Lena's asleep in her canopy bed.

Sharon tiptoes inside, turns on a small lamp, glances around. She picks up the box camera on Lena's dresser, turns off the light, quietly inches out the door.

HALLWAY

The overhead light - dim. Sharon hands Frankie the camera.

FRANKIE

Mom! She's not allowed in my room.

Sharon puts her finger over her lips.

SHARON

Shhh. Lena's asleep.

FRANKIE

Better not have taken any pictures.

Frankie views the transparent red window of the camera.

SHARON

I told her she could use it when you're finished with your shenanigans.

FRANKIE

(shrugs)
Then I'll go in her room, take some a her stuff.

Sharon places her hand on Frankie's shoulder.

SHARON

(shakes her head)
I.. don't... think... so.

Frankie pulls back. Tension is thick as molasses.

FRANKIE

That's not fair.

SHARON

I'll talk to her.

FRANKIE

(rolls his eyes)
How many times have I heard that?

SHARON

That's it!

Sharon takes hold of Frankie's elbow, leads him to his room.

SHARON (CONT'D)

You'll leave when I say so!

Frankie tries to shut the door; Sharon holds it open. Frankie picks up his glove throws it on the floor.

SHARON (CONT'D)

Young man...

(forms a two inch gap
with her fingers)

... you're this close of joining
Jeff on the bench next game. And he
has a good excuse.

(beat)

You won't.

EXT. TWO STORY HOUSE, FRONT YARD - DAY

NEAL HALL (20) full of himself, spiked hair, over six feet, in a t-shirt and work gloves, digs a hole. A small maple tree with roots wrapped in burlap lays on the ground nearby.

Jeff and Frankie sneak up. Frankie aims the camera at Neal.

JEFF

Neal.

Neal raises his head; Frankie snaps his photo, advances the film.

NEAL

Oh. Hi, Frankie. Jeff... that's
gonna' cost you.

Neal drops the shovel, removes his gloves, holds out his hands.

NEAL (CONT'D)

Give it up, dweeb, or I'll take it
from you.

Frankie hands Neal the camera. Neal looks it over, pretends like he's taking a photograph.

JEFF

No... no... don't!

NEAL

You'll get it back when I see my
photo.

(snickers)

(MORE)

NEAL (CONT'D)
I'm dying to know what's on my next
chemistry exam.

Neal holds the camera above his head, out of Jeff's reach.

JEFF
That's not fair.

Neal shuffles Jeff's hair, leans the shovel on Jeff's cast.

NEAL
Loosen' up.... and get busy.

FRANKIE
Come on, Neal. Give us a break.

Neal picks up the work gloves, tosses them toward Frankie.

NEAL
(laughs)
You do know how to plant a tree,
don't you?

Neal carries the camera, strides toward the corner of the house, turns around briefly.

NEAL (CONT'D)
I'll be in the house when you two
agronomist have it in the ground.
(snickers)
Don't forget to clean up if you
want your magical camera back.

Neal strolls around the corner of the house, out of view.

NEAL (O.S) (CONT'D)
Have fun guys.

FRANKIE
He's worse than my sister.

JEFF
She's not six-two.

BACKYARD

Jeff wears work gloves, carries a shovel. Frankie opens the gate of a chain-link fence. They meander toward a shed shaped like a mini-barn.

JEFF
We've got two shots left... if Neal
hasn't taken any.

FRANKIE
How many photos did you take of the cheerleaders?

Jeff sets the shovel on the side of the shed, opens the door, steps inside. Frankie leans against the siding.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Three... Four?
(beat)
Five?

Jeff hangs the shovel on a hook, tosses the gloves in a basket, returns to the yard, shuts the door.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Way to go, farm-boy! That's our last roll. I knew it was a bad idea for you to take it to school.

Red in the face, Jeff shrugs, smiles sheepishly.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Oh. Now I get it.

Jeff shoves Frankie on the shoulder; Frankie loses his balance, falls in the grass.

JEFF
Whad'ya expect?

Frankie gets up, leaps in the air, does a mock cheer.

FRANKIE
Ra-Ra. Jeff and Carrie, sittin' in a tree, k-i-s-s-i-n-g.

Jeff chases Frankie, tackles him. They roll on the ground. Jeff's on top; he holds Frankie down, tickles him.

JEFF
You think she's cute, too.
(beat)
Admit it... admit it.

Frankie squirms, LAUGHS, gasp for air.

FRANKIE
Stop... stop. Yeah. I give. Uncle.

The boys get up, dust themselves off. Frankie flaps his arms in the air.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Wha'd you give for a pair of wings?
(snickers)
Oink. Oink.

Frankie sprints toward the gate, shuts it before Jeff arrives. Frankie acts like he's flying.

JEFF
You just wait.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, HALL - OUTSIDE FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Lena leans in toward the partially open door; she's frozen, quiet as a church mouse, her hands cupped behind one ear.

On the wall behind her hangs a Thomas Kinkaid painting of a small chapel in a serene forest.

FRANKIE'S BEDROOM

Jeff's on the bed, strokes a corn snake as it curls around his cast. Frankie views an overexposed photo near a window.

ON PHOTO: Jeff embraces a cute, blonde TWEEN GIRL, a bit taller than him, in a well-lighted, decorated gym.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE
Sweet. Your dream's about to come true.

JEFF
That can't be me.

Frankie brings the photo close to Jeff's eyes.

FRANKIE
(snickers)
I'd recognize the back of Charlie Brown's head anywhere.

Jeff puts the snake in the aquarium, covers it with a lid.

JEFF
Carrie's on a totally different team on the other sixth grade hallway.

FRANKIE
You're sprouting wings.

Frankie hands Jeff another photo.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Take a look.

ON PHOTO: Frankie proudly points to two merit badges on his scout uniform sewn below his pocket. One badge depicts a rocket flying to the moon, the other - a trophy cup.

BACK TO SCENE

JEFF
Space exploration?

Frankie nods, grabs a pamphlet from his bookshelf, opens it.

ON PAMPHLET: A photo of the rocket, merit badge and a list of qualifications required to earn it.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE
The research and a collectors card
is done. My rocket design's already
approved by my counselor.

Jeff motions with his arm moving toward the ceiling.

JEFF
When's the launch?

FRANKIE
The engine I got was too small to
carry the payload. Had to re-order.

JEFF
What's the other badge for?

FRANKIE
No clue.

The boys hear a SNEEZE o.s. Frankie opens the door, sees Lena dash to her room, SLAM the door. Her door lock CLICKS.

LENA'S BEDROOM

Lena cracks the door, peers out. Frankie barges in. Jeff's right behind him.

LENA
I'm tellin'.

FRANKIE
Nothin' to tell.

Lena tries to leave. Frankie blocks her path.

LENA
About the photos.

FRANKIE
What photos?

LENA
I heard you and Jeff talking.

Frankie backs out the door.

FRANKIE
Come on Jeff, let's go.

Lena steps in front of Jeff.

LENA
I know you found another roll of
film. And...
(to Jeff)
... I saw you get off the bus with
the camera... so there.

Lena puts out one foot defiantly, one hand on her hip.

JEFF
So what? You've got squat.

LENA
Wait 'til I tell mom know you're
still messin' around with that
camera.
(sneers)
Jeff won't be over, and you'll not
be leaving your room for a month.

Frankie moves to block Lena's progress. She tries to squirm
around him, fails.

FRANKIE
You little sneak!

LENA
(yells)
Mom!

Frankie puts her hand over Lena's mouth.

FRANKIE
Hush.

Frankie slowly removes his hand.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Whad'ya want?

Lena grins, puts both hands on her hips, elbows out.

LENA
Feed and water Cisco every night
for two weeks.

FRANKIE
No problem.

Frankie starts to leave. Lena tugs on his shirt.

LENA
My bathroom cleaned for a month.

FRANKIE
And you'll keep your mouth shut?

LENA
No, two months.

Lena holds out her hand. Frankie shakes it.

FRANKIE
If you say anything, I'll deny it.

Lena lifts up her chin.

LENA
Deal.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - DAY

TIM BAXTER (45) regimented, tall, overweight, sits on a sofa,
He hands Sharon a large envelope. She sits in a chair beside
him.

TIM
Mrs. Chandler. Frankie's a great
kid. I expect he'll be ready to
apply for eagle next year.
(beat)
Anyway... he's done so much to
promote science in our troupe among
our rising cub scouts, I wanted him
to apply for a special merit badge.

SHARON
Oh? Are we talking about the same
kid?

TIM
(chuckles)
It's a regional competition, so
there's no guarantee.
(beat)
The info's all inside. I hope, he's
interested.

Sharon opens the envelop, pulls out an introduction letter and an application. She glances at the letter.

SHARON
I believe he'll be thrilled. I'll help him with it when he gets home.

TIM
Great!

AWKWARD SILENCE.

TIM (CONT'D)
I best be running along. If you have any questions, give me a call.

SHARON
I will.

They shake hands. Sharon escorts Tim to the door.

TIM
He did a marvelous job on his rocket design. Your family is more than welcome to join us at the initial launch.

SHARON
I'm sure it will be the first of many.

Tim exits. Sharon pulls the door closed, flips through the application.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Glad he's got his mind wrapped around something more constructive than that silly camera.

FRANKIE'S ROOM - LATER

Frankie bursts in, plops on his bed.

Breathing hard, sweat rolls off his forehead. He peels off his shirt, tosses it at the closet, almost hits the hamper.

He spies a letter on his desk on top of a large envelope. Frankie picks it up, scans the first paragraph.

FRANKIE
Well, well... wait 'til Jeff hears about this.

Sharon passes his room, leans against the door-frame.

SHARON
Your scout master dropped by with
the application. Aren't you
excited?

FRANKIE
Why am I not surprised? You coming
to my launch?

SHARON
It's the first I've heard of it...
... but I'd be... we... the whole
family would be happy to come.

Frankie grabs a pen, starts filling in the first blank on the
application. Sharon stops him.

FRANKIE
After dinner... your handwriting.

Frankie sets the pen down, stands, unbuttons his shorts,
reaches for the zipper.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Mom!

Sharon grins, closes the door.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, SIXTH GRADE WING - DAY

The hall's crowded with SIXTH GRADERS, (12), who change
classes. TEACHERS stand outside their rooms, monitor their
STUDENTS.

Jeff spins the dial on his lock, yanks open his locker. It's
a pig pen; papers fall to the floor.

JEFF
Yes! First time... as always.

CARRIE (12) unpretentious, in a cheerleader uniform, her
blonde hair in a pony tail, rushes to her locker nearby. She
slowly positions the combination, gingerly pulls on the lock.

The lock fails to open.

She glances at her watch, flies through the combination
again. Not happening. Jeff dallies over.

JEFF (CONT'D)
New locker? They can be stubborn.

Carrie smiles, nods. Confidently Jeff grabs the lock, blows
on his fingers like an experienced bank robber.

JEFF (CONT'D)

Combo?

CARRIE

Four... twenty-three... six.

Jeff quickly dials in the numbers. Yanks down hard on the lock. It opens.

JEFF

Nothin' to it.

Carrie smiles, flirts with her eyes.

JEFF (CONT'D)

(grins)

Get the numbers spot on... then yank down... hard.

Jeff shows Carrie how to grasp the handle to pull it down.

JEFF (CONT'D)

My locker's close by. One-twelve.

CARRIE

Thanks. I'm Carrie.

Carrie offers Jeff her hand. He shakes it.

JEFF

No problem. Jeff. I saw you at the Sport's Clinic when the doc set my wrist.

Carrie puts a book in her locker, removes another.

CARRIE

How'd you break it?

Jeff holds up his arm with the cast.

JEFF

Freewheelin'. BMX stunt bike.

CARRIE

Really.

Carrie shuts her locker.

JEFF

You change lockers?

CARRIE

New team.

(nods)

Our sponsor wants the six grader cheerleaders on the same hallway.

JEFF
Welcome to the blue raiders.

Carrie scurries down the hall, glances back, catches Jeff gazing at her. Jeff tries to look away but not in time.

Carrie winks, waves, dashes into her classroom, out of view.

Jeff gets out a book, SLAMS his locker, does a fist pump.

The bell RINGS twice in rapid succession.

Jeff meanders into class. His MALE TEACHER sneers, closes the door.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Worth it.

SCIENCE CLASSROOM - DAY

STUDENTS sit in groups of four at lab tables.

Small cups with droppers and pieces of purple cabbage set on the tables for an experiment.

WILLIAM KIRKLAND (40's) confident, strolls between the tables, gives the students strips of pH paper.

WILLIAM
Make sure you don't contaminate
your solutions.

Frankie sits across from Jeff at a back table. Jeff tears the cabbage into small pieces, drops them in a cellophane bag.

JEFF
What next?

Frankie draws water with a dropper, squirts a small amount in the bag.

FRANKIE
Shake it around.

Jeff shakes the bag. The water turns light purple.

JEFF
Ah, I get it now. Our test
solution.

FRANKIE
You're a genius. What do you want
to try first?

Jeff draws a yellow solution from one of the cups, puts two drops into a clear beaker.

JEFF
Start with what we know. Lemon
juice.

Frankie takes the purple cabbage water and places two drops
into the beaker. It turns bright red.

FRANKIE
Walah!

Jeff puts one drop of the lemon solution on the pH paper.

JEFF
Four. Strong acid.

Frankie writes their results in a column on his paper.

FRANKIE
Jeff, I was thinking about my
honorary merit badge.
(beat)
What would happen if I didn't send
in the application?

Jeff rinses the beaker with water, dries it with a paper
towel.

JEFF
You wouldn't get it.

FRANKIE
(nods)
I wonder if the photo would change?

JEFF
Maybe.

FRANKIE
Let's find out. It's our
experiment, remember?

William walks to their table, leans over. Frankie lifts up
his paper, shows him the results.

WILLIAM
You two better hustle up. We have a
short period today due to the
assembly.

JEFF
Oh yeah.

Jeff prepares a dropper from a different solution.

FRANKIE
We're on it, Mr. Kirkland.

EXT./INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

STUDENTS pile in.

Frankie weaves down the isle, takes off his back-pack, plops down beside Jeff in a back seat.

JEFF
Where were you?

FRANKIE
(smiles)
No braces or cavities. How do they look?

JEFF
Did you do it?

FRANKIE
Sent it yesterday, two days late.
You wanna' get off at my stop?

JEFF
(nods)
Why not.

INT. CHANDLER HOME, FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jeff and Frankie dash inside, toss their backpacks on the bed. Frankie gets a box from the closet shelf, opens it, pulls out a photo.

ON PHOTO: Frankie proudly points to a single merit badge on his scout uniform sewn below his pocket. It's a rocket on its way to the moon.

BACK TO SCENE

Frankie shows Jeff the photo.

JEFF
There's our answer.

FRANKIE
You won't be dancin' unless you ask her.

JEFF
What if she's not there?

Frankie gets out another photo.

ON PHOTO: Carrie and Jeff sway arm in arm in a decorated gym. It shows Carrie's face and the back of Jeff's head.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE
The stars are in your favor.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, GYM - NIGHT

The gym's decorated in colorful balloons and streamers. Rock Music BLAST from four huge speakers which VIBRATES through walls.

Several MALE and FEMALE ADULTS (various ages) intermingle among their STUDENTS (12 to 14) who move like a confused hive of bees across the gym floor.

A MALE DISC JOCKEY (early 20's) with pink hair works the controls on a sound board. The music slowly FADES.

DJ
(into a microphone)
Let's change the motion, and get
the notion.

The music switches to a song by Taylor Swift, "Love Song".

Carrie, along with TWO pretty GIRLS (13) file one by one in front of Jeff and Frankie, who eat popcorn among the CROWD.

JEFF
It's now or never.

FRANKIE
Jump in.

Jeff hands Frankie his bag. Jeff follows Carrie through the CROWD. She stops.

Jeff stops just short from bumping into her. Jeff grins. She returns his jester with a warm smile.

JEFF
Wann'a dance?

CARRIE
(nods)
Okay.

Carrie wraps her arms around Jeff. They sway to the rhythm. Carrie leans her head on Jeff's shoulder.

With Carrie's back turned, Frankie gives a "thumbs up" to Jeff. Jeff raises one eyebrow, looks unflappable.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, FRANKIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

A B & W photo lies on Frankie's desk.

ON PHOTO: Carrie has her arms around Jeff in the gym at the middle school dance revealing Jeff's head and Carrie's face.

BACK TO SCENE

Sharon runs the vacuum cleaner from the hallway into Frankie's room. She bumps the desk.

The photo falls, flips over. Sharon picks up the photo, hesitates, sets it back on Frankie's desk, vacuums.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, ATTIC - DAY

Old, drab-colored clothes are cluttered around a cedar chest and on top of a dresser with all the drawers open.

Jeff pulls out a silver dollar from a pocket of an oversized, wool coat he wears, displays it for Frankie.

JEFF

Found another... 1942.

Jeff sets the coin on top of four other silver dollars.

FRANKIE

(boisterous laughter)
You've been swallowed.

Jeff removes the coat, throws it on the pile.

JEFF

Who's found all the coins?

They search pockets in other coats and clothing. Nothing.

FRANKIE

We're not gettin' rich, here.

Everything is stuffed and crammed into the cedar chest. Jeff jumps on the lid; the chest won't close.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

We're on a mission. We'll get to it later.

Frankie grabs a suitcases, unhooks the straps, pulls out women's under-garments, a stuffed baby doll, a sewing kit, costume jewelry, a fox fur, and a coin on the very bottom.

Frankie holds up a silver dollar, marks a "check" in the air, sets the coin beside the others.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 Boo-yah! 1936. Jeff, five. Frankie,
 one.

Frankie closes the suitcase, sets it aside. Jeff SNAPS open another suitcase, spreads out the sides.

Jeff lifts out pants, wrinkled shirts, belts, suspenders, a yearbook, B & W photos, and a heavily taped, cigar box.

JEFF
 Nope. Nope. Nope. Nope... and nope.

Jeff removes two ticket stubs to the 1924 World Series game stuck to the bottom, hands them to Frankie.

FRANKIE
 We're gettin' warmer.

Jeff grabs a shaving kit, unzips it, pulls out an "Old Spice" jar and a straight razor. He shakes the after-shave, empty.

JEFF
 Check the box.

Frankie picks up the taped, cigar box, puts his nose to it.

FRANKIE
 Definitely not cigars... smells
 like some kind of weird spice.

Frankie shakes it; something ROLLS around inside. He tears wedges his finger between the tape, rips it open.

A film canister pops out, rolls beside Jeff's foot, falls beneath insulation, out of view.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 Jeff, hold up. Don't move!

Jeff shines a flashlight on the insulation, gently removes the canister. He pops open the lid, pulls out the film, pretends to kiss it, slides it inside, closes the lid.

JEFF
 Back in business.

Frankie slips the silver coins in his pocket. Jeff holds the canister. They edge toward the steps, guided by the flashlight.

Everything in the attic remains in disarray.

HALLWAY

Frankie and Jeff close the attic door. Lena strides from her bedroom into view, sticks out her chin.

LENA
Whad' ya' find this time?

Frankie leans an inch away from Lena's nose. She retreats.

FRANKIE
None of your beeswax.

LENA
I'll tell mom.

FRANKIE
Go ahead. She already knows.

Lena crosses her arms, sticks out her lip. She pouts, HUFFS, and STOMPS her feet down the hallway, out of view.

JEFF
You told your mom?

FRANKIE
(shakes his head)
A bluff.

JEFF
You're good.

Jeff and Frankie dash inside Frankie's room, close the door.

A lock CLICKS.

FRANKIE'S BEDROOM

Jeff inspects six silver dollars lined up across the bed.

JEFF
Two of these are eighty years old.

FRANKIE
Maybe we did hit the lotto.

Frankie snaps open the camera, loads the film at his desk.

JEFF
There's a pawn shop across the street from Wendy's.

They hear FOOTSTEPS. The door handle JIGGLES.

LENA (O.S)
 You're not s'posed to lock the
 door.

Frankie hands the camera to Jeff who shoves it beneath a bed pillow. A few coins fall to the floor. Jeff covers them with his shoes. Frankie unlocks the door. Lena struts in.

LENA (CONT'D)
 Jeff's gotta' go home.
 (gruff)
 Mom said.

FRANKIE
 In a minute.

Lena stretches on tiptoes to view Frankie's ball cap and glove on the top shelf of his desk.

LENA
 (sneers)
 She said, now!

Lena inches around Jeff. Jeff leans back on the pillow to block Lena's view of the camera. A silver dollar rolls on the floor. Frankie quickly scoops it up.

LENA (CONT'D)
 I saw it. What else are you hiding?

FRANKIE
 Scram! You little snoop.

Lena turns in a HUFF, prances down the hall.

LENA (O.S.)
 I'm tellin' mom what you said.

FRANKIE
 Tattle-tail.

Frankie closes the door, locks it. Jeff wipes his brow.

JEFF
 That was close.

Frankie grabs the camera, advances the film to a #1. He puts the camera in a shoe box, sets it in the back of his closet shelf. Jeff unlocks the door, opens it.

JEFF (CONT'D)
 No one knows.

FRANKIE
 Think of it as our little own
 sci-fi project.

JEFF
Cool. Our secret mission.

FRANKIE
We start in the morning.

They give one another a chest bump.

EXT. GREENWAY - DAY

Jeff and Frankie pedal their bikes along the asphalt path with trees on one side, a plaza and businesses on the other.

Jeff carries a back-pack across his shoulders.

WOMEN push carriages, TEENS scoot along on skateboards, SENIORS stroll casually through the wooded area.

MONTAGE - TAKING PHOTOGRAPHS ALONG THE GREENWAY

A) Jeff snaps a photo with the box camera of TWO MEN entering a bank in the b.g. He returns the camera to his back-pack, hops on his bike, and rides ahead beside Frankie.

B) Jeff photographs a GROUP of CHILDREN (6 to 8) playing soccer in a field in front of their middle school. He captures a sign showing dates of a fund drive.

Jeff and Frankie ride their bikes along the path.

C) Frankie shoots a photo of a SENIOR ADULT walking his German Shepherd on a leash. Frankie puts the camera in Jeff's back-pack. They pedal ahead.

D) Jeff takes a snapshot of a store advertising buying and selling of gold and silver coins and jewelry.

FRANKIE
Our silver dollars.

They give one another a fist bump.

JEFF
Perfect.

The boys hop back on their bikes, continue riding.

END MONTAGE

EXT. FIRE STATION - DAY

A huge bay door is open. Four male FIREFIGHTERS clean a fire engine. An ambulance is beside it.

Frankie and Jeff skid their bikes to a stop.

Frankie nudges Jeff, points at Mark Abrams in a tie with a badge pinned to his shirt. Mark strolls to the ambulance.

FRANKIE
Coach Abrams!

They turn away from the station.

JEFF
No telling' what this'll turn up.

They edge under the cover of a tree.

FRANKIE
(chuckles)
Some ole' lady who can't get up.

JEFF
(laughs)
Or a cat stuck in a tree.

FRANKIE
Let's take a couple of these.

Frankie snaps two photos, one of Coach Abrams, the other of firefighters cleaning the engine.

He turns the roll. CLICK.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
That's it.

INT. PHARMACY, FILM DEVELOPING BOOTH - DAY

Frankie unloads the film, drops it in an envelope, seals it.

FRANKIE
Still think it's a good idea?

JEFF
No one knows. Period. That's our plan.

Frankie writes his name, address, and number on the label.

JEFF (CONT'D)
This time I carry the photos.

Frankie nods, drops the envelop in a slot on the counter.

FRANKIE
Come on, baby. Surprise us.

JEFF
A bank robbery would be cool.

Jeff scans the drop off/pick up chart on the display.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Friday.

FRANKIE
The future develops.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, MR. KIRLAND'S CLASSROOM - DAY

William writes lesson goals on a white board. CHUCK SEARS (mid 60's) white hair and a mustache strolls into the room.

Chuck sets a 9-volt battery and a box filled with plastic, measurement triangles on William's desk.

CHUCK
'Dis what you be needen', Mr. Kirkland?

William turns around, sees the battery and triangles.

WILLIAM
Perfect, Chuck. Where'd you find them?

CHUCK
Mr. Hooper's lab, sittin' inside the floor of his closet.

William pats Chuck on the shoulder.

WILLIAM
You saved me, you know that?

Chuck's grin reveals gaps in his front teeth.

CHUCK
Dat's what I'm here for.

Chuck exits.

William strolls to a lab table, places the battery in front of Frankie. Frankie glances at the nine-volt.

FRANKIE
Just what we need.

Frankie hooks up a launching pad; two sections of a model rocket lie beside it on a table.

William picks up the base section of the rocket, inspects the fins, feels the weight.

WILLIAM
 Looken' good, Frankie. Lighter than
 it looks. You built this yourself?

FRANKIE
 Along with a scout buddy of mine
 and a project book on model rocket
 design and construction. I've got
 the book in my locker.

WILLIAM
 Bring it. I'm sure your classmates
 would like to see it.

FRANKIE
 You sure it'll be okay, Mr.
 Kirkland?

Frankie pulls two small rocket engines from his pocket and a
 set of nose clips, lays them on the table.

WILLIAM
 Too late now. Already in my plan
 book
 (chuckles)
 I've invited the other science
 classes to join us for the launch.

William picks up the nose cone of the rocket, opens the
 parachute.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
 How high will she fly?

FRANKIE
 One 'll do it. A rough estimate...
 ... a thousand feet.

Frankie reaches in his back-pack, brings out two small spools
 of insulated wire, one red, the other black.

WILLIAM
 Let's hope for calm breezes. We
 plan to calculate the flight
 distance using the triangles and a
 tangent formula.

FRANKIE
 It won't end up on the roof... the
 payload weight 'll bring it down
 well inside the soccer field.

Frankie carefully folds the parachute and reloads it inside
 the capsule. He slides the engine in the bottom of the
 rocket, hooks the rocket to the launch platform.

WILLIAM
 Why don't we do a trial run today?
 (beat)
 Do you have time before your mom
 comes to get you?

Frankie glances at his watch.

FRANKIE
 Twenty minutes... no problem.

William pours the triangles from the box onto his desk, places the rocket engine, battery and rolls of wire inside it. Frankie carries the rocket launcher and rocket.

WILLIAM
 Nothing better than hands on. It'll
 give me time to step off a fifty
 foot parameter.

INT./EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, SCIENCE LAB - DAY

GARY HOOPER (20's) wears an oversize lab coat and looks like he's not old enough to be the teacher, fills beakers on lab tables. He strolls to his desk, empties the remainder of the red liquid into a bucket, tops it with a lid.

GARY
 All set.

SCOTT HENDERSON (14) a risk taker with a mop for a haircut, writes a -4 on top of a paper, adds it to a stack on the teacher's desk; he flips through the ungraded papers.

SCOTT
 Five or six more.

Gary hangs up his coat on a rack.

GARY
 Leave 'em. I'll grade 'em Monday
 morning during homeroom.

Scott scampers toward the hallway.

GARY (CONT'D)
 Thanks for helping out, Scott. By
 the way... did your ultra-light
 come in?

Gary pushes a reset button three times before a red light on a power strip remains on. Extension cords lead to the lab tables from the strip by the door.

SCOTT
 Yesterday. Breaking it in this
 weekend... rain or shine.

GARY
 Good deal. With two new scouts, our
 troop may need to borrow it soon.

SCOTT
 (nods)
 You're welcome to it, Mr. Hooper.

Scott glances at the clock on the wall.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Oh my gosh! Gotta' run. My friend's
 waiting on me to help set up his
 model rocket.

CLOSE ON: Red fluid leaks from the bucket beside the desk.
 The power strip is frayed, flickers off and on.

BACK TO SCENE

Scott dashes down the hallway. Gary turns off the lights,
 locks the door.

EXT. MR. KIRKLAND'S CLASSROOM - DAY

Scott KNOCKS on the door, checks the handle. Locked. He looks
 through the window.

SCOTT
 Oh well. Looks like fly-boy has
 already gone.

Scott strolls down the hallway.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, GARAGE - DAY

Sharon pulls a small carry-on behind her. Lena tags along,
 bends down, pets Cisco who chews on her shoe lace.

SHARON
 Lena, come on. I've gotta' pick up
 your new ballet shoes before your
 recital. With the prima ballerina
 coming to give you some pointers, I
 want you to look your best.

Lena sets Cisco down in a small pen.

LENA
Why can't I bring Cisco?

Sharon loads the carry-on, climbs in the driver's seat. She pushes a remote, the garage door opens.

SHARON
Honey, we're already late.

Lena opens the side door, steps inside.

LENA
Please. Pretty please.

SHARON
Not this time, sweetie.

LENA
(frowns)
He can stay in his pen in the car.

Sharon pushes a button above the mirror, the side door closes. She starts the van.

SHARON
Lena! Buckle up.

EXT. CHANDLER HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - DAY

The garage door's up; the van's gone. Cisco's asleep on a blanket in his pen.

Jeff brakes slightly, jumps off his bike. Frankie's right behind him.

Their bikes crash and roll into the flower-bed.

JEFF
Beat ya'.

FRANKIE
By your big nose.

Frankie and Jeff race through the garage. The top of a photo packet sticks up from Jeff's shirt pocket.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, KITCHEN - DAY

Frankie and Jeff ramble in, snort with laughter.

FRANKIE
What have we here?

Two chairs block their path. Frankie and Jeff stop, read a note written on a board stuck on the frig door:

INSERT - NOTE

Which reads:

"Gone to recital. Call us, we have
our cell. Love, mom and dad."

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Thank you Lena. They're gone.
(laughs)
Wait... did I just say that?

They shove the chairs aside, dash through the kitchen.

FRANKIE'S ROOM

The door's closed.

Jeff's in a chair. Frankie's on his bed. Jeff removes the photo packet from his pocket, sets it beside him.

They stare at the packet, hope in their eyes.

FRANKIE
Go ahead.

JEFF
Your camera. Your call.

FRANKIE
Here goes nothin'. Here goes
everything.

Frankie takes out six photographs, lines them up across the bed one by one, on the back like a deck of cards. He flips over the first photo.

ON PHOTO: A bank with three cars behind one another in the drive through teller.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Where's our robbery?

JEFF
Next.

Frankie slowly turns another photo to the front.

ON PHOTO: A mini-market with neon lights; it's night.

BACK TO SCENE

JEFF (CONT'D)
Promising. Same market.

FRANKIE
Different time of day.

Frankie grabs a third photo, flips it over.

ON PHOTO: A gold coin and jewelry store; puddles of water pool in spots on the parking lot. No customers or cars.

BACK TO SCENE

JEFF
Where's our jewelry heist?

Jeff sails the photo toward a trash can. Frankie grasp another photo.

The phone RINGS. Both boys jump. Frankie grabs the phone, focuses on the number.

FRANKIE
(mouths the words
silently to Jeff)
My mom.
(into phone)
Hi mom.

INT. AUDITORIUM - DAY

Multi-colored streamers, wands, and scarves hog the corner of the stage.

YOUNG GIRLS (5 to 13) stretch and warm up on stage in white tights, pink leotards and shoes.

Chris sits by Sharon on the second row beside other PARENTS. He cradles a flower bouquet, flips through a program.

INTERCUT - TELEPHONE CONVERSATION

SHARON
Lena's dance is near the end of the recital... again! Say a prayer for her, she's so nervous.
(beat)
You boys doing okay?

FRANKIE
Fine.

SHARON
A pizza's in the oven. Pepperoni.
Just warm it up... 200... ten
minutes.

Frankie covers the speaker.

FRANKIE
(toward Jeff)
Pizza. Pepperoni.

Jeff licks his lips, rolls his hand over his belly.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Way to go, mom.

SHARON
After her recital, we thought we'd
swing by Bounce & Play... let Lena
burn off some of her energy.

FRANKIE
Can I still go?

Frankie crosses his fingers; Jeff take a deep breath.

SHARON
Ashley said she's coming to get ya'
around six-thirty. Behave yourself.
And don't stay up all night.

Frankie signals a 'thumbs up'.

FRANKIE
We will. Uh... we won't.

SHARON
Take a toothbrush. We'll pick you
up around noon.
(beat)
Have fun.

The lights in the auditorium dim, go off then back on.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Recital's almost started. Gott'a
turn off my phone. Love you, bye.

FRANKIE
Thanks a lot, mom. Bye.

Frankie hangs up, views the photo.

ON PHOTO: A restaurant in a strip mall with very few cars
parked in the lot.

BACK TO SCENE

JEFF
Where's the lunch crowd?

FRANKIE
(snickers)
Subway across the street.

Frankie nods, flips over another photo.

IN SLOW MOTION

Frankie's pupils dilate, his mouth drops; he crumbles on his bed. The photo slips from his fingers.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(gasp)
Noooooooooooo...

Jeff retrieves the photo, inspects it.

Jeff puts his hands on top his head, his face pale, solemn, distraught, goose-bumps break out on his arms.

BACK TO NORMAL SPEED

JEFF
This can't be happening.

ON PHOTO: Their middle school is in ashes, burned to the ground.

The gym remains intact.

Three fire engines and MULTIPLE FIREFIGHTERS douse water from large hoses at the smoldering middle school in the b.g.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE
(shakes his head)
It's not fun any more.

Frankie rapidly turns over the last photograph.

ON PHOTO: Two medics load fire-chief Mark Abrams on a stretcher in the back of an ambulance. He's badly burned.

Mark wears an oxygen mask, has an IV solution in his arm. His face and arms are red, badly burned.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Oh my gosh! Oh... my... gosh.
(sighs)
(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Now what?

JEFF

(gasp)

This changes everything.

The boys take deep breaths, stare in angst at the two photos.

FRANKIE

Jeff, what if somehow I'm responsible for that fire.

JEFF

You're kidden' me?

FRANKIE

Hear me out.

(beat)

I set up my model rocket on the launch pad in our science class on Friday... ready to go... even inserted the engine. The pad seemed unstable, but I left it when my mom drove up. What if the rocket tipped over on the battery and ignited the engine?

JEFF

Think about what you're saying.

FRANKIE

But it could happen.

JEFF

Did I mention our family won the sweepstakes?

INT. COLLEGE DORM ROOM - NIGHT

Two beds and amenities: a small icebox, a flat screen TV, a microwave, and a sound system.

Neal writes on a notepad at his desk, refers to an open, chemistry book.

A cell phone BEEPS. He answers it.

INSERT - TEXT MESSAGE

Which reads:

"Need help! Jf."

BACK TO SCENE

Neal texts back. His phone RINGS in an instant.

NEAL
What's up?

Neal scoots back, stretches, props up his feet.

NEAL (CONT'D)
Hang on... whoa. Slow down! You
what?
(snickers)
You expect me to believe that?

He kicks off his shoes, flings them aside.

NEAL (CONT'D)
Come on! Okay, okay... what's your
big plan... me... why me?

Neal glances at the clock. Almost nine.

NEAL (CONT'D)
(shakes his head)
I can't... a Saturday morning
chem-lab... and besides... I'm a
good two hours away.

He shifts the phone to his other ear.

NEAL (CONT'D)
Hey, go check it out. Yeah... head
over there, get a visual... ya' see
something strange, someone poking
around... call the police... yeah.
Right... okay. bye.

Neal hangs up, grabs a bottled water from the frig, takes a
long gulp.

NEAL (CONT'D)
This is absolutely crazy.

Neal puts on his shoes, grabs his keys and water, dashes out.

INT. HALL'S TWO STORY HOUSE, JEFF'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

The room is a huge junk drawer.

There's a day bed, a dresser, a sectional desk with a swivel
chair, and music posters and baseball banners on the wall.

Jeff's in the swivel chair; Frankie's on the unmade bed.

JEFF
Told ya' he'd bum us out.

FRANKIE
It's time we talk to a real adult.
We'll tell your mom.

JEFF
Hold on... I've got an idea. Coach
Crawford leaves his office window
by the gym open... get's his
stuff's soaked all the time if it
rains.

FRANKIE
(shakes his head)
Tonight?

JEFF
Give me one good reason?

FRANKIE
(holds up five fingers)
It's gaited.... it'll be locked...
... it's illegal... too risky...
... we're liable to get hurt... and
besides... I'm not supposed to be
anywhere else, but here. My mom's
orders.

Jeff shoves the photo of Coach Abrams lying on a stretcher in
Frankie's face.

JEFF
That reason enough?

Frankie throws up his arms.

FRANKIE
Whadda' you think we can do?
(a long beat)
And if we're caught?

Jeff strides toward the door, determination in every step.

JEFF
Then I'll jus' go myself.

FRANKIE
No way.

JEFF
Your honor code... our pact?
Where's your promise to me?

Frankie grabs Jeff's arm with the cast.

FRANKIE
Hang on... what if we let Scott
know? Show him the photos.

JEFF

Scott--

FRANKIE

Jefferson. You do know him, right?

Jeff rubs his forehead, shakes his head, uncertain.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

Kind of a loner... tall... scruffy hair... in my scout troupe? He's an eighth grader sporting his eagle.

JEFF

Better than goin' alone... okay. Call him.

FRANKIE

Better still... text him. His number's 704-3327.

Jeff grabs his cell, pecks out a text. There's a BEEP seconds later. Jeff looks at the returned message.

JEFF

We're good to go... you know where he lives?

Frankie nods. Jeff grabs a flashlight from his desk drawer.

JEFF (CONT'D)

My mom's probably asleep, but we'll check. If so, she's out for the night. We'll slip out the front.

Frankie gives Jeff a reluctant high-five; they creep out the door.

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC, BACKYARD - NIGHT

A glowing campfire lights up an ultra-light, four-man tent in a yard behind a house with a wooded field in the b.g.

Scott adds sticks to the fire.

Jeff and Frankie approach the tent guided by a dull flashlight.

SCOTT

Welcome to my parlor, gentlemen.

Scott opens the flaps of his tent.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Sorry about not hooking up today. You get your rocket set up okay?

FRANKIE
That's one of the things I'm
worried about.

The boys climb inside the tent.

INT. TENT - NIGHT

An LED lantern provides light as Scott views a photograph. Frankie and Jeff sit motionless across from him, their legs crossed.

INSERT - PHOTO: A sign in front of scorched middle school
Which reads:

"PTA Meeting, Tuesday 7:00."

BACK TO SCENE:

FRANKIE
Notice the sign? It was changed
today.

SCOTT
(nods, scratches his chin)
Anyone else 'sides me know?

JEFF
(shrugs)
My snob of a brother.

FRANKIE
He's off at college... hasn't seen
the photos. Couldn't care less.

SCOTT
He didn't believe ya', and that's
okay... really.
(smiles)
Tell ya' what we're gonna do.
Tonight... it's overcast. That's in
our favor. We'll pay a visit to the
school. Have a look 'round.

Jeff punches Frankie with his elbow.

JEFF
Just what my brother said.

SCOTT
Just so we're trackin' on the same
wavelength... I'm talking inside.

Scott spins a long piece of field grass in his mouth.

FRANKIE
I'm not so sure that's a good idea.

SCOTT
Hang on. We'll check in at his house, see if coach's on duty.

FRANKIE
Out of the blue?

SCOTT
(a confident grin)
If he answers, I'll make up some excuse about one'a my merit badges.

Frankie's and Jeff's mouths drop in surprise.

JEFF
You can do that?

Scott forms the three-fingered scout oath of promise.

SCOTT
(laughs)
Once I talked to a weather man at a TV station. A walk-in. Have even interviewed a policeman on his beat... not a big deal.

FRANKIE
(to Jeff)
Who knew?

SCOTT
No, this ain't the first time.
(chuckles)
Gonna' have to teach you cubbies the secret power of the merit badge.

Scott raises his hand, receives high fives from both boys.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
He's at home, no big rush... but if he's workin' then we're a go.

Frankie shakes his head.

FRANKIE
You mean, if he's home, we tell him what we know?

SCOTT
What's the fun in that?

JEFF
 (to Frankie)
 Feel free to go home if you want.

FRANKIE
 Fair enough.

Scott unzips the net, opens the flaps.

SCOTT
 Back in a few.

TENT - LATER

Scott lugs two rolled-up sleeping bags, drops them on the vapor barrier. Frankie and Jeff are seated, legs crossed.

SCOTT
 He's on duty. Out'ta town all next week... a training exercise.

Jeff scoots toward the entrance.

JEFF
 Let's get started.

Casually, Scott unrolls the sleeping bags, separates them.

SCOTT
 Hang on, cowboy. Love your enthusiasm but chill a while. My dad's goin' hunting early with some friends.

Scott moves the LED lantern between the sleeping bags.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
 Lights 'll be out fore long.

Frankie rolls to his stomach on the sleeping bag, his chin rest on his hands.

FRANKIE
 Run that by me again.

SCOTT
 Frankie, your tenderfoot is showin'.
 (smiles)
 For instance, how do we get in?

Jeff raises his hand, puts it down.

JEFF
 We've got that covered.

FRANKIE
Crawl though a window. Coach
Crawford leaves it open.

Scott makes an imaginary check mark in the air.

SCOTT
Check... next, we're lookin' for a
fire source. We start with all the
places where chemicals might be
stored or used. And those are?

Jeff looks down, shrugs, slowly lifts the head.

JEFF
The kitchen?

Scott smiles his approval, turns toward Frankie.

FRANKIE
Janitor's closet?

SCOTT
Yes-sir-ee, cubbies, you're making
progress.

Scott makes another imaginary check mark in the air.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Let's not forget the science labs,
especially eighth grade.

Jeff glares at Frankie

JEFF
Tell him Frankie.

FRANKIE
A model rocket I made is in my
science class ready to fly. If it
tips over, it could ignite the
engine... start the fire.

SCOTT
We'll check into that, my little
von Braun.

Scott pulls a packet of peanut butter crackers from his front
pocket, hands two each to Frankie and Jeff.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
We've been mixin' some mean solutes
this week. Plenty a things might
create a fire.

Frankie and Jeff nibble on their crackers.

FRANKIE
We're all set then?

Scott yawns, lays back, puts his hands behind his head.

SCOTT
Sounds like a plan.

Jeff's cell phone RINGS. He checks the number, shows the screen to Frankie.

JEFF
Uh-oh.

The phone continues to RING.

FRANKIE
(sarcastic)
Great! It's over. I'm busted.

JEFF
(to Scott)
Supposed to be spending the night
at my house, not campin' out here.

Frankie answers it, a look of panic in his eyes.

FRANKIE
Hello... yeah.
(covers the phone,
whispers)
Lena.
(speaks into phone)
Uhu... do I have a choice... when?
Okay. I will... I said I would...
... no, not all of them. One and
that's it! Now stop. Bye.

Eyes of anticipation look to Frankie; he views the heavens.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
You're not gonna' believe it.
(animated)
Jeff knows my little sister, the
biggest tattletale in the
country... maybe the whole world.

JEFF
And a certified snoop. A cry baby.
Momma's girl. Pampered. Spoiled...
... shall I go on?

FRANKIE
(shrugs)
Anyway... we're taking her along.
She's plans to sneak out.

JEFF
You've got to be kidding?

SCOTT
Whip-e-io, cowboy.

Scott pretends he lassoes a calf.

FRANKIE
Either that or I'm toast.

Frankie looks gruff, slaps his hand on his thigh.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Dad-gummit! Why didn't I tell her
to take a hike! I'll call her back.

Jeff grabs the phone from Frankie's hand.

JEFF
Be like stirring up a hornet's
nest.

FRANKIE
(nods his head)
Guess we'll have to take our
chances. Otherwise, I'm home in a
heartbeat with a week or two a
choirs.

Scott CLAPS his hands.

SCOTT
It just got a whole... lot... more
complicated.

FRANKIE
Lena said she'll meet me us on the
back porch around midnight.

SCOTT
You better go alone. We'll wait at
the school in case things go
sour... if you know what I mean?

FRANKIE
(nods)
Tell me about it. Be glad you don't
have a little sister.

JEFF
Whad' she ask for?

Frankie pretends to flip a coin, catch it in his palm.

FRANKIE
All our silver dollars. I'll give
her one.

Jeff pats Frankie's shoulder.

JEFF
(laughs)
Better than I expected.

Scott glances at his watch.

FRANKIE
(to Frankie)
You need to get started, you've got
quite a walk ahead of you.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

A streetlight shines onto a football field and school with a
fence surrounding both.

The school has four wings with a gym on one end in the b.g.

Jeff and Scott crouch down outside the fence. Two photos hang
from Jeff's front pocket.

JEFF
Where are they?
(to Scott)
Maybe Frankie got scared, folded.

SCOTT
Or got caught.

Scott glances at the lighted dial of his watch.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
You still wanna' do this?

They hear dogs BARK in the distance. Jeff touches the photos.

JEFF
(nods)
My idea.

SCOTT
Alright then... this mission's a
go!

Scott bends back the lower part of the fence near the gate.
Jeff bends to his knees, prepares to crawl through.

The sound of dogs barking grows LOUDER o.s. Lena and Frankie
race through a stand of trees with TWO DOGS in chase in the
b.g. Lena SCREAMS. Jeff waves at them.

JEFF
Frankie! Lena! Over here!

A car passes. Jeff's silhouette is revealed like a deer in headlights. The driver of the car lays on the HORN.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Come on girl, run!

Dogs on Lena's heels GROWL and BARK. Breathing hard, Lena leaps through the opening in the fence. Frankie follows her.

Scott maintains the opening, his forearms taut.

SCOTT
Anytime now!

Jeff wiggles through; his shirt pocket snags, rips; the photos fall outside the fence.

One dog snaps at Scott, shows his sharp canines. He kicks at the hound, scrambles up the chain-link fence, hops over, ends in a roll.

A SIREN ECHOES from a police car o.s.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Everyone down.

The CHILDREN hit the turf. The police car speeds past in front of the school, its blue light flashes and siren BLARES. The cop car races rapidly out of view.

The hounds prance along the fence, SNARL and BARK. Scott scrambles across the football field.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Guys. Get movin'.

Frankie pulls Lena to her knees. Jeff and Frankie trot after Scott. Lena dusts off her knees, meanders across the field.

LENA
I wish I would of told mom.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, BEHIND CONCESSION STAND - NIGHT

Jeff, Frankie, Scott, and Lena group together, partially hidden in shadows.

SCOTT
The troops okay?

Frankie places his arm around Lena.

FRANKIE
Lena, you alright?

LENA
(shakes her head)
Wait 'til Cisco grows up. He'll get
those mean, creepy dogs.

Jeff steps out from the concession stand. The light reveals
his torn pocket.

FRANKIE
Jeff. Don't tell me.

Jeff lifts up a flap of cloth, once his shirt pocket.

SCOTT
Way to go Allstate.

Jeff searches the ground around him.

JEFF
The photos. Must have fallen out at
the gate.
(beat)
I'll go back.

Scott grabs Jeff's elbow.

SCOTT
No problem... we'll get them later.

JEFF
But?

SCOTT
We don't need 'em. Come on.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, WING - NIGHT

Scott leads Lena, Jeff, and Frankie in single file along a
brick wall.

JEFF
What took you so long?

Lena HUFFS, turns, sticks out her tongue at Jeff.

FRANKIE
Long story. Not her fault.

JEFF
Short version.

FRANKIE
I tried to cut through the
subdivision. Had to back-track.
Twice.

Scott, on edge, comes to a corner, peeks around it.

SCOTT
Gang. We're here. Keep your eyes
peeled.

PARKING LOT, BESIDE GYM

TWO COPS in a police cruiser slowly circle the lot.

Scott lies face down beneath a stairwell leading to the gym.
Frankie, Jeff, and Lena huddle behind a huge dumpster.

Lena squirms, stands.

FRANKIE
(whispers)
Lena. Freeze.

Lena doesn't budge.

The police cruiser stops; the bright head lamps flash
briefly.

A long minute.

The cruiser exits slowly through the main gait of the school
onto the street in the b.g.

Frankie, Jeff, Lena, and Scott breath again. Jeff nudges
Frankie. Scott stands, stretches his neck side to side.

SCOTT
Who-o-a-w-a, close!

LENA
Somethin' stinks.

Frankie picks up Lena to face the dumpster.

FRANKIE
Duh!

Jeff saunters to the wide open gait, swings it back and
forth.

JEFF
You might know.

FRANKIE

We could have already been inside.

A KITTEN rubs against Lena's leg, scampers beneath the dumpster out of view.

Lena jumps, SCREAMS. Scott races beside Lena, bends down.

SCOTT

Here kitty, kitty.

The kitten MEOWS, emerges, weaves in and out between Lena's legs. Lena and Scott pet the kitten, who PURRS from their soft caresses.

The three boys amble around the stairwell.

Lena cradles the kitten, enamored. Frankie glances back, notices Lena isn't behind them.

FRANKIE

Lena. Come on.

LENA

What about the kitty?

Frankie returns to Lena beside the dumpster.

FRANKIE

Get real. You can't bring him.

LENA

It's a girl.

FRANKIE

I knew we shouldn't have brought you along.

Lena WHIMPERS. She draws the kitten to her face, rubs it's face against her cheek.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)

(sighs)

You stop your whining or we go home.

Lena nods. They stroll past an old model, compact car parked in the lot.

CAFETERIA, LOADING DOCK

Jeff loads a wooden pallet into Frankie's arms below him, adds to the one Frankie holds.

FRANKIE
That's good.

Frankie carries his pallets around a corner, out of view.
Scott comes into view, approaches Jeff, his arms extended.

JEFF
Hit me.

Jeff lifts three pallets, one by one, into Scott's arms.

SCOTT
Grab one more, and we're ready.

Jeff leans a pallet against the dock, hops down, grabs the
pallet, follows Scott along the sidewalk.

WALL, BELOW AN OPEN WINDOW

Frankie and Jeff stack pallets on top of one another against
the front wall.

Scott lifts another pallet to the stack hidden behind a large
bush.

SCOTT
Lena. You're up.

Lena strokes the kitten, sits on a curb.

LENA
(shakes her head.)
Uh-Uh. I not climbin' that.

Scott puts his arm on Lena's shoulder, gently removes the
kitten from her grip.

SCOTT
Sweetie, you can do this.
(to Frankie and Jeff)
We'll keep it steady, won't we?

Jeff and Frankie nod. Scott scratches the kitty's chin.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Your friend 'll be okay.

Scott hands the kitten to Jeff.

Scott hoist Lena onto the irregular mass of wooden pallets.
She stumbles, regains her balance; she's just out of reach of
the window.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Easy enough to fix.

Scott helps Lena down. He adds another pallet, lifts Lena up. Frankie and Jeff steady the pallets.

LENA

Better.

Lena reaches up, fully opens the narrow window, sticks her head inside, glances down. Several cars pass along the road in front of the school.

FRANKIE

We're exposed here!

Lena squeezes through the window. Her feet disappear. The boys hear a CRASH.

SCOTT

Lena, you okay?

Lena sticks her head through the window, looks down at them, smiles.

LENA

Bookshelf.

The three boys SIGH in relief.

Frankie leans on the pallets; they come CRASHING down in the shrubbery.

Frankie, Jeff, and Scott LAUGH, rush around the corner wall, out of view.

INT. GYM ENTRANCE - NIGHT

Lena opens the gym door. Frankie, Scott, and Jeff hurry inside. Lena hands each of them a mini-flashlight.

Lena snatches the kitten from Jeff.

FRANKIE

Where'd those come from?

LENA

My birthday. You owe me ten bucks... and that doesn't include the coin you promised me.

FRANKIE

No way. We'll give you the penlights back.

Scott pats Lena on the back, gives her a hug.

SCOTT
I'll make sur'a that, pumpkin.

They turn on their flashlights, stroll past bleachers folded against the wall and goal posts tucked on hangers.

Jeff and Frankie amble toward the locker rooms.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Where ya' goin' there,
super-heroes?

JEFF
Bathrooms have chemicals. Thought
we'ed--

SCOTT
(chuckles)
Okay rookies. Remember... the gym's
the only thing not burned up.

Scott gently knocks their heads together.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Follow me boys.
(to Lena)
You, too, bright eyes.
(turns off penlight)
Lights off... 'til I give you the
signal.

Frankie and Jeff turn off their lights.

They mosey toward two entry doors in an orange glow created from emergency lights reflecting off the shiny, wooden floor.

HALLWAY BESIDE GYM

Numerous athletic trophies in cabinets line the wall.

Scott gently closes the gym doors. He points his penlight at his lips, an index finger over them.

SCOTT
(softly)
Quiet.

The children nod. Scott silently leads the way down the hallway.

A phone RINGS. Everyone stops in their tracks.

Jeff struggles to remove the phone from his pocket. He views the number; the phone stops ringing.

JEFF
Neal... what does he want?

SCOTT
Whoever... shut that phone off.

The battery BEEPS three times; the phone dial goes black.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Even better.

CAFETERIA, DINING HALL

Dining tables are folded upright against the wall. Scott uses his penlight to lead Frankie, Scott, and Lena.

A toilet FLUSHES o.s.

They're like statues in freeze tag. The other penlights come on. They quickly scatter in all directions.

MONTAGE - FINDING A PLACE TO HIDE

A) KITCHEN: Scott guides Lena to the open kitchen. They duck beside an ice cream freezer which HUMS.

Lena loses her grip, the kitten scampers underneath a table out of reach. She struggles on her knees to reach him.

FRANKIE
No, Lena. She'll mosey out in a minute.

B) MEZZANINE: Skipping steps like a track star, Jeff dashes to the mezzanine, squeezes between a two cafeteria tables.

C) BACK WALL: Frankie races back and forth, slides on his knees beneath a small table.

END MONTAGE

Penlights turn off. The cafeteria becomes an orange glow from a single emergency light.

SILENCE.

One by one, three toilets FLUSH o.s. A motor starts up making a RUB-RUB, SWISHING NOISE o.s.

Scott and Lena tip-toe from the open kitchen to the dining area. The kitten trails behind them.

Scott signals back and forth with his penlight. Jeff edges down the steps of the mezzanine, comes into view. Frankie crawls out from beneath the table, joins them.

Scott uses hand motions to relay to the others to stay put.

SCOTT
(whispers)
Wait here.

VESTIBULE, FRONT OFFICE

The lobby and office are lit up.

Chuck, his back slightly bowed, moves a floor buffer WHIRRING across the floor. He wears an I-pod with earphones.

Scott pokes his head around the corner from the steps. He backs away slowly. Chuck notices Scott's shadow.

Scott reaches for the exit door.

His hand slips off the handle.

The door BANGS shut.

SCOTT
Yikes!

Scott, in a panic, opens it, leaps through the door.

The sound of the door closing ECHOES off the walls.

DINING HALL

Scott rushes inside, knocks over a recycle-bin. The bin CRASHES, rolls along the floor. Empty drink cans spill out, CLANG as they roll.

Frankie, Jeff, and Lena are glued in place, stiff as nails.

The floor buffer goes silent o.s. Seconds later, they hear FOOTSTEPS coming up the stairs.

SCOTT
(motions toward a hallway)
R-u-u-n-n!

HALLWAY, RAMP

Frankie, Jeff, and Scott, who carries Lena, haul up a ramp, turn a corner. Light from their penlights bounces off the ceiling.

They reach an exit door. It's chained.

FRANKIE
You might know.

They turn around and scurry down another hallway.

HALLWAY, BESIDE LIBRARY

Library shelves, four classrooms, and a teacher's lounge are along the hallway.

Scott sets Lena down, checks classroom doors on the left.

Locked.

Frankie and Jeff find the other classrooms locked. Scott opens the teachers' lounge door.

SCOTT
(quietly)
Finally... in here.

TEACHER'S LOUNGE, WORK AREA

Scott's on a love seat next to Lena on Frankie's lap. Jeff crouches down in a corner beside a roll of construction paper. Penlights switch off.

LIBRARY

Chuck, in a reserved manner, unlocks the door of the library.

He passes shelves stacked with books, reaches around a projector, flips on a row of lights.

Fluorescent lights come on in succession.

CHUCK
Okay, sonny. Know your up here.

He glances between various shelves, walks in a slow gait into the hallway. The area is aglow with light, except the room where the children hide.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Now... or I'll no choice but to call the cops.

TEACHER'S LOUNGE, WORK AREA

Scott gets off the sofa, turns on the light.

SCOTT
Campers, the fire's gone cold.

With heads downcast, the other three children follow Scott one by one into the hallway.

LIBRARY

Chuck's eyes pop out when Lena pokes her head around the library shelf, comes into view carrying the kitten.

CHUCK
What the?

Jeff, Frankie, and Scott, a few seconds apart in single file, come into view; they shuffle toward Chuck.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
Any more a comin'?

Scott nods, offers to shake Chuck's hand; Chuck refuses.

SCOTT
That's it.

CHUCK
Land's sakes, alive! What are you kids doing here this time'a night?

Jeff and Scott point simultaneously toward Frankie.

FRANKIE
(voice trembles)
There's a real good reason.

CHUCK
I see.

Chuck eases into a chair. They sit, gather around him.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
How'd you get hooked up with these boys?

Lena strokes the kitten, her lip out, points at Frankie.

LENA
Him.

CHUCK
Let's be hearing it.

FRANKIE
(swallows hard)
Well, it, uh... it's gonna' sound weird... we're strolling past the
(MORE)

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 school on our way home to spend the
 night in Scott's tent. I decided to
 show everyone a model rocket I
 built. The side door we tried out
 was open so we slipped right in.

Chuck creases his forehead.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
 I'm launching my rocket first
 period Monday. I wanted them to see
 it in case it blew up on lift-off
 or something.

Chuck opens his eyes wide, confused.

CHUCK
 Good Lord, son. You're not making
 a'licka sense.

JEFF
 Frankie's rocket may be about to
 explode and cause a real bad fire.
 (beat)
 It's a long story. It began when we
 found a--

Scott leans forward in his seat.

SCOTT
 What these scouts are trying to say
 is this... we have evidence from
 photos taken by a magical camera...
 ... found by Frankie and Jeff...
 ... that this school's fixin' to be
 burned to the ground.
 (a long beat)
 Perhaps tonight.

FRANKIE
 On one photo, our coach is loaded
 in an ambulance.

CHUCK
 Your coach?

JEFF
 Coach Abram, our baseball coach;
 he's the fire chief. You know him?

Chuck shakes his head.

CHUCK
 (to Lena)
 What do you say to this, darlin'?

LENA
I never saw a thing, only overheard
them bragging about it.

FRANKIE
Then why'd you come along you
little snot?

CHUCK
Show me the photos.

Jeff points in the direction of the football field, pulls the
flap of what's left of his pocket.

JEFF
They fell out when I snagged my
pocket on the fence.

Chuck tilts his head to one side.

CHUCK
Been meaning to fix that gate.

Chuck stands, shuffles toward the back hallway.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
We best be gathering those photos
or I'll be callin' your folks.

Suddenly, a downpour ROARS pounding rain onto the all metal
roof. Lena GASPS. The kitten bounces away.

Jeff throws up his hands.

JEFF
What next?

Chuck unlocks a closet door using one of the many keys from
his key chain around his belt, retrieves a large umbrella. He
taps Scott's shoulder.

CHUCK
Jus' got one umbrella.
(to Jeff, Frankie, and
Lena)
We be back, shortly.

Chuck and Scott stroll down the hallway, out of view. Jeff
leans toward Frankie.

JEFF
You reckon' he believes us?

FRANKIE
It could go either way.

Lena locates the kitten between the book shelves, returns.

LENA
Just like your big, scary fire.

FRANKIE
What about my rocket?

Frankie and Jeff race through the library enter the sixth grade hallway, out of view.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

A steady drizzle.

Chuck and Scott trek across the field beneath the umbrella, step over puddles.

EXT. FENCE, BEHIND FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

A light sprinkle.

Chuck unlocks the gate. Scott and Chuck search the muddy ground.

SCOTT
They were here. Scout's honor.

Scott picks up a small corner of one photo lying in a pool of water. He wipes the mud off what's left of the photo.

ON CORNER OF PHOTO: A dog's teeth marks are imprinted in the photo showing only the gym.

BACK TO SCENE

SCOTT (CONT'D)
There.

Chuck pulls the photo nearly to his nose.

CHUCK
I don't see it.

SCOTT
Those dad-gum strays!

Chuck tucks what's left of the photo into his pocket, locks the gate.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, LIBRARY - NIGHT

Frankie thumbs though a science reference book. Jeff reads Lena a story, finishes it, closes the book. Lena yawns, her lids droop. The kitty naps nearby.

LENA
What's taking so long?

FRANKIE
Hear that. It's still pouring.

Lena scurries into the hallway out of view. Sounds of a water fountain TURN ON then OFF o.s.

LENA (O.S.)
Smell that?

Jeff raises his head, sniffs, shakes his head.

JEFF
Not a thing.

LENA (O.S.)
Over here.

Jeff strolls into the hallway out of view.

JEFF (O.S.)
Frankie, come here.
(beat)
Frankie? Hey. Frankie.

Frankie looks up, closes his book.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Come smell.

HALLWAY, OUTSIDE LIBRARY

Frankie and Jeff sniff the air. Lena gets a drink from the water fountain.

FRANKIE
Ammonia?

JEFF
Something like it, anyway.

FRANKIE
Come on.

Frankie and Jeff scoot down the hall, sniff the air. Lena skips along. A boy's and girl's restroom is on their right.

Lena squirms and fidgets, scampers suddenly into the girl's restroom out of view.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Once again... Lena.

LENA (O.S.)
I heard that. I couldn't wait.

The toilet FLUSHES o.s.

Lena prances out from the restroom into view. She washes her hands, dries them on a paper towel. She marches toward Frankie, rears back to punch him in the stomach.

FRANKIE
Not this time.

Frankie steps aside. Lena comes up empty, falls forward. She sets up red in the face, stomps down the hall.

LENA
Where's your big fire, Frankie?

LIBRARY

The library is empty. Chuck leans his umbrella on a chair. Scott moves about, turns his head, sniffs the air.

SCOTT
The eighth grade wing.

Scott dashes into the hall, stops. Chuck waves him on.

CHUCK
I'll catch up to ya'.

Scott hustles down the hall, turns out of view.

The kitten comes into view, stretches, yawns, nudges Chuck's leg.

CHUCK (CONT'D)
My, my, my... what shall we do with you?

Chuck scoops up the kitten, shuffles along with a stiff gait.

EIGHTH GRADE WING

Jeff flips on the lights in the hallway; lockers line both sides with teacher's names above the classroom doors.

JEFF
It's definitely gettin' stronger.

Frankie turns the restroom lights on, nods with a sneer toward Lena.

FRANKIE
My privilege.

LENA
Smartie.

Jeff, on one side and Frankie on the other, look through the small windows in each classroom door; they stroll toward the far end of the hall.

Lena races ahead, turns the door handles, runs back.

LENA (CONT'D)
Locked.

FRANKIE
Lena. Go back to the library. Tell 'em we're here.

LENA
Oh no! My kitty!

Lena dashes away out of view. Frankie and Jeff converge on the second to last door at the end of the hall.

Frankie searches inside one window with his penlight, Jeff the opposite window.

FRANKIE
Don't see a thing.

JEFF
Gotta' be somewhere 'round here.
Stinks somethin' awful.

Jeff props open the chained, double doors leading outside with a door stop. Rain POUNDS against the door- a gully-washer.

Frankie and Jeff shine their lights in the last two classrooms.

FRANKIE
Over here.

END OF HALLWAY, OUTSIDE LAST CLASSROOM

INSERT - PLAGUE ABOVE DOOR

Which reads:

"HOOPER"

Frankie scans the inside of the classroom with his penlight.

FRANKIE
Take a look. The corner... near the
desk... beside the sink.

Jeff shines his penlight through the window.

JEFF
Short circuit?

ON WALL OUTLET: Sparks fly from the cord of a power strip
toward a covered bucket.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE
(nods)
What's causing that awful smell?

Jeff scans the desk, bucket, and lab tables in range of his
light.

JEFF
The bucket's leaking.
(beat)
Gott'a funny feelin' it ain't
water.

ON BUCKET: A spark bounces off the lid. The spark hits the
carpeted floor; carpet frizzes, smokes.

BACK TO SCENE

FRANKIE
Smoke!

Jeff whiffs the air, nods.

JEFF
Frankie, grab an extinguisher. The
other end of the hall. I'll see
if--

Jeff and Frankie hear an EXPLOSION behind the door like a
large firecracker.

CLASSROOM, TEACHER'S DESK

Papers on the teacher's desk scatter on the floor from the
small explosion.

The papers ignite; fluid catches the carpet on fire.

HALLWAY, EIGHTH GRADE WING

Jeff peeks inside the door, notices the papers ablaze. Smoke seeps slowly through the bottom of the door frame.

JEFF

Go, go, go! We need to find the alarm.

Jeff and Frankie sprint down the hall, turn the corner. Jeff runs into Chuck, knocks him over.

Frankie weaves in time, barely misses Scott and Lena.

The kitten SCREECHES, leaps from Lena's arms, scampers into the restroom.

FRANKIE

Fire!

HALLWAY, NEAR RESTROOM

Chuck sets up, unleashes his set of keys, hands them to Scott.

CHUCK

Third key from the end... the blue one. If not, try the red.

Scott nods, shuffles through the set of keys.

SCOTT

Check. Third key, blue then red.

CHUCK

You can't open it, get outside.

Scott flies down the hall, keys in hand, gives Chuck a "thumbs up". Lena wanders out from the restroom, cuddles and kisses the kitten.

LENA

Sissy. I didn't mean to leave you. I'm so sorry.

CHUCK

It's gonna' be okay, darlin'. Lets you and me head to the office.

Chuck stands. They stroll around the corner out of view.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

The phone RINGS.

Chris and Sharon are asleep on their bed.

Chris turns on a lamp, reaches for his glasses, answers it, looks at the clock - 1:15 AM.

CHRIS

Who is this? What? I can barely hear you.... can you speak up...
... Chuck Sears... correct?

Sharon turns over, sits up, concern on her face.

SHARON

What's wrong?

Chris flattens his hand for Sharon to wait.

CHRIS

She's where ...the office? Oh?
Listen, if this is a prank, I'll...
... yes.

Chris nods his head a few times.

SHARON

(a look of concern)
Tell me.

CHRIS

Uh-hu... I see... a photo. That explains it all.

Chris hangs up, pops out of bed, puts his pants on.

SHARON

(gasps)
Oh no... what happened to Lena?

Tears form in Sharon's eyes. Chris scoots beside her, hugs her tenderly, looks squarely in her eyes.

CHRIS

She's safe.

Chris puts his hands around Sharon's shoulders, takes a DEEP BREATH, swallows hard.

CHRIS (CONT'D)

We need to get to the the middle school right away.

Chris gets up, grabs his tennis shoes from the closet.

SHARON

Frankie? Is he? In trouble?

Sharon stands, tears stream down her cheeks.

Chris grabs a tissue wipes her eyes, hugs her.

CHRIS
'Fraid so. Fill you in on the way.

Chris throws on his shoes, quickly ties the laces.

SHARON
(sniffles)
Boys? What's goin' on?

Sharon takes a LONG BREATH, puts on anything she can find.

CHRIS
Frankie's dragged Jeff and another
boy in the middle of it.

They race from the bedroom.

INT. FIRE STATION - NIGHT

An ALARM sounds repeatedly. A blue light rotates on the wall.
Fire-chief Mark Abrams races from an office.

MARK
Let's go! Let's go!

Bay doors open. MEN come to life in a frenzy of activity.

Grabbing helmets, SIX FIRE FIGHTERS rapidly don fire
retardant clothing, check oxygen masks. They ready two fire
engines, hop aboard.

Mark RAPS on the hood of the first engine in line.
FIREFIGHTER 1 gives him a thumbs up.

FIREFIGHTER 1
Ready to cruise.

Both engines ROAR to life, ALARMS comes on, bright red lights
reflect off the wall.

A MALE emergency medical tech (EMT) and a FEMALE paramedic
climb aboard the ambulance.

The fire engines and ambulance speed away, sirens BLARING.
Mark follows them, his dash light rotates, flashes red.

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, EIGHTH GRADE WING - NIGHT

Three fire extinguishers set beside lockers. Smoke filters
from the door frame of Mr. Hooper's classroom into the hall.

INSIDE CLASSROOM: A chart on the wall blazes. Ceiling tiles
ignite; the carpet is fully engaged. Stools catch fire.

BACK TO SCENE

Frankie slaps wet paper towels across the door frame. The smoke diminishes.

Scott tries several keys in the door lock; it fails to open. He hands the keys to Frankie. Jeff looks on.

SCOTT
Give it a shot.

Frankie picks a key at random, inserts it, burns his fingers. He puts his fingers in his mouth.

Scott covers the handle with a wet paper towel. Frankie tries again. The key CLICKS.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Thatta' boy.

Frankie grabs the door knob, starts to turn it. Scott pulls back on Frankie's hand.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Hold up, fire-chief... that door comes open, flames liable to follow.

Frankie nods, picks up one of the extinguishers. Scott and Jeff, with their fingers on the trigger, aim the hoses from their extinguishers toward the door.

SCOTT (CONT'D)
Ready?

FRANKIE
It's what we came for.

Frankie reaches for the handle.

JEFF
Let's do it.

Frankie turns the knob.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Two fire engines, Mark's car, an ambulance, and a Sheriff's cruiser are outside the eighth grade wing.

The parking lot is a buzz; firefighters and paramedics ready their equipment, prepare to respond to any emergency.

Smoke filters from a roof vent. Firefighters carry axes, climb a ladder extending above the roof.

The sound of a LOUD EXPLOSION occurs in the room below them.

MARK

Go! Go! Go!

The crew moves into overdrive. Firefighters whack open the roof with axes. Black smoke pillows out. Hoses tighten and fill. Water is sprayed furiously at the doors and roof.

FIREFIGHTER 1

Get a hose up there!

Mark races to the cruiser, motions over his ear and mouth with his thumb and little finger to the DEPUTY SHERIFF (30's) sitting inside.

MARK

Get on the horn. Station 14.

DEPUTY

(nods)

I'm on it.

The deputy grabs his walkie-talkie.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, FRONT OFFICE ENTRANCE - NIGHT

DONNA (mid-20's), a female paramedic, sets down her medical bag, tries the handles. Locked.

She POUNDS on the door.

DONNA

Come on!

INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, OFFICE AREA - NIGHT

Lena opens the office door, runs to the outside door, lets Donna inside. Donna kneels beside Lena, smiles.

DONNA

What's your name?

Lena grins, innocence in her eyes.

LENA

Lena.

DONNA

I'm Donna. Come with me.

Donna grabs Lena's hand, quickly escorts her to the office. Chuck's on the phone at a desk, the kitten's in his lap.

DONNA (CONT'D)
 Sir... we must vacate the premises.
 Immediately!

Chuck hangs up the phone, gives Lena the kitten. He pushes upward on the desk to stand, stumbles, nearly falls.

DONNA (CONT'D)
 Are your hurt?

CHUCK
 (waves her off)
 Author-ritis.

Chuck grabs Lena's hand. The kitten's folded up in Lena's arm. Donna grips Chuck's elbow, leads them from the office.

DONNA
 Anyone else inside?

Lena points toward the stairs leading to the dining hall.

LENA
 My brother and two of his pals.

Donna pulls her walkie-talkie from her shoulder harness, speaks into it, as they exit the school.

DONNA
 Safely removed elderly male and
 young girl from harm's way. Three
 people remain inside. Over.

MALE VOICE
 (filtered)
 Roger that. Get here, stat. Out.

EIGHTH GRADE HALLWAY

Mr. Hooper's classroom - engulfed in flames; the door, still chained, hangs precariously by the hinge. Thick, black smoke pours out.

Ceiling tiles are ablaze above the door. Several burning tiles fall, splatter, ignite the carpet.

Scott, Frankie and Jeff are sprawled against metal lockers. The boys have contusions and scrapes on their head and arms.

Frankie and Scott don't move, their eyes closed.

Jeff raises on his elbows, briefly squints, collapses.

JEFF
 (mumbles)
 Help.

EXT./INT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, EIGHTH GRADE WING - NIGHT

WHAM! WHAM! WHAM!

Firefighter 2 whacks through the chain, kicks open the door. He enters cautiously through the smoke, sticks his head out the door, flips up his oxygen mask, cups his mouth.

FIREFIGHTER 2

(yells)

Clear! I see three kids down.

Two firefighters rush inside the hallway, carry thick hoses. They spray the hall, flush down the first room with water. The fire is brought partially under control.

Mark races inside with firefighter, TERRY SULLIVAN (40's) half man, half hulk. They wear mask and oxygen tanks.

MARK

Jeff!

Jeff turns his head slightly, views Mark.

JEFF

Coach... it could have been you.

Mark kneels, assesses bruises over his eye and scrapes on his head. He pats Jeff's shoulder gently.

MARK

You okay, son?

Terry's beside Jeff's midsection across from Mark.

JEFF

My head's a hurten' bad.

Mark feels Jeff's scalp and head.

MARK

Try not to move your neck.

Mark and Terry reach beneath Jeff, lock arms.

MARK (CONT'D)

(to Jeff)

Arms across your chest.

(gently lifts Jeff's arm)

How's the wrist?

TERRY

One... two... go.

Mark and Terry, in a coordinated motion, lift Jeff.

JEFF
Okay, I reckon'.

They carry Jeff to the exit, move out of view. Other firefighters douse flames spread to a third classroom.

A male EMT, RICK (30's), dashes inside. Firefighter 2 has two fingers along Scott's neck, glances at the EMT.

FIREFIGHTER 2
Seventy-two. Respirations okay, but he's not responsive.

RICK
Let's move!

They lock arms beneath Scott's back, lift him, carry him outside.

Terry and Mark bolt inside, find Frankie on his stomach, his head against a locker. He's pale. Mark feels along Frankie's neck for a pulse.

MARK
Hurry, hurry. We're losing him.

The two men support Frankie's neck, turn him in tandem onto his back, sweep him up, carry him through the outside doors.

EXT. GRASSY KNOLL - NIGHT

Jeff, Scott, and Frankie lie on stretchers.

Scott and Jeff wear oxygen mask. Terry provides Frankie oxygen through an ambu bag. Frankie has IV fluids running in his arm and wires hooked to his chest leading to an AED.

Mark monitors Frankie's heart rhythm beside Terry. Rick starts an IV on Scott who moves and is conscious.

Firefighter 2 is at Jeff's side.

DONNA
(into walkie-talkie)
This is rescue squad six... need a chopper.... stat! Two teens critical, one stable. Smoke inhalation, head trauma, possible internal bleed. Over.

The walkie-talkie CRACKLES, then responds.

MALE VOICE
(filtered)
Roger, rescue six. Air transport standing by. State exact
(MORE)

MALE VOICE (CONT'D)
location... ready... over.

DONNA
Carver Middle. North Busby road.
Front lawn to be marked. Estimate
ETA? Over.

MALE VOICE
(filtered)
Roger. Carver, North Busby, site
marked. ETA... ten to fifteen
minutes, over and out.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, FRONT LAWN - NIGHT

A beacon shines toward the night sky. An emergency helicopter
lands, the rotor blades turn in a steady WAP-WAP-WAP.

As the rotor NOISE quiets and the engine ROAR winds down, a
MALE PARAMEDIC and a FEMALE REGISTERED NURSE in scrubs spill
out the side, unload two stretchers.

Mark rolls Frankie to the chopper; Terry provides him oxygen
via an ambu bag. They assist in Frankie's transfer to the
paramedic's stretcher along with his medical equipment.

PARAMEDIC 1
Any change in status?

MARK
Afraid not. Hasn't regained
consciousness. Blood pressure's low
but hasn't dropped further.

The paramedic straps Frankie securely with Velcro, covers him
in a blanket, changes the oxygen tank. The registered nurse
continues to provide respirations to Frankie by the ambu bag.

REGISTERED NURSE
I'll check with the ER doc on meds
when we're in the air.

Two firefighters help the second paramedics lift Scott onto
the other stretcher. Scott's strapped down, covered, has his
medical equipment exchanged by the paramedic.

Terry, Mark, and the two firefighters in rhythm help the
paramedics lift the stretchers into the chopper.

The doors slide closed. Mark, Terry, the two firefighters
duck for cover. The engine POWERS UP; the chopper lifts into
the air.

INT. AMBULANCE, PATIENT BAY - NIGHT

The engine IDLES; the back doors are open. Donna snaps an ice pack, places it on the lump and bruise on Jeff's forehead.

Jeff's strapped onto a stretcher, wears a neck brace, has an IV in his arm, receives oxygen through a face mask.

Neal pops his head around the door. Donna motions him inside.

JEFF
(coughs)
You made it.

NEAL
(chuckles)
Didn't want to miss the fireworks.

Donna opens a bandage, tapes it across a cut on Jeff's cheek.

DONNA
We're about to shove off.

Neal clasps Jeff's hand.

NEAL
Your two friends?

Donna moves to the back doors, reaches for the handle.

JEFF
Life flight.

Neal climbs out, salutes Jeff.

DONNA
Gotta go! Jeff 'll be at Memorial.

Donna BANGS on the side, closes the doors. The SIREN screams to life.

EXT. MIDDLE SCHOOL, OUTSIDE FRONT OFFICE - NIGHT

Chuck and Lena face the road, sit on a curb. The kitten's asleep on her lap. Chris pulls the van beside them.

Tears well up in Sharon's eyes. She and Chris swallow hard. Chuck shuffles to the driver's side window.

Lena sniffles, her eyes and cheeks red.

CHUCK
The chopper took off less'n five minutes ago. Memorial.

SHARON

Oh God.

Sharon hops out, wraps Lena in her arms. Sharon and Lena climb in the side door. Sharon wipes Lena's tears.

SHARON (CONT'D)

We're glad you're not hurt.

CHRIS

We love you Lena.

CHUCK

Lena and I've been prayen'.

CHRIS

Appreciate it, and thanks so much for watchen' our daughter.

(beat)

Hop in.

CHUCK

My car's 'round back. I best be gettin' on home. Let met know.

CHRIS

We will.

Sharon steps out, sets the kitten on the grass.

SHARON

We can't take him.

LENA

(sobs)

Her.

Sharon offers the kitten to Chuck; he shakes his head.

CHRIS

Take her already!

Sharon SIGHS, grabs the kitten, climbs back in, hands the kitten to Lena. The kitten PURRS.

Chris makes a u-turn, tires SQUEAL; the van speeds away.

EXT. EMERGENCY ROOM, ENTRANCE - NIGHT

A helicopter is parked on the pad in the b.g.

An ambulance pulls into the drive below a red-lettered Memorial ER sign. Rick hops out, hurries to the back.

Donna swings open the ambulance doors. The remove Jeff on the stretcher, wheel him toward the entrance bays.

DONNA
Your mom's on her way.

Jeff places his hand over Donna's hand. He chokes up, tears roll down his cheeks, his mask fogs up.

JEFF
I'm... not crazy about hospitals.

Donna grips Jeff's fingers in her own, smiles tenderly.

DONNA
Nobody is. You're in good hands.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM, WAITING AREA - NIGHT

The lobby is quiet except for the BUZZ of fluorescent lights. Empty styrofoam cups and a few soda cans set on end tables.

Lena's asleep beneath a blanket, her head on a pillow propped between two chairs.

Neal entertains the kitty with a plastic straw in a cardboard box beside him.

Ashley, KYANNA HENDERSON (late 30's) - Scott's mom - slouch on a hodgepodge of chairs. Their eyelids are red.

Sharon stomps to the admission desk, her face inflamed. Sharon leans over the plexiglass petition.

SHARON
Excuse me.

Wearing a headset, the rude CLERK sits on a stool with her back turned, doesn't budge.

SHARON (CONT'D)
Hello... excuse me!
(demands)
Hey! We've waited long enough.

The clerk removes her headset, rolls her stool to the counter, smacks her chewing gum, makes no eye contact.

CLERK
(perturbed sigh)
It hasn't been that long since they've been admitted.

Ashley points to the clock, which reads: 4:50.

SHARON
We've been here over an hour, and haven't heard anything.
(pounds on the counter)
(MORE)

SHARON (CONT'D)
 What's wrong with you people?

The clerk HUFFS, rolls her eyes, picks up the wall telephone, punches in three numbers, leans the receiver on her chin.

CLERK
 (into phone)
 What's the status on the three boys brought in... uh-hu... right. Yes. I'll tell them.
 (to Sharon)
 The nurse should be out shortly.

SHARON
 Should be?
 (beat)
 She's got five minutes... or else.

The clerk ignores Sharon, scoots her stool along the counter.

Crossing her arms, Sharon fumes. Chris strides into view beside her, offers Sharon a soft drink.

SHARON (CONT'D)
 I'm going in there... four minutes and counting.

CHRIS
 We're all as worried as you are.

SHARON
 I mean it. Try to stop me.

A female NURSE in colorful scrubs, swings open a double door, motions for the FAMILIES to follow her.

NURSE
 The doctor will see you now.

SHARON
 Finally!

Sharon and Chris are first away, followed by KyAnna, Ashley, and Neal. Ashley stops Neal at the door, shakes her head.

NEAL
 Oh-kay. No prob-lem-o. I'll be right here with Lena and her kitty... hanging out.

Neal retreats, slumps in the chair, pets the kitten.

ER, MD AREA

Eight patient rooms with doors closed surround a desk. Charts, a computer, and a flat screen are on the desk.

A lighted, x-ray panel is on the wall.

Sharon, Chris, KyAnna, and Ashley gather around VIJAH PATEL, MD (40) with her name embroidered above her lab coat pocket.

Dr. Patel is all business. She flips open a chart, makes a notation, grabs a medical report from her desk.

VIJAH

It took a while for the radiologist to read the CT and MRI scans.

(smiles)

The good news... they're all awake, and there's no brain hemorrhages, internal bleeding, or fractures.

SHARON

The bad news?

VIJAH

Jeff can be home after a twenty-three hour short stay assuming his stay is uneventful.

(beat)

As a precaution, we need to keep Frankie and Scott another day.

CHRIS

What's wrong?

The smile fades from Dr. Patel's face. Sharon GASPS, grips Chris's hand tightly.

VIJAH

They lost consciousness... a stage three concussion. Frankie's vomited a few times, still reports dizziness and some memory loss.

Chris puts his arm around Sharon. Tears well up in her eyes.

VIJAH (CONT'D)

If everything goes well, we'll release them on Tuesday.

Chris, Sharon, and Ashley glance at one another, shake their heads.

SHARON

Thank God... can we see them?

Dr Patel grabs a chart from the desk, flips through it.

VIJAH

Yes, yes... of course.

Sharon SNIFFLES. KyAnna hugs Sharon. Ashley pats KyAnn and Sharon on their backs. They form a group hug.

VIJAH (CONT'D)

It'll be a few minutes. The resident's suturing Frankie's head.
(beat)
You won't notice it once his hair grows out.

Dr. Patel gets a BEEP, glances at her pager on her waist.

VIJAH (CONT'D)

It's nice meeting you. Let me know if you have any more questions.

Dr. Patel hurries down the hall. Chris looks dumbfounded.

CHRIS

At least it's not as serious as we first thought.

Sharon SOBS, her emotional dam burst. Ashley holds her.

ER, PATIENT ROOM

A machine BEEPS rhythmically, monitors Frankie's heart and blood pressure. IV fluids run into Frankie's arm.

A male registered nurse, BOB HAWKINS (30's) listens to Frankie's heart. through a stethoscope at his beside.

KNOCK KNOCK.

Chris and Sharon step inside then retreat. Bob waves to them.

BOB

Come in. It's okay. I'm almost done.

Chris and Sharon step inside. Bob records Frankie's vital signs on a clipboard at the foot of the bed.

BOB (CONT'D)

(to Frankie)
If your headache gets above a three, you know how to reach me.

Frankie nods, holds up the call button. Bob cleans his hands with sanitizer, smiles at Sharon and Chris, exits promptly.

SILENCE.

Sharon turns her back, CRIES SOFTLY.

FRANKIE
I'm sorry mom. Dad. I should of
told you. I wanted to.

Sharon turns around, speaks between SNIFFLES.

SHARON
You could'a been killed.

FRANKIE
I couldn't live with myself if
coach had been seriously burned and
I did nothing to prevent it.

Sharon wipes her eyes, regains her composure. Her lids are
red.

SHARON
Did you consider your sister?

FRANKIE
It's not the way we planned it. I
was trying to help.

CHRIS
Not how you planned it? That's the
problem. Where's your good
judgment, son?

Chris scrunches his eyebrows, disappointment on his face.

CHRIS (CONT'D)
We expected more from you.

FRANKIE
I'm sorry.

Chris throws up his arms.

CHRIS
Not good enough!

FRANKIE
You're right. I wasn't thinking.
I'm an idiot.

SHARON
You don't get it, do you?

FRANKIE
What do you want me to say?

SILENCE.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
No more secrets. I promise.

Frankie lifts three fingers in the scout's oath of promise.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
Scout's honor.

CHRIS
That's a good start. And you're not
an idiot.

Sharon slips her hand into Frankie's.

SHARON
We love you son. We were so
worried.

Sharon hugs Frankie's neck; a tear falls from her cheek.

SHARON (CONT'D)
We thought we'd lost you.

FRANKIE
Will you forgive me?

CHRIS AND SHARON
(simultaneously)
Of course.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM, 3RD FLOOR - DAY

The sound of a siren BLARES in the distance o.s.

Jeff and Frankie sit on the side of their beds. Abrasions
cover their arms.

Jeff wears a bandage above his eyebrow; Frankie has one on
both sides of his chin along with a bruise below his eye.

A FEMALE NURSE (50's) shaped like a pear, wheels Scott into
the room. Scott transfers to a chair, salutes. His right hand
is bandaged, an ice bag over his eye.

SCOTT
Howdy rangers.

The nurse leaves the wheelchair, strides out of the room.

JEFF
Let's see it.

Scott removes the ice bag. His face is swollen, mostly black
and blue, purple in spots. His eye is nearly closed.

FRANKIE
And I thought mine looked bad.

Scott covers his eye with bag.

SCOTT
At least we got a chopper ride out.

Frankie's bewildered. Jeff spins his hand around the side of Frankie's head.

JEFF
He doesn't know.

Scott spins one arm above his head in a circular motion.

SCOTT
The He-lo? We both road in on a chopper.
(snickers)
You don't have a clue, do you?

FRANKIE
(shakes his head)
Who are you, by the way?

Scott LAUGHS.

FRANKIE (CONT'D)
(to Jeff)
You didn't come with us?

JEFF
Nascar. Same speed anyway.
(beat)
My first time in an ambulance. A lot smoother than I expected.

ELEVATOR CORRIDOR

Lena pushes Frankie in a wheelchair into the corridor. Balloons and the basket of candy set on Frankie's lap.

Sharon pushes the elevator button.

Together they silently watch indicator lights blink as the elevator rises from the ground floor.

The doors slide open.

A WOMAN and YOUNG GIRL step out. The girl holds the woman's hand, carries a Disney Sofia the First doll, smiles at Lena. They stride down the hall out of view.

Sharon hurries inside, holds the door open with her hand.

LENA
(to Frankie)
Have you seen my Rapunzel doll...
... the one with the princess outfit?

FRANKIE
 (chuckles)
 I take it you're searching for your
 doll house as well, the castle?

Lena scoots in front of Frankie, stares him down.

SHARON
 Would you two get in?

Frankie motions to Sharon to continue to hold the elevator.

FRANKIE
 Hang on a sec. Lena, I owe you a
 new doll along with your castle.
 (laughs)
 It's actually quite funny. The
 first rocket I built crashed and
 burned, hit your castle dead
 center, exploded. There was nothing
 left... totally an accident.

LENA
 What'd you do with it?

FRANKIE
 Long gone.

LENA
 (sneers)
 Two dolls with outfits, the castle,
 and new furniture.

FRANKIE
 No more hand shakes. I'll buy you a
 new doll and castle when I can.

The doors close.

INT. CHANDLER HOUSE, ATTIC - DAY

The pile of clothes and coats are put away; everything is
 neat and in place.

Frankie sets the box camera inside the dresser drawer where
 he and Jeff found it. The drawer won't close; he shoves it.

A film canister rolls out from the bottom of the drawer,
 lands by his shoe.

Frankie snaps open the lid; there's a roll of film inside.

FADE OUT.