

# *Shared Scars*

Original Screenplay by

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FADE IN:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY LOCKERS -- MORNING

Is the first day of class at this New York neighborhood, Public High School. A row of STUDENTS of all backgrounds and ages are putting personal belongings into their lockers. Its noisy as many are talking at the same time, greeting, laughing and opening and closing their lockers.

GINA (17) angelic face, soft spoken, is putting some items in her locker as ALEX(19) Puerto Rican, dark, long hair, school jock, muscular physic, a bully, approaches Gina from behind and putting his head on her shoulder. He speaks slowly and always with sexy smile.

ALEX  
How's my girl?

GINA  
I'm not your girl, Alex.

Gina, starts walking towards class.

ALEX  
Yes you are. You just don't know it yet. By the way, how was your summer? Why didn't you call me?

GINA  
I told you I was going to Florida to visit my grandparents.

ALEX  
Shit. You're right. I forgot.

GINA  
Yeah, you were probably too busy with Linda or who knows what other girls.

ALEX  
Come on, Gina, you're the only girl I've been after for over a year now. So, when are we going out?

MELANIE (17) Latin girl, tough. She's been standing behind Alex, listening.

MELANIE  
If she's smart. Never.

ALEX  
Why don't you mind your damn business!

MELANIE

Gina is my business and you know it!  
Just like I know exactly what you  
are after!

GINA

Hey guys, cool it. What's happening  
between you two?

ALEX

Melanie is just Jealous.

MELANIE

Alex, you seem to forget, I broke up  
with you over a year ago.

ALEX

Hey, who's counting?

LINDA (17) Sexy, blonde, great body, not very bright, knows  
how to use her beauty. Passing Alex-

LINDA

(squeezes Alex's ass)  
Hi, sexy!

ALEX

Ouch!  
(chasing Linda)  
Hold on, bitch!

MELANIE

See, Gina? The guys is a ho'.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN CLASSROOM -- MORNING

There are about twenty STUDENTS in John's classroom. There  
are students from every background, but mostly Hispanics.

BELL RINGS.

JOHN FLANAGAN (30s), English teacher, attractive, honest  
face, strict, speaks very clearly and pauses a lot. He enters  
the classroom and behind him are Gina and Melanie. Alex and  
Linda are seated talking. 15 OTHER STUDENTS are gathered  
around.

JOHN

(facing the students)  
Good morning everyone! Hey! Quiet!  
(silence)  
Thank you. Now, please take the  
seats that have your names on them.

Alex gets up and walks over to ANGEL (17) Hispanic, soft  
spoken, very cute, introvert and shy.

ALEX

Well? What are you waiting for,  
sissy boy? Get the fuck off my seat!

JOHN

Hey! Mr. Rodriguez, apologize!

ALEX

Yo' man, he's in my seat!

JOHN

Apologize, I said!

ALEX

Sorry...  
(whispers)  
Faggot.

Angel, goes over to his assigned seat. Alex, gives him a  
dirty look.

JOHN

Thank you. Welcome back ladies and  
gentleman to this, your last year of  
high school. You're all seniors  
now. Congratulations on getting  
this far!

JEROME(17) Black, tall, sad, angry eyes.

JEROME

(making fun of Alex)  
Yo' Alex. Lets hope this is your  
last year here, finally!

LAUGHTER from STUDENTS at Alex for they know he's repeating  
the 12th grade thanks to Mr. Flanagan, who left him back the  
previous year and Alex hates him for that.

ALEX

Fuck you, all!

JOHN

Cool it! As I was saying,  
congratulations to all of you on  
this your senior year. I trust and  
have faith, that all of you will  
graduate. That also includes you  
Mr.Rodriguez. My name is John  
Flanagan. I will be your English  
teacher and this will be homeroom  
for many of you. Over here on the  
board I've put up the rules of conduct  
for this classroom.

BLACKBOARD - header: "RULES OF CONDUCT" Below:

- 1.Self Respect
- 2.Respect for others
- 3.Punctuality.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Already, most of you have violated rule number two. So, I hope that from this moment on, you will respect one another, because if any of you have not learned these basic human values by now, I will make sure that you practice them and learn them here, everyday... On your desks are some of your reading materials. I also want you to read a book every three months by an author of your choice, after I've approve it, and I want a book report. Now, copy your homework while I take attendance.

ALEX

(whispering)

Yo, JT, this mother hasn't change.

JEROME

You should know. He kept here another year.

ALEX

He's gonna regret it. You wait and see.

Linda turns to Angel and LISA (17) Hispanic, very protective of Angel, Lisa is butch and proud of it.

LINDA

Hi, Lisa?

LISA

Hey, Linda.

LINDA

Angel, how was your summer?

ANGEL

Okay.

LINDA

Listen, I, I wanted to--

ALEX

Linda, you're into sissies now?

LISA

Oh, and you're Mr. big macho?

ALEX

Not as macho as you, Lisa, bro!

LISA

Fuck you.

LINDA

Ignore him guys, he's just jealous.  
Angel, you wanna go to the movies  
this Saturday night?

ANGEL

Can I let you know by Thursday?

Lisa stares at Linda, suspiciously.

LINDA

Sure, no probl-

JOHN

Can you all be quiet in the back!

After a brief moment, John, gets up.

JOHN (CONT'D)

For tomorrow, I want you all to write  
an essay of no more the 100 words,  
about an event or life changing  
experience. Or..about goals, dreams  
or fears that you might have and  
would like to get off your chest. I  
hope all of you have the courage to  
come up and read your essays out  
loud because I believe that we can  
all learn from each others experiences  
and at the time, these experiences  
will bring many of you closer  
together. As I'm sure many of you  
have a lot more in common than you  
think.

ALEX

(sarcastically)

I don't think so.

JOHN

(approaching him)

Well, I know so and I will prove it  
to you, Mr. Rodriguez.

GEORGE (17) Hispanic, overweight, abandoned by his mother  
and being raised by his grandmother and father. Trying to  
embarrass Jerome who goes by J.T. about his mother's AIDS.

GEORGE

Hey, J.T.? Maybe you should write  
about your mama's disease and--

JEROME

(grabbing George)

Listen, fat fuck! You better-!

JOHN  
(overlapping)  
Hey, hey!

JEROME  
Why don't you talk about your mama-

JOHN  
Stop it guys!

JEROME  
And how she left you and your little  
brother to go live la vida loca,  
down at A.C.

GEORGE  
Eat shit!

JOHN  
Okay enough! Mr.Thomas, go back to  
your seat. Mr.Lopez, apologize.  
Apologize now!

GEORGE  
I--I'm sorry, J.T. My bad.

ALEX  
Hey, I'll talk about my mama. I'm  
just like her and proud to be.

JOHN  
I will not! I repeat! I will not  
tolerate another act of disrespect!  
I will personally suspend the next  
student who breaks the rules of this  
classroom.. Is that clear, Mr. Lopez?

George nods.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Mr.Rodriguez?

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
Alex, is that clear?

ALEX  
(smiling)  
Crystal.

JOHN  
You're just going keep pushing me to  
give you more and more homework. So  
here it comes--

Complains form ALL STUDENTS in unison.

MELANIE

It had to be Alex with his big mouth!

ALEX

Shut up!.

John remains silent for a minute until they all say what they had to say.

JOHN

Now that you all said what you wanted to say, I will tell you what your assignment is and you don't have to worry because it's easy, fun, but most importantly, life changing. My own grandmother had me do it when I was only seven... I want you to get a small piece of wood with no markings in it and five small nails. Then, I want you to take a nail and for every bad, nasty, offensive or hurtful things that you've done to someone, today is great example, I want you to lightly, hammer a nail into the piece of wood for every person you've hurt verbally or otherwise!

MELANIE

Alex, you're gonna need a whole box of nails!

LAUGHTER.

JOHN

Quiet..! I said only five nails. And don't put them all the way into the wood, because then, I want you to go back to the persons you've hurt and do an act of kindness. From a heart felt apology, to giving them a gift, taking them out, doing a chore, if it's an adult or parent, etcetera, etcetera. For every act of remorse that you show to the same persons you've hurt, you're going to remove a nail, until you get to everyone of the five persons you've offended.

GEORGE

Then what do we do with the piece of wood, Mr. Flanagan?

JOHN

Put it away, George, and after the Thanksgiving break, you'll bring it in and you will all learn the purpose and meaning of this task.

ALEX

I don't know what the hell this is going to teach-

GINA

I, I think I know!

JOHN

I don't want you discussing it among yourselves! It's not a group task. It's only between you and the persons you've hurt. My ultimate goal is that by the end of the school year, you have all developed a moral compass that will teach you right from wrong. It's my hope that this task will open your hearts and minds, so you can all realize that your actions have permanent consequences! You all need to start caring for one another!

ALEX

Hey? Why should I care? No one cares about my feelings.

JOHN

I can't see that and this is why you behave the way that you do, Mr. Rodriguez. You are a victim who's become a victimizer.

ALEX

What ever.

JOHN

Any questions...? I'll give you five minutes to write it all down.

EXT. THE QUEENSBORO BRIDGE PROJECTS -- AFTERNOON

Jerome walks into his apartment building after school. SOME CHILDREN are playing and riding bikes in this Queens, New York City public housing complex known as The Projects.

INT. THOMAS APARTMENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Jerome Thomas, enters the small 2 bedroom apartment. He puts his backpack on the sofa, in the modestly decorated living room. The small kitchenette can be seen from the living room, where the teen notices a pile of dirty dishes in the sink.

He goes over to the stove. Pots and pans are empty. He stand's there depressed, helpless. He looks at his AIDS stricken, mother, asleep in her bedroom.

TAMIKA THOMAS (40s) black, thin, appears older.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- ANGEL'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Angel begins to write his essay, but his hand shakes, as fear over takes him.

CRISTINA (30s) Angel's mother, Puerto Rican, wears hardly no make up, still there's an attractive woman there.

CRISTINA  
Baby, dinner is ready.

ANGEL  
I'll be right out, ma.

CRISTINA  
Hey, how was your first day of class?  
Senior now!

ANGEL  
It was cool. But, I got a lot of  
work ahead of me.

CRISTINA  
(kissing him)  
Mm! I'm so proud of you! Just come  
to my room when you're ready to eat.

Cristina exits. Angel just sits there, pondering of what on what to write on his essay.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Alex, also lives in the same projects as Jerome. He enters the small living room, where he lives with his single parent mother.

MILLIE (30's) a sexy lady, speaks with a slight Spanish accent, bartender. She opens her bedroom door as Alex approaches it, where a MAN'S VOICE can be heard laughing.

MILLIE  
Oh! Hi, baby? You hungry?

ALEX  
Not really.

MILLIE  
There's arroz con gandules in the  
stove. Just warm it up and--

ALEX  
(upset)  
Forget about me! Why don't you get  
back to what you were doing..!

MILLIE  
Excuse me?

ALEX  
Oh, you're going to deny it?

MILLIE  
You listen me. I'm a grown woman  
who works hard and gives you  
everything that you--

ALEX  
Everything? Are sure, ma?

MILLIE  
Alejandro-!

ALEX  
Look, I got homework to do and you  
have a guest to take care of.

Alex enters his room.

MILLIE  
(in Spanish)  
Damn kid.

Millie goes back to her room.

ALEX'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

The small bedroom has posters of playboy center folds hanging  
on the walls as well as Yankee baseball players.

SEXUAL SOUNDS from his mother's bedroom can be heard. The  
19 year old, turns his stereo on, loud enough to flood out  
any noise coming from his mother's bedroom. He takes out  
the piece of wood, a nail and hammers it.

ALEX  
(resentful)  
This one is for the way I spoke to  
you, dear mother. Now, guest what,  
teach? I don't regret it.

He sits in bed brainstorming, with pad and pen, thinking of  
a title and topic for the essay Mr. Flanagan assigned the  
class.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
Title, title... Got it! Like mother,  
like son. By Alex Rodriguez.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John enters the 2 floor, 3 bedroom home.

ANTHONY (20s) handsome, tone body, defense attorney, enters  
from the kitchen holding an empty dish.

ANTHONY

Hey?

JOHN

Hi? What's for dinner?

ANTHONY

I bought Chinese. Vegetarian for you, of course.

JOHN

Thanks, Anthony. I'll be right down-

ANTHONY

Oh, before I forget. Mom, just called.

JOHN

Is everything okay?

ANTHONY

Yeah. She just wanted to say hi and of cause she remembered today was your first day back teaching and-

JOHN

I'll call her later. I'm just gonna change real quick.

ANTHONY

Okay. I'll set the table.

INT. THE THOMAS APARTMENT -- TANIKA'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Jerome is feeding his mother.

TAMIKA

Thank you, baby. You know you make a great nurse, J.T., I'm so sorry about the mess and the-

JEROME

It's okay, mama. I'll take care of it. All I want you to worry about it's you and your health... Here. Take your pills... Mama, why didn't you take them earlier?

TAMIKA

I, I, I forgot.

JEROME

(scared)

Mom, you can't forget about something this important. This medicine it's what's keeping you alive! Don't you know that AIDS kills..? It killed him.

TAMIKA

Of cause I know baby and I promise you, it wont happen again. Jerome, he was your father and-

JEROME

Come on eat up.

TAMIKA

J.T. I'm sorry that I got AIDS and I'm sorry that--

JEROME

Mama, you have nothing to be sorry for. It was that man's fault.

TAMIKA

That man was your father and he was always there for--

JEROME

No he wasn't! He wasn't here for us when he decided to fool around behind your back and bring that disease into our home, depriving us of his life and risking your life at the same time!

TAMIKA

J.T., please you need to forgive-

JEROME

(hurt, angry)

No! Never. He ruined our lives. You loved him so much and look what he did to you.

TAMIKA

I forgave him and so should you.

JEROME

(resentful)

Mom, I'm sorry. I can't.

TAMIKA

Baby, I know you're worried, but I want you to always remember this psalm from the bible. Psalm 46 says: "God is our refuge and our strength, an ever present help when we are in trouble." You got that baby?

After a short pause.

JEROME

Mom, are your doing okay? The medicine is helping you, right?

TAMIKA

Jerome, you are the best thing in my life. I'm very proud of you and you are going to achieve what ever it is that you want in life. Don't let nothing stop you and don't ever lose hope, or faith in yourself. Promise me that.

JEROME

I promise. I'm going to be doing my homework, you know where.

TAMIKA

The fire escape. Enjoy it, because you know soon the cold nights begin.

JEROME

Maybe later we can watch a movie together?

TAMIKA

What ever you want. I'm all yours, baby. Just come and wake me. Thank's for that delicious meal.

JEROME

I love you, mama.

TAMIKA

I...I love..you more...

He covers her. She takes his hand and kisses it, falling asleep. He looks at her for a few seconds.

KITCHENETTE

Jerome puts the trade in the sink, walks out to the fire escape and sits out there with pen and a legal pad. He sadly looks down at the street.

TWO DRUNK man are fighting and cursing at each other.

He looks towards his mothers bedroom and sees her asleep. Fear is written in the young 17 year teenager's face as he sees his whole world crumbling in front of him as his mothers life drifts away and there is nothing he can do except cry in silence. He begins to write the title of his essay: IN THE DARKNESS OF MY HELL.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Anthony is putting dishes in the dishwasher. John is on the phone.

JOHN

Everything is fine, mother... Just another first day of classes for me...They're all great kids deep inside, some have problems- How's dad..? Is he still up? Yeah, put him on.... Oh, he's watching the game...That, that's fine, mother. Look, I'm tired. I'll call you in the weekend. Your other son? Thank God for him. He's putting the dishes away- I, I will. Bye.

John hangs up and just stands there in silence.

ANTHONY

John...? Everything okay with dad?

JOHN

Dad...? The bastard doesn't deserve neither of us to call him dad. The son of a bitch, has no clue what being a real parent is all about.

INT. TEACHER'S LUNCH ROOM -- MORNING

John is seated eating a bagel with cream cheese and drinking tea. FRANK (25) a substitute teacher is serving himself a cup of coffee.

FRANK

How's Anthony doing, John?

JOHN

He's fine. Working hard in what he loves.

FRANK

I have doubt he's doing better than you and I. Or at least making 5 times what we make.

JOHN

Frank, you should've studied law, like Anthony, then you wouldn't have to complain.

FRANK

Me law? Please, John, I'm not that smart. By the way, I hear you got some real winners again this year.

JOHN

(annoyed)

What do you mean by real winners, Frankie?

FRANK

I was speaking ironically, John. What I mean is you have some real losers, some tough kids, like that Rodriguez kid you held back last year. I have him in my math class and I'm telling you he drives me-

Frank seats.

JOHN

Frank, first of all I don't believe in labels. You know that. These are all students to me. Second, I have great faith and hope in all of them, when many don't have it in themselves.

FRANK

John, you are too good for this school.

JOHN

This is what I choose to do and no matter how tough it gets, I'm not giving up on them. I care for all of them. They know it and deep inside I know that they're grateful.

(getting up)

Gotta go, but one more thing. Its because of teachers like me that I'm a teacher today.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

The class is already in progress.

JOHN

Everyone! Please pass forward your homework. I will start grading it while you continue reading the next chapter of "Catcher and the Rye"

ALEX

(whispering)

How many fucking times do I gotta read this stupid story?

JOHN

Did you say something, Mr.Rodriguez?

ALEX

Yeah, I was saying what a pleasure it is to read this book...all over again.

JOHN

Well it should be like the first time for you, considering that you failed all the test and assignments that I gave you last year on this story.

All the STUDENTS LAUGH.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Quiet! But, I can assure you that you will pass this class with straight A's this time around.

ALEX

(sarcastically)

I'm sure that I will. Especially on yesterdays assignment. It was very personal.

JOHN

(eye to eye with Alex)

You and everyone here should make every assignment very personal, Mr.Rodriguez. Your future depends on it.

ALEX

Our future? Man, you are dreaming.

JOHN

And what's wrong with dreaming...man?

ALEX

Read my essay and you'll see.

JOROME

Come on, Alex, cool it. We got work to do here.

JOHN

(still focus on Alex)

No, no, let him speak. I really want for all of you to take this first week, not only to express yourselves in writing, but also verbally.

(short pause)

I want to get to know you all better.

Reaction of contentment from Angel.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I don't want any one of you holding back anything out of fear or embarrassment.

Lisa, smiles as John looks at her briefly.

ALEX

Did you hear that, sissy boy?

JOHN

One more outburst of disrespect from you, Mr.Rodriguez and you'll be visiting the principals office.

MELANIE

I told you, all! He's gonna need a whole box of nails for the wood assignment.

JOHN

Okay, that's enough! Do I have all the essays?

LINDA

Angel, where is your essay?

ANGEL

It's okay.

JOHN

Begin reading!

CLOSE ON CLOCK above board. It's 10:30am.

John begins to read and grade some of the essays.

45 minutes later.

THE BELL RINGS.

JOHN (CONT'D)

For tomorrow, I want some volunteers to read your own essays out loud to the whole class! See you later in homeroom..! Mr.Diaz, I need to speak with you!

ALEX

Hey, no problem with me sharing. Everyone here knows my life.

GIRL

Yeah, what? That you are a sexy, papi chulo?

Melanie hears this and looks at Gina with a: "see, I told you so" look. Gina heads out.

ALEX

Hey, mami you know it. Gina, wait!

Alex chases after Gina. All students exit except Angel Diaz, who stayed at his seat. John approaches him, pulling up a chair in front of Angel.

JOHN

Mr. Diaz, why didn't you turn in your essay?

(silence)

Did you do it?

ANGEL

(barely audible)

Yes, I--I...

JOHN

Did you forget it at home?

ANGEL

No. I..I have it.

JOHN

I'm sorry, son. You said you have it?

(angel nods)

Then why didn't you turn it in?

Angel, you can trust me. What is it?

ANGEL

I--I really don't know how I dare to put on paper what happen to me, eleven years ago.

JOHN

(now John understands)

Well, maybe this is the best thing you've done. But, eleven years ago you were only..six, seven years old. What bad thing could have happened to you that you are so afraid--

ANGEL

(frighten)

I was never to say anything to anyone for the safety of my mother.

JOHN

Son, I'm not forcing you to reveal something you are not comfortable with. But, if you want to keep this confidential, I give my word that no one will know. Look, what ever it is, you need to leave it in the past where it belongs. None of us can change the passed, Angel. But, we can change our present in order to improve upon our future.

ANGEL

Do you promise not to tell my parents?

JOHN  
Angel, you were only seven and--

ANGEL  
Do you promise?

JOHN  
I-I promise.

ANGEL  
Here.

JOHN  
Thank you for your trust. Angel,  
what ever it is that's bothering  
you, talk it out with your parents,  
your family, your doctor. I will  
always be here for you, don't ever  
forget that. Okay?

ANGEL  
Thanks. I, I gotta go.

John reads the title of the essay.

JOHN  
(saddened)  
Oh, God.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

The PHONE on the end table of the sofa is RINGING. The  
answering machine comes on and Jose's voice comes on.

JOSE  
(v.o)  
Hi. You've reached the Diaz home.  
We are not in. At the tone leave us  
a brief message.

The front door opens and JOSE DIAZ (35) a cop and Angels father -  
walks in - in uniform. He decides not to pick up the  
receiver.

JOHN  
(v.o)  
Hello Mr. and Mrs.Diaz. My name is  
John Flanagan. I'm your son's Angel,  
English teacher. I need for one or  
both of you to come see me at the  
school at your earliest convenience.  
I need to talk to both of you about  
something that concerns your son.  
PLEASE come see me anytime between  
8:00am and 4:00 pm, Monday to Friday.  
Thank you.

JOSE  
(disgusted)  
Oh, please. Get a life, mister!

Jose presses the erase button and as he walks away, the  
MACHINES INNER VOICE: message erased.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Alex, is on top of Linda humping her to loud MUSIC. They  
both climax. Panting and screaming.

He gets up, puts on his briefs, lowers the music and lights  
up a joint.

LINDA  
Alex, you're sexy and hot, but you  
don't know how to make love.

ALEX  
Hey, bitch. What do you call what  
we just did?

LINDA  
Screwing. Don't you believe in love  
making, Alex?

ALEX  
(lighting the joint)  
How can I believe in something I've  
never learned or felt. Right now  
all I can say is that this..is my  
love.  
(takes a deep puff)  
You wanna know why?

LINDA  
Why?

ALEX  
Because it makes me feel so, so good.

His mood changes to serious, sad, angry.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
It takes away my pain, my anger, my  
rage.

LINDA  
What the hell are you talking about?

ALEX  
Forget it. You could never understand  
it. We live in two different worlds.

LINDA  
That's what you think.

ALEX

Here take a puff... I wanna fuck again.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

Its now Monday morning 2nd week of the senior year. Gina is in front of the class reading her essay out loud.

GINA

I love my parents very much, don't get me wrong. I just wish that at times they would be a bit open minded, so I could talk to them about my feelings, about dating boys my age and life in general. They want me to fear God and what God would do to me if I disobeyed them or if I do something that God might not approve of. But, the real truth is, that I fear them, my dad mostly, more than I fear God. It's a whole different world from theirs that I'm growing up in and my only wish is that they understand and embrace these changes. I--I know Jesus understands and loves me no matter what...

GIRL

I hear you, girlfriend. I know exactly what you're going through.

MELANIE

Give them time, Gina.

JOHN

Okay. Good job, Gina, and as you can all see, many of your classmates share your concerns and are going through many of the same issues with their parents.

GIRL 2

Oh, yes honey. I sure am.

TACHIA

Word!

GEORGE

Hey, Gina at least your parents stuck with you. They didn't walk away and left you, like my mother did to my little brother and me.

LISA

Also remember that God is the only one who knows our hearts.

GINA

Thanks, Lisa.

JOHN

Good guys. Who wants to go up next?

ALEX

I'll go. Hey, I got no fears.

MELANIE

Oh, I know that.

JOHN

Okay, Mr. Rodriguez. You're on.

LISA

(to Angel and Melanie)

Oh, boy. I can only imagine what he wrote about.

MELANIE

Sex. What else.

JOHN

Silence please! Lets all give our full attention and respect to Mr. Rodriguez.

ALEX

Title: Like mother, Like son. My mother keeps telling me that the older I get, the more I look like my-- my bastard of a father. I can't say notin' about that for I never met the man. He left my mom before I was born.

Alex now stops reading from his essay and starts speaking his mind. His inner rage takes over him.

ALEX (CONT'D)

This days... I'm more and more like my sex, addicted mother. Yes, for when it comes to sex--she's never satisfied and neither am--

JOHN

(upset)

Mr.Rodriguez--

ALEX

(ignoring John)

--I. I come home in the afternoons and where is my dear mother? In bed with--

John and Alex overlap each other in crescendo

JOHN  
Alex, I'm warning you!

ALEX  
--a different man--

TACHIA (17) black, kind and caring.

TACHIA  
Mr.Flanagan, we don't need to hear  
this crap!

ALEX  
(enraged)  
Yes! You all need to hear it--!

JOHN  
(screams)  
Hey!

ALEX  
'Cause is my truth. My life!

JEROME  
Alex bro, please!

LISA  
Yo' man. How can you say such things  
about your own mother?

ALEX  
Why, Lisa? What about your mother?

LISA  
Look, maricon don't you talk--

ALEX  
Me? A *maricon*? You must be talking  
about your buddy Angel. The other  
dike in this class!

JOHN  
Mr.Rodriguez-!

LISA  
(grabbing him)  
You mother fucker! Take it back!  
Take it-!

ALEX  
Get off me you, lesbo!

JOHN  
(grabbing alex)  
Stop it! Lisa, please sit down!  
(to Alex)  
You, outside! I said outside! The  
rest of you copy your homework!

Alex doesn't move. He just stares at his teacher with the most profound hate. They lock eyes for a moment. John grabs him.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Come on! Move it! Outside! Out!

They both leave struggling with each other. The whole class is shocked by all that has happened.

Melanie exchanges looks with GINA, who lowers her head.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

JOHN

What is wrong with you? What the hell were you thinking?

ALEX

I was just telling the truth!

JOHN

Whose truth? Yours? Let me tell you something son, you know nothing about Lisa and Angel. You were just being hurtful, mean and rude!

ALEX

Come on! She's a dike and he's a fag! You know it and everyone--

JOHN

(grabbing him)

I'm going to say it for the last time! I want you-- No! I order you to respect everyone in here!

ALEX

Get off me, man!

JOHN

Not until you listen to me for once in your life...!

Short pause. John, releases Alex.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Who do you think you are expressing yourself about your mother the way that you did in there? Didn't you learn anything from Gina's essay? She spoke about her parent's, but not in the way that you-

ALEX

(voice breaking)

I spoke my truth!

(MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

Whether anyone liked it or not. I got nothing to hide! Do you...?

Brief Pause.

JOHN

This is not about me. It was wrong. No one liked it. There are many ways to say things, especially in a public forum and yours is not acceptable!

(caring)

Alex, I want you to read the essay as you originally wrote it, which I approved and gave you a B grade. Or else, you need to rewrite it. But, rewrite it from your heart, not your head. Look, its time that you start to focus on your future and--

ALEX

(bitter)

I have no future.

JOHN

Yes you do. Every student here has a future and the positive outcome of that future begins right here with an education and hard work, on your behalf as well as mine. I'm doing my share. I need you to do yours, damn it!

Alex looks at his teacher moved.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I'm not giving up on any of you until you walk out of here with a diploma! And--and even more important than that, until you all develop a sense of self-worth...! Let's go back inside and I want you to apologize to everyone, specially to Lisa and Angel. When you get home I hope you know what you need to do to your piece of wood. If, if you're truly sorry you can put two nails in it and then remove them.

Alex lowers his head. They enter the classroom.

CLASSROOM

JOHN

Listen up everyone! Mr. Rodriguez, has something to say to all of you. Specially to you Lisa and Angel...

ALEX  
 (head down)  
 I...I'm sorry... Lisa. Angel.

ON LISA and ANGEL, they don't look at Alex.

JOHN  
 Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez. You may  
 take your seat.

GINA smiles at Alex proudly as he passes her.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 It's obvious that many of you have a  
 great deal of hostility, rage, anger  
 locked inside of you. You've not  
 only displayed it in here, but in  
 many of your essays.  
 (pause)  
 This is bad and good. Because I  
 strongly believe that our problems  
 serve as a test to our character.  
 It tells us where we are weak.  
 However, you all need to find strength  
 in your weaknesses..! Another good  
 thing about all these, is that many  
 of you, whether you like it or not,  
 have that in common. I said I prove  
 you wrong, Mr.Rodriguez and I have.

JEROME  
 That's easy for you to say, sir.  
 You don't come from where we come  
 from or live the lives that--

JOHN  
 I don't want to hear that. You need  
 to stop dwelling about where you are  
 now and start envisioning where you  
 are going from here on! Your troubles  
 can't compare to those of others who  
 came before us and I'll prove it to  
 you right now! Here it is, your  
 next reading assignment!

John, lifts up a small book titled: The Narratives of  
 Frederick Douglass.

JOHN (CONT'D)  
 Frederick Douglass, was a man who  
 bid all the odds in a time where all  
 the odds were against him. In the  
 age of slavery, he had no voice, no  
 Negro ever did. This is his harrowing  
 story, narrated by him..! Have..have  
 any of you heard of Frederick  
 Douglass, before today..?

Silence.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I didn't think so. I bet you all know who Tupak or B.I.G was. Or who 50 cent, Jay Z and Eminem are.

(they all node)

Of cause you do! Well, let me tell you, none of these...what should I call them?

ALEX

(sarcastic)

Rap-artist comes to mind.

JOHN

Rappers! How could I be so naive? Not one of those, have gone through what Mr. Douglass went through or will ever achieved what he did against all odds. Many of you need to start rethinking who your real heroes are and more importantly, who they were. For they crated change that open doors to all of us.

Bell rings.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Please pick up your copies on your way out! Good work!

TACHIA

Yeah, Alex. Thank you!

ALEX

Anytime, sweetie.

TACHIA

J.T, I don't know how you could be his friend.

JEROME

We're brothers and we a lot in common.

TACHIA

I don't see it. Bye.

JOHN

Mr.Rodriguez! You are to rewrite your essay by years end and maybe you will get an A on your rewrite!

ALEX

Sure. Come on J.T. We got practice.

JEROME

Give me a minute.

Lisa goes over to Angel and whispers on his ear.

LISA

Don't believe Alex's forgiveness.  
Be very careful with him and his  
girl Linda.

(in Spanish)

Take care, papa. If you need to talk,  
call me. Here is my cell.

She leaves him a note.

ANGEL

(confused)

Th--Thanks.

LINDA

Bye, Lisa! Angel, movies this  
Saturday?

ANGEL

Yeah, sure.

LINDA

I'll call you Friday with the details.  
Bye!

JEROME

(to John)

Mr. F. I'm sorry if I was rude I  
just--

JOHN

You were not rude, son. I read your  
essay and I can only imagine what  
you're going through. But, please,  
don't give up on yourself and if  
there's anything I can do for you,  
don't hesitate in asking.

JEROME

(moved)

Thank, you sir.

Angel slowly approaches John.

ANGEL

Sir? You have a moment?

JOHN

Sure, Angel. By the way. I gave  
you an A. You are a very good writer.  
You know that?

ANGEL  
That's what I hope to become.

JOHN  
Great.

ANGEL  
(chuckles)  
Too bad I can't share this A with my  
parents.

JOHN  
Angel, I'm truly sorry. Believe me,  
I, I know exactly how you feel.

ANGEL  
(confused)  
You do...? I--I don't think so.

JOHN  
The worst part of that experience,  
has been keeping it locked inside of  
you all this years. That's why I  
think it was good that you put it  
all down on paper. But son, I-I  
think, you need to see a professional.

ANGEL  
I fear the memory of that day will  
never go away. Not until that men...

JOHN  
That man is your uncle. He needs to  
be put out away and he will if you  
speak.

ANGEL  
I wish he was dead. I feel so guilty  
about every--

JOHN  
You need to stop feeling guilty. It  
was not you fault.

ANGEL  
Then why did he have me do those  
things? Why me?

JOHN  
You were an easy pray.

ANGEL  
(with great difficulty)  
Yeah, but..I...I didn't run away or  
asked him to stop... I think that--  
that I enjoyed it. Oh, God!

Fear and panic overtake him.

JOHN

No, no, no. Don't you think that! He touched you in a very sensitive private part and your body just reacted normally. But, that, that doesn't make it right.

ANGEL

But, now I'm going on 18 and I have these feelings, thoughts and doubts about my- I don't know if I'm a Homo or--

JOHN

Angel, listen to me. If you are gay or not has nothing to do with what that animal did to you.

ANGEL

I still remember when I was six years old, my dad slapping me across the face and telling me: "you better start acting like a man and not like that little faggot friend of yours" That friend was a neighbor, my own age who acted feminine. I think my uncle saw something on me that I didn't even realize and he--

JOHN

My God, Angel. How much hurt have those who are suppose to protect you inflicted on you. That man should be in jail and you need to accept yourself no matter what you are.

ANGEL

(agitated)

No, no. Never! Never!

JOHN

Son, you are only seventeen. Give it time. Please, have your parents call me, so-

ANGEL

(frighten)

No! No, please! You promised!

JOHN

Calm down, son. Let me finish. I can speak with them in general terms as a concerned teacher without telling them what you feel or what happened to you.

ANGEL

(in great fear)

You, you, you don't know my father. He's a policeman, but he's even a worst cop at home. I don't want my mother to get hurt! I prefer to die before she finds out any of this!

JOHN

Angel, don't say that. My God, that man really scared you!

ANGEL

"Your mom must never know" he said. "She will kill me and go to jail for a long time" He's right. I know she'll do it if I confess.

ANGEL breaks down in tears. Short pause.

JOHN

Please let me help you. Son, I--I know what you're going through-

ANGEL

(grateful)

You--you have already helped me a lot by listening. Let's not talk about this ever again. Please.

JOHN

Very well. Just know, that I'm here for you. Okay?

Angel smiles.

ANGEL

I'll be all right. Thanks for the A.

JOHN

You earned it. Keep writing.

JOHN just sits, worried, scared for his student.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- DINNING ROOM -EVENING

It's Saturday evening. Cristina is serving dinner. Angel, is all dressed up and ready to go out with Linda.

CRISTINA

You want more rice, mi hijo?

ANGEL

No, mom thanks. I'm stuffed.

JOSE  
Hey, son. You gotta eat. You looking  
kind a slim lately.

ANGEL  
I'm fine, dad.

JOSE  
You don't look it. Tell me what is  
it? Is it, Manny?

ANGEL  
Manny? Who's Manny?

JOSE  
(gesturing masturbating)  
La mano? Hand job?

ANGEL  
Dad..! Jesus.

JOSE  
You are almost eighteen. Any girls?

ANGEL  
That's not any of your business!

JOSE  
(slaps Angel)  
You watch how you talk to me!

CRISTINA  
What the hell is wrong with you?

JOSE  
Pendejo!

CRISTINA  
Baby, are you alright?

JOSE  
Stop calling him baby, damn it!  
He's a man! Stop treating him like  
a little girl.

ANGEL  
I gotta go, ma. Linda is waiting.

CRISTINA  
(in Spanish)  
God bless you. Be careful. Bye.

JOSE  
Well, at least he's finally dating.  
I was beginning to worry.

CRISTINA  
Worry about what?

JOSE  
 (sarcastic and cold)  
 You know very well. About whether  
 he is a maricon or not!

CRISTINA  
 Oh, Jesus! I can't believe you would--

JOSE  
 Oh, come on Cristina! Don't tell me  
 you haven't thought about it?

CRISTINA  
 No, I haven't.

JOSE  
 Well I have... That's the last thing  
 I need. A fag for a son.

She exits the room angry.

EXT. THE VILLAGE PIER PARK -- NIGHT

Angel is walking alone. He witnesses OTHER GAYS his own age  
 walking, holding hands and kissing without shame as if all  
 this was normal to them but never to Angel.

TWO cute GAY TEENAGERS cross Angels path and one of them  
 flirts to him.

GAY TEEN  
 Hi, cutie pie.

Angel timidly keeps walking. He stops and turns around, not  
 sure if they meant him.

GAY TEEN (CONT'D)  
 Yes, baby. I was talking to you,  
 angel face. Bye!

Angel, smiles, then fear over takes him. He runs to the  
 nearest subway station.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- NIGHT

Alex is in bed watching a porn dvd and touching himself.  
 His smart-phone rings.

ALEX  
 What's up, bitch? How did your date  
 with sissy boy go?

LINDA (V.O.)  
 The little creep didn't show up!

ALEX  
 What did you expect?  
 (MORE)

ALEX (CONT'D)

The kid has pussy phobia. Now, if you had a big dick--

LINDA (V.O.)

You're such pig..! I'm telling you, Alex. I'm not giving up on him. I will make him come out of his little closet even if I have to use Raid on him!

She hangs up. He chuckles.

As he is about to start masturbating, the DOOR BELL RINGS.

ALEX

Crap! Who the hell?

He gets up, only wearing underwear.

LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He opens the door angry. His face lights up when he finds Gina standing there.

ALEX

Gina... Shit, what a surprise!

GINA

(blushing)

I, I, I'm sorry...maybe this is not the right time.

ALEX

No! Please this--this is a great!

GINA

You're naked!

ALEX

Gina, it's just flesh. Besides, I ain't naked. Wow, you're really here!

(takes her hand)

Come, come, come in.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John is seated in an EZ chair in his pajamas, having a drink, in the dark.

Anthony enters from the street and turns the light on.

ANTHONY

Hey.

JOHN

Hey.

ANTHONY

What--what's going on? Why are you here in the dark and drinking?

JOHN

I needed it. How was work?

ANTHONY

Busy, preparing a case for- Don't change the subject, John. What's going on with you?

JOHN

Problems with kids and-

ANTHONY

John, your their teacher. You are not their parent.

JOHN

Many of them don't have a father and those that do, have intolerant, ignorant fathers like...

ANTHONY

Like, Dr. John Flanagan senior? You can't fix the world, John. No can we change the way our parents think. Two different worlds, theirs and ours, Johnny.

JOHN

But, I can give those kids hope, understanding, show them that someone cares, regardless of-

ANTHONY

Come on, give me that glass and lets go watch one of those old classic movies you love so much, that always put me to sleep.

JOHN

Fuck you.

ANTHONY

(chuckles)

Okay. I deserve that. Come..hold on to me.

JOHN

Hey...? Thanks.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Angel enters and sits in the dark. He closes his eyes and recalls his UNCLE ANTONIO'S voice, speaking to him the day he molested him at age seven.

ANTONIO (V.O.)

(in Spanish)

Don't be afraid, little Angel. Give me your hand... Come on, baby. Its-- its okay.

ANGEL

(shaking his head)

Ha! Oh..

Angel rushes into bedroom.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Alex and Gina are in the sofa drinking wine and eating potato chips and dip. They are both a bit drunk.

GINA

Good wine. What am I saying? I never had wine before.

ALEX

Now you know what you've been missing. Hey, tonight I don't want you to be afraid of anything.

GINA

Are you sure your mother is not coming back soon?

ALEX

There you go again. Gina, she don't care about me.

GINA

Jesus, I find that hard to believe.

ALEX

We hardly see each other.

GINA

Alex, do you hate your mom?

Short Pause.

ALEX

I..I hate what she's become. But who am I to judge? I'm just like her. I don't think I know how to really love someone.

She looks at him a bit shocked and sadden at the same time.

GINA

I can teach you, if you let me.

ALEX

I, I, I don't...

GINA  
Have you..been hurt by love?

ALEX  
Can we just enjoy this moment before  
it passes us by. We don't know if  
we'll be here tomorrow.

GINA  
You're right. The Bible says: why  
worry about tomorrow when we have  
enough to worry about today.

ALEX  
Never read that book, but its nice  
to hear that someone more important  
than me, agrees with an idiot like  
me.

GINA  
His name is Jesus and He died for  
all of us.

Alex smiles happily for a moment and they just sit, looking  
at each other.

ALEX  
You say the most beautiful things.

He starts caressing her face and hear.

ALEX (CONT'D)  
I was feeling real lonely tonight,  
you know, being the weekend and all?

GINA  
I was too.

He begins to kiss her cheeks and then her lips.

She lets him at first, but then gets up, rushes to the door  
with her back to him. He gets up behind her. She trembles  
as she feels his hard, warm, naked torso, pressed against  
her.

ALEX  
You are shaking. Are you okay?

GINA  
(turns to him)  
I'll be fine.

He starts kissing her lips softly and this time she lets  
him. He stops and looks into her eyes.

BRIEF PAUSE.

ALEX

Just tell me when you want me to stop.

She takes his hand and starts walking him towards the bedrooms but stops, unsure which one is his. He takes her hand and walks her into his bedroom.

ALEX'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He puts on music and starts undressing her as he gently kisses her.

Through the window we can the night is clear with a full moon shining, filtering into the two lovers in bed. The digital clock in the night stand shows 10:01 pm.

ALEX'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Alex in front of his bedroom window smoking. Gina is getting dressed in the dark background. She walks over and wraps her arms around him from behind.

GINA

A penny for your thought.

ALEX

I didn't think...that you...

GINA

That I was a virgin?

ALEX

Well...yeah.

GINA

You seemed...shocked.

ALEX

Fuck yeah. I didn't think that...

GINA

(smiling)

You didn't think there were any virgin girls left in New York?

ALEX

Well, yeah.

GINA

How does that make you feel?

ALEX

I don't know.

GINA

I would think you would be proud.

ALEX  
Never been proud of anything.

GINA  
(kissing his shoulder)  
Mm... I hope I can change that.

He turns to her, smiles happily and proud. He holds her against his bare, big, chest, taking a deep breath, taking in her aroma of lost innocence.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

It's Monday morning of the same month of September. John has assigned many of his students to read out loud passages from "The Narratives of Frederick Douglass".

Students dialogue is overlap by other students picking up where the previous student left off in the passages.

JEROME  
(reading)  
Douglass, was born into bondage and sold repeatedly in slave markets of the south-

GINA  
..south because he secretly taught him-

ALEX  
..self to read and write, a crime...punishable by death...

Short pause as this last statement causes them shock.

LISA  
This is one of the most eloquent indictments of slavery ever recorded..

TACHIA  
Douglass writes: "I have no accurate knowledge of my age, never having seen my authentic record containing it-

JEROME  
..by far the larger part of the slaves know as little of their ages as... horses...as horses know theirs-

GEORGE  
..and it is the wish of most masters within my knowledge to keep their slaves thus ignorant.

SEQUENCE is over as John begins lecturing.

JOHN

"It was the wish of most masters to keep their slaves ignorant."  
Ignorant! That was just another way of enslaving blacks. But, as you will see later on, Mr. Douglass taught himself secretly to read and write. He knew that knowledge would be his only road to freedom and he would pursue an education even if it cost him his life.! Without knowledge he had no voice, he was invisible. He rather die trying, than giving up! And you all thought you have it so bad...?

SOME of the STUDENTS lower their heads in shame, not grateful for all that they have here in America at the present time.

BELL RINGS.

JOHN (CONT'D)

We will continue on this tomorrow as you read on. Good job everyone!

All STUDENTS walk out.

Alex, puts his arm around Gina as they walk out together.

Linda and Melanie, notice this and are not happy.

INT. BOYS GYM LOCKER ROOM -- DAY

Angel is getting dressed after gym class and as he ties his shoes, GREG (17) Blonde, tall, build, walks in, from the showers totally naked. Just a few feet from Angel, Greg starts getting dressed in front of his locker.

His POV: Angel, checks out the young man's, muscular body from top to bottom.

Alex who's also getting dressed on the other side of Angel, notices what he is doing and quietly he approaches Angel from behind. He whispers into his ear.

ALEX

You like that big dick, sissy boy?

Angel runs away.

ALEX (CONT'D)

Faggot!

(to Greg)

Greg? Did you see him, man?

GREG

Who?

ALEX  
That fag! Sissy boy, Angel Diaz?  
He was checking you out, bro!

GREG  
Is he cute?

ALEX  
What?

GREG  
Cause I'll fuck him, if he's cute.

Alex looks at Greg in disgust shocked.

ALEX  
What..? You're fucking with me,  
right?

GREG  
Hey, man. What's the problem a hole  
is hole... Why are you looking at  
me like that?

ALEX  
Come on, Greg. The guy is a fag!  
He's a disgrace to my race and to  
all real men!

GREG  
(grabbing Alex)  
Listen man! I don't know about you,  
but I'm sure of who and what I am.  
So, stop being such a homophobic  
bastard and leave that poor kid alone.  
Yeah, I saw him. So what? He's got  
enough shit to deal with to have  
bullies like you picking on him!

ALEX  
What the fuck, bro!

GREG  
(poking Alex)  
Why--don't you--pick on someone your  
own--fucking size and let him be?

ALEX  
Okay, man! It's cool.

Alex backs away shaking his head. Greg's eyes remain fixed on him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- MOMENTS LATER

Angel is putting away some books into his locker. Linda approaches him.

LINDA  
Angel..? What happened Saturday?

ANGEL  
I'm sorry. I, I wasn't feeling well.

LINDA  
I see.. Hey, in three weeks it's my birthday and I'm having a small party at my house. I would love for you to come. My house is on 30th Avenue, in Astoria. So--

ANGEL  
I'm in Astoria too. So, cool.

LINDA  
Now, are you sure you're coming?

ANGEL  
Yeah, I'll be there.

LINDA  
Great! I'll give you all the details next week.

ANGEL  
Okay, okay. Bye.

Angel runs when he notices Alex approaching..

ALEX  
What did the queer tell you about Saturday?

LINDA  
That he got sick.

ALEX  
Yeah, right.

LINDA  
(devilishly)  
But, I have another plan. A private party at my house with a surprising guest.

ALEX  
Uh. Can I come?

LINDA  
Are you crazy? He'll run away if he sees you there!

ALEX  
Guess what just happened?

LINDA

What?

ALEX

I caught him in the locker room checking out Greg from the wrestling team and of course the little fag rushed out as soon as I approached him. Then, Greg goes off on me. He said that he'll fuck him if he's cute.

LINDA

Alex, now days no one is as homophobic as you are. I've had sex with other girls and I'm not a lesbian.

ALEX

You have? Bitch, why haven't you ever invited me for a threesome?

LINDA

Oh, so its okay for you to participate when its two girls? But never two guys and a girl?

ALEX

Hey, as long as the other guy is not queer. That's just fine by me.

LINDA

You are such a New York Rican, machista. Anyway, I really want to out Angel once and for all. In the long run, he's gonna thank me.

ALEX

I hate him. Him and Lisa have put us latinos in shame.

LINDA

Alex, you sure you're not gay?

ALEX

Fuck you!

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT -- EVENING

Jerome enters his apartment. We follow him into his mother's bedroom.

TAMIKA'S BEDROOM

JEROME

Mama... Mom?

He stops talking when he notices something is not right with his mother.

CLOSE on TAMIKA

She is in bed with her eyes wide open. Pupils dilated. She is holding a picture frame of Jerome with herself and his father.

Jerome scared, slowly approaches her. Finally realizing that his mother is dead after touching her arm. There's a letter right next to her.

JOROME

(CRYING)

Mama...ma...oh, mom... Mama..  
Mama...

He pick up the letter. Seats next to her still, serene body.

He hears and sees his mother as he reads.

TAMIKA

My dearest son, Jerome: you are the best thing that happened to me. I don't think I be here, physically, by the time you come home. In a way I'm glad because I don't wanna see you suffer anymore for me... I just want you to keep studying hard. I want you to go to the best college of your choice. I've left you enough money in my Life insurance just for that. Your aunt Ruthy and your uncle will take care of everything. Please love and respect them both. Son, a mother's life lives on through the hearts of her children and right now I'm inside of you in your beautiful, wonderful, big heart, forever until we meet again...

Jerome begins sobbing. He continues reading.

TAMIKA (CONT'D)

Baby, please be strong. Your mama needs to rest now and go home to be with our Lord. Jerome, I beg you to please seek the Lord.. Accept Christ as your personal savior and everything in your life will be all right...  
Love you always, your mother, Tamika.

He picks up the picture frame and sees that is of him with his mother when he was six. He looks at his father's PICTURE and caresses it.

Sobbing like a little, frightened child, he lies down next to his mother in a fetal position.

JEROME

Mama... Oh, mama. Mama! Oh, oh,  
oh!

Seconds later Alex stands by the door.

ALEX

JT? Bro, I..I came to see if...

Jerome gets up crying. Alex puts his arms around him.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- DAY

Gina, George, Angel, Lisa, Linda are seated. Alex walks and Melanie, right behind. Alex goes straight to Gina.

ALEX

Hey, baby. You wanna go out this weekend?

GINA

Sure. You owe me a movie, remember?

ALEX

I owe you much more.  
(he kisses her)  
We'll talk at lunch time.

MELANIE

Gina, can we talk for a moment?

ALEX

(sarcastic)  
Hi, Mel?

MELANIE

Gina, please.

GINA

(to Alex)  
Later.

As Alex passes Angel, he whispers into his ear.

ALEX

I always knew you liked dick. But now I'm sure.

Angel stares at him with hatred. Lisa who overheard-

LISA

Why don't leave him alone?

ALEX  
Wow! Congratulations, sissy boy.  
You got yourself a body guard.

GINA  
Alex! Please, don't do that.

LISA  
Damn, bully.

Alex sits.

MELANIE  
(to Gina)  
See what I mean? Did you do it?

GINA  
Melanie, please.

MELANIE  
Do you have any idea what you've  
gotten yourself into?

GINA  
I'm living for the first time in my  
life without any fear.

MELANIE  
Fear is a good thing when it comes  
to girls like you.

GINA  
What do you mean?

MELANIE  
I mean that fear protects good girls  
like you from serpents like him!

John walks in. Melanie decides to ignore her best friend.

JOHN  
Good morning everyone! Please take  
your seats and do the assignment on  
the board as I take attendance...  
Has anyone seen Jerome Thomas,  
today..? Alex, you two are friends.  
Do you know if he's sick?

ALEX  
We also live in the same building.  
Well, his mother... she, she died  
yesterday.

JOHN  
Oh. I'm sorry to hear that.

TACHIA  
Poor, J.T.

JOHN  
Is he alone? Or--?

ALEX  
His aunt flew in from Georgia late last night. His mother's pastor came over until his family...

JOHN  
Thank you, Mr. Rodriguez. I'll get a card, and after lunch you can all sign it and I'll send flowers from all of us.

TACHIA  
Thank you, Mr. Flanagan. That's might nice of you.

JOHN  
I'll check up on him tonight, Tachia. You should go visit him as well.

TACHIA  
I will.

Gina raises her hand.

JOHN  
Yes, Miss Cavelli.

GINA  
Mr. Flanagan, can we have a moment of silence to pray for Jerome? If no one objects?

JOHN  
Any objections...? Lets all vow our heads.

ALL students lower their heads.

Alex, stares at John a bit moved.

INT. THOMAS'S APARTMENT -- JEROME'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Jerome in his bed with his hands behind his head staring up. The door opens.

JOHN  
J.T., son?

JEROME  
(surprised, but content)  
Mr. Flanagan! What, what are you doing here?

JOHN

Your aunt let me in. I wanted to come and give you my condolences in person... Son, I'm so sorry for your lost.

JEROME

Thank you, sir.

John takes out an envelope with a card inside.

JOHN

The whole class send you this card.

JEROME

Which you purchased, I'm sure.

JOHN

They all prayed for you at Gina's request. So, I think little by little I'm reaching my goal and hearts and minds are being changed. Son, how are you holding up?

JEROME

I don't know... It's strange but, I feel relieved for her. The last year she, even though she kept quiet, she had been suffering a lot. But...she was holding on for me, you know?

JOHN

You've been a great son and a good care giver. You should be proud.

JEROME

She was good to me. She made mistakes but, she was always there for me. I just wish I could have had her a bit longer... Mr.Flanagan, I have to leave New York. I don't want to but...

JOHN

Your aunt just told me. You're going to be fine. Please, keep studying hard and go to college.

JEROME

I will...  
(moved)

I will never forget you sir. You have taught me so much in so little time. You are a great teacher and an even greater human being.

They look at each other for a moment and then Jerome hugs his good teacher tight.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) John get's in his car looks up and sees Jerome in window.

B) LaGuardia Airport runway. A Delta flight is taking off.

C) Delta plane. Jerome, sadly looks out the window at the New York skyline.

INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- LIVING ROOM -NIGHT

Lights are dimmed. He puts a Cd on. SONG: "You Sang to Me" by MARC ANTHONY begins playing.

Alex starts dancing with Gina. He tries to kiss Gina passionately and aggressively as he is use to, but she stops him. He tries again and Gina pushes him back taking control of his impulses.

She finally takes his hand and starts kissing it softly. He doesn't know what to make of all this but, is enjoying it.

He tries to speak and she covers his mouth. Like the song says: "I didn't see it. I couldn't feel it."

Gina, removes his shirt and starts kissing his chest.

He's confused, yet wildly turned on now. He starts panting and realizes for the first time in his life, the girl is in control and he likes it.

She works her way down to his navel then up to his biceps, kissing them softly.

This just kills him,. He can't control himself and makes a loud sound of pleasure.

ALEX  
(almost crying)  
OH!

GINA  
This is love...love making. Not  
sex... Now, you know the difference.

ALEX  
(out of breath)  
No shit!

Gina smiles.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE -- NIGHT

Angel, ringing the bell and holding a small box, gift wrapped.

LINDA  
Hi! You made it!

ANGEL  
Happy birthday. Here.

LINDA  
(kissing him)  
Oh, thank you. You shouldn't have.  
Come in. No one is here yet.  
(closing the door  
devilishly)  
But, it's still early.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- NIGHT

ANGEL'S BEDROOM

Jose, enters his son's bedroom. He walks around looking at the posters in the walls. He seems content at the one of Cristina Aguilera and Jennifer Lopez. Smiles when he sees Cher.

He then goes over to the desk and picks up the piece of wood with 2 nails and 1 hole without the nail.

JOSE  
What the fuck is this suppose to be?

He picks up the book of Frederick Douglass, reading the back cover.

JOSE (CONT'D)  
(sarcastic)  
Another shitty slave story. Like we need it.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

She is serving a glass of fruit punch with her back turn to Angel. She open's a tiny bottle of vodka and pours it all into the glass she then brings over to Angel.

LINDA  
Here.

ANGEL  
Oh, no. Thanks but, I've already had three cups of that punch and...I'm feeling a bit--

LINDA  
Don't be silly this hardly has any alcohol.

ANGEL  
My head is telling me differently.

LINDA

What you need to do is eat. Have a snack. Come on don't be a party pup. Drink the punch...

(looks at her watch)

I don't understand. I invited at least 10 more people.

ANGEL

Did you invite...Alex?

LINDA

Are you crazy? We don't speak anymore. He's with Gina now.

ANGEL

Where are your parents?

LINDA

They're away for the weekend. I'd rather celebrate without them. They can be a pain, you know.

DOORBELL

LINDA (CONT'D)

Oh, great! More company. Please, drink it. Its my birthday!

She opens the door to TOMMY (20s) handsome, loud, queer. He's holding a small box, gift wrapped.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Oh, Tommy!

Whispering in his ear as they hug.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Bitch, remember its my birthday.

TOMMY

(loud)

Happy birthday, baby! Here is your gift!

(whispers)

...open it later, ho. Its just an empty box. I already gave you a birthday gift 4 months ago, remember?

LINDA

(smiling)

Thanks, Tommy! Come in, darling! I want you to meet Angel.

She holds Tommy by the hand and sits him in the sofa next to Angel who's very much drunk by now.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Angel, this is Tommy.

Angel is immediately mesmerized by the young man's beauty.

TOMMY

(perky)

Hi! Tommy. Nice to meet you!

ANGEL

Hi. Angel Diaz.

They shake hands. Angel doesn't realized he is holding him a bit too long.

TOMMY

I think you two have been celebrating a bit too early, honey.

Angel realizes he is still holding his hand.

ANGEL

I, I'm, I'm sorry.

TOMMY

Its okay. Too much punch?

ANGEL

(chuckling)

Yeah! I think so.

Linda is happy her plan is working. She smiles.

LINDA

Punch Tommy?

The two guys are locked at each others eyes.

LINDA (CONT'D)

Hello! Any punch, sweetie?

TOMMY

(without looking at her)

Yeah, sure...

She walks away. Smiles with devilish delight.

INT. JOHNS HOME -- DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

John is grading some papers. Anthony, elegantly dressed-

ANTHONY

You sure you don't wanna come? Tracy and the gang are gonna be there.

JOHN

Sorry, I got a ton of papers to grade.  
Please, say hi to everyone for me.

ANTHONY

Are you still upset about that phone  
call with mom and-?

JOHN

I'm fine. It's nothing new with  
him, his indifference. He never  
wanted me to be a teacher. To  
degrading among other things. Have  
a good time and please don't drink  
and drive.

ANTHONY

I'm not taking the car, I called Ub-

SMARTPHONE BEEPS.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

Uber. Right on time. Bye.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- ANGEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Cristina walks in and finds Jose seated in Angel's desk, in  
total darkness.

CRISTINA

What's going on?

JOSE

Nothing. I was just...here, thinking.

CRISTINA

Snooping is more like it.

JOSE

Snooping? This is my house. This  
is my son's room. I'm concerned  
aren't you?

CRISTINA

I have nothing to be concern about.  
Angel is the best son any mother  
could ask for.

JOSE

(sarcastic)

Too good. Don't you think?

CRISTINA

What is that suppose to mean?

JOSE

You know our saying in Spanish:  
 "there's no worst blind, than that  
 one whom doesn't want to see..."  
 Serve me dinner. I'm hungry.

Jose walks out leaving his wife worried.

INT. LINDA'S HOUSE -- LATER

Linda and Tommy are dancing.

Angel is seated, still feeling a bit dizzy from the alcohol,  
 but feeling happy and uninhibited.

LINDA

Come on, Angel. I love this song!  
 Dance with me!

TOMMY

(sitting down)  
 Oh, yes please man. I need a break.

ANGEL

I don't know if I can...my, my head  
 is spinning.

LINDA

So, what. Just let yourself go!  
 Tommy, help him up.

Linda and Tommy grab Angel and get him dancing. She starts  
 dancing sexually around and getting closer to him.

Angel starts dancing clumsy at first. Soon he gets into the  
 music.

LINDA (CONT'D)

There you go! Oh, I love this song!  
 Don't you? Come on, Tommy! Join  
 us!

Tommy gets up and Linda gestures for him, to get behind Angel.  
 Tommy does it very discreetly at first.

Angel is now into the music with his eyes closed holding  
 Linda's hands.

Tommy and Linda have him sandwiched in. But in an instant  
 Angel feels Tommy's penis, rubbing close to his ass and it  
 triggers him to recall the abuse.

QUICK FLASHES -- INT. UNCLE'S ROOM -- DAY.

--Antonio is standing behind a 7 old Angel and is pressing  
 his penis against the child's head.

--Antonio licks angels in the ear.

BACK TO SCENE

Angel reacts in panic and shame, rage take over him. He pushes Linda and Tommy away from him, looks at them hurt and disgusted He rushes out.

TOMMY rushes after him.

EXT. LINDA'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

TOMMY  
(grabbing him)  
Hey! Hey, bro wait!

ANGEL  
Don't touch me!

TOMMY  
What's wrong? We were just having a little fun. What's your problem?

ANGEL  
A little fun? Do you think I'm stupid? What were you trying to do?

TOMMY  
Come on! We were all having fun with each other.

ANGEL  
Oh, really? With each other? Or with me?

TOMMY  
Look, you need to get out of your closet, sister!

ANGEL  
(enraged)  
Fuck you!

Angel notices Linda by her door.

ANGEL (CONT'D)  
Fuck you both! I didn't come here for this shit! You don't even know me, so don't--

Tommy feels really sorry for the kid and honestly tries to help him.

TOMMY  
Hey! I've been there! Where you are. So, trust me... It gets better.

ANGEL  
(grabbing him)  
You asshole! You don't know shit!

TOMMY

Hey, hey, hey, calm down okay? Come back inside and we can talk.

ANGEL

(pushing him, crying)  
You have no idea...what--what I've been...

Angel runs away.

Linda runs out to Tommy, truly worried for the first time about Angel's feelings.

TOMMY

(concerned)  
Poor kid. He is so scared and confused...

LINDA

I've never seen this side of him.

TOMMY

I empathize with him. I was where he is emotionally not too long ago. But, the rage in his eyes... What happened to him? Do you know?

LINDA

(afraid)  
I don't know. Tom, I feel bad.

TOMMY

He's hurting and the worst part is, that rejection is going to come from those he loves most... I'm out of here.

LINDA

You can spend the night if you--

TOMMY

No, thanks. Please, apologize for me when you see him.

Tommy gets in his 2 door sports car and drives away.

Linda ashamed and worried for Angel, heads back inside.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- LIVING ROOM - LATER

Angel enters and as he is heading to his bedroom, Cristina comes out of her room.

CRISTINA

Angel, mi hijo. Did you have fun?

ANGEL

What?

CRISTINA

The party. Your girlfriend.

ANGEL

Ma, I have no friends. You have no idea how lonely I am.

CRISTINA

Oh, honey. How could that be. You're a beautiful, young man!

ANGEL

Maybe that's my curse.

CRISTINA

Angel!

ANGEL

I'm very tired, mommy. I'm going to stay home on Monday, okay?

CRISTINA

What happened? Talk to me.

ANGEL

Not now. I'm too tired. I had too much to drink at that...that stupid, awful party!

CRISTINA

(kissing him)

Okay, okay. I'll call your school. Stay home.

She holds his face.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

Angel, you are my life. Don't ever forget that.

ANGEL

And you are mine, mom. You're the only one I can trust in this...this ugly world.

CRISTINA

(crying)

Angel, you're scaring me. Why, why are saying that?

ANGEL

Night ma.

He enters his bedroom. Cristina saw a sadness and pain in his eyes she's never noticed. She enters her bedroom.

## CRISTINA AND JOSE'S BEDROOM

Jose is in bed, awake.

Cristina lays Down.

JOSE

Cristina, things are not right with that kid.

CRISTINA

That kid is your son.

JOSE

He's going through some shit and I hope for his sake, its not what I'm thinking.

CRISTINA

He's a teenager. We all went through it.

JOSE

I hope you're right.

## ANGEL'S BEDROOM

He's seated in his desk. Rage and anger builds up in him. He starts panting and biting his lips. He picks up a pen and holds as a knife and starts stabbing his desk violently.

## INT. ALEX'S APARTMENT -- BEDROOM - LATER

He's in bed alone reminiscing of all the great feelings that Gina left him with. He hears the front DOOR OPEN and CLOSE.

ALEX

Mom? Is that you?

MILLIE (O.S.)

(a bit drunk)

Yes, baby.

## LIVING ROOM

ALEX

Why are you home? Is only 11:30.

MILLIE

I wasn't feeling well. So I said: fuck it! I'm going home.

ALEX

Ma, I think you had a bit too much to drink. What happened? You forgot that you are the bartender and not a customer?

MILLIE

What ever... I'm just tired of that job, night after night. Oh! I don't know, mi hijo.

Alex looks at his mother for the first time in many years with love and compassion. HE approaches her. She is barely standing and takes her hand and puts it around his shoulder. He notices how exhausted she looks.

ALEX

(feeling guilty)

Come on, ma. Let me tuck you in.

MILLIE

Que?

ALEX

Callate. Just do as I say. Hold on to me.

She complies and as they are walking together, she looks at him with a happy smile and even gets emotional.

MILLIE

I don't know what's gotten into you. But thank you, papito.

ALEX

Come on I'll rub your neck. I owe you.

MELANIE

I owe you more, baby. I hope you can forgive me.

ALEX

I do, ma. I hope you forgive me too.

She puts her head on his shoulder as they enter her bedroom.

INT. ALEX'S BEDROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Alex takes out the piece of wood, which has four nails on it and one hole. He removes one more nail.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

John is bed awake. Anthony enters quietly, but a bit drunk.

JOHN

Hey?

ANTHONY

Oh, I'm sorry. Did I wake you?

JOHN  
I wasn't sleeping. Did you have  
fun?

Anthony removes his shirt and lays across the bed.

ANTHONY  
Fun..? Fun is not the word. I--I  
had a-a little bit too, too, too  
much to drink.

JOHN  
You want me to make a pot coffee?

ANTHONY  
No...I..I just need a shower and  
sleep.

JOHN  
Come on, my turn. I'll help you to  
the bathroom. Put your arm around  
me.

ANTHONY  
Thank you, Johnny.

JOHN  
Shut up and walk.

ANTHONY  
Yes, papa John.

JOHN  
Heavens forbid.

EXT. QUEENSBORO HIGH SCHOOL -- AFTERNOON

Gina is in the empty school playground. She looks at her  
watch.

Melanie, exits the school and notices Gina.

MELANIE  
Gina, are you okay?

GINA  
I'm waiting for Alex to finish  
practice.

MELANIE  
Are you two going out tonight?

GINA  
No. I...I just need to talk to him.

MELANIE  
What's wrong, girlfriend?

GINA

(teary)

I--I don't know if--if I should tell you since--

MELANIE

Gina, come on. We're like sisters. What's wrong? Although I think I--

GINA

It's worse than what you think.

MELANIE

What is it?

GINA

(whispers)

I, I think I'm pregnant.

MELANIE

What? Gina, shit! How could you let this happen?

GINA

We love each other.

MELANIE

If he loves you, the least he could have done was protect himself!

GINA

He did! We only did it once.

MELANIE

Gina, he didn't. He lied. He never does. He only cares about himself.

GINA

No, that's not true.

MELANIE

Oh, Gina... Look, you first need to tell him what you suspect. See his reaction, then go and buy a home pregnancy test. You have money?

GINA

I...seven dollars?

MELANIE

Not enough. I think I... Here take this twenty and don't be afraid or ashamed! Talk to the bastard straight up. I'm here for you, okay?

GINA

(crying, scared)

Thanks. Really, thank you. I...

Melanie hugs her. Notices Alex approaching and backs away.

MELANIE

Call me tonight after you get tested.

Gina agrees and Melanie rushes off.

ALEX

(kissing her)

Hey. What was all that hugging about?

GINA

Nothing. We just love each other very much. She is my best friend.

ALEX

And my worst enemy.

GINA

(serious)

I wonder why.

ALEX

You know very well why... Gina, what's going on?

GINA

I'm not sure yet... But I'm late.

ALEX

You're late for what

GINA

Jesus, Alex.

ALEX

Well, what is it...? Are you sick?

GINA

I wish it was that simple.... I'm not sure, but I might be pregnant.

ALEX

What? Shit, shit, shit!

GINA

That's all you have to say?

ALEX

Fuck! What the hell do you want me-

GINA

(slapping him)

Son of a bitch!

ALEX

That I am and you always knew it... Gina, I'm not ready to be a father.

GINA

Neither and I. Why did you lie to me and pretended that you used protection?

ALEX

I did wear a condom! Everyone knows that condoms are not 100% percent safe. If you were so concerned, why didn't you... Anyway if you are, which you are not sure, I'll help with the...

GINA

I can't believe the things that you are saying. I loved you so much and Christ! You, you don't care. Mel, was right. You only care about yourself!

ALEX

Gina, please! I can't be a father right now. I-I don't think I could ever be one!

(holding her)

Lets talk about--

GINA

Don't touch me! You were right, love does hurt us, specially when it comes from someone who doesn't know the meaning of the word!

ALEX

Gina?

GINA

(disgusted)

I don't want you near me or in my life ever again!

She runs away from him.

ALEX

Gina! Wait! Fuck!

INT. THE CAVELLIE'S HOME -- DINNING ROOM - LATER

ROBERT (40s) Gina's strict father and HELEN (40s) his wife, a conservative woman, Gina's mother.

ROBERT

Why did I get that girl a cell phone, Helen? Why? If she's not going to use it.

HELEN

Robert, maybe Gina is in the library studying and she just lost track of time.

ROBERT

Helen, please stop defending her. She knows very well she has to be here by dinner time and it is now-

Front DOOR CLOSING

HELEN

Oh, thank God! There she is.

GINA

Hi, mom, daddy.

ROBERT

Hey! Where are you going?

GINA

I, I'm not hungry. I'm going up to my-

ROBERT

Young lady, you are going to sit here, we are going to say grace and eat dinner together like the family that we are.

GINA

But, dad I-

ROBERT

Do as I say! Go, watch your hands and sit. We've waited long enough! Helen, get dinner. Where were you by the way?

GINA

I-I was in the library studying with Melanie.

ROBERT

And you forgot to call? Or even have the decency to pick up your phone when I called!

GINA

(holding back tears)

I'm sorry, daddy. I, I, I lost track of time and- I can't eat. I-I gotta go to my room.

Gina rushes upstairs.

HELEN

Gina-

ROBERT

Leave her. I-I think she's in love  
and got her heart broken. She'll be  
fine. It happens to all of us.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- FOYER - AFTERNOON

Cristina notices the trade of food by Angel's bedroom has  
not been touched. She holds her forehead and prays in silence  
for a brief moment, then takes trade and walks away.

INT. GINA'S HOUSE -- UPSTAIRS FOYER - NIGHT

Helen, knocks at the door hard. MUSIC is playing loud.

HELEN

Gina? Honey, you gotta eat...Gina?  
Are you okay, sweetheart?

Helen opens the door and Gina is not in the room.

GINA'S BEDROOM

Helen walks in and turns off the stereo. Gina's SMART-PHONE  
BEEPS. Helen picks up.

INSERT - GINA'S PHONE - 6 missed calls. Missed call: Melanie.  
Missed call: Alex.

HELEN (CONT'D)

Alex?

She is now more concerned. She heads to the bathroom and  
she slowly opens the door.

GINA'S BATHROOM

HELEN

Gina, are you--?

Helen see's Gina's legs first on the floor. An empty bottle  
of Rx pills.

Gina's mouth is foaming.

HELEN (CONT'D)

(crying)

Gina! Gina! Oh, God! Robert!  
Robert! Robert! Robert! Gina!  
Oh, God!

ROBERT

What-? Oh, Jesus!

HELEN  
Robert, call 911.

ROBERT  
What the hell did she do?

HELEN  
She took my sleeping pills. Hurry  
call 911. Hurry, hurry! Oh, Gina,  
baby! Oh, oh, oh, oh...!

Robert rushes into the room for the phone.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MORNING

Students are walking in. Alex walks in. Melanie chases  
after him.

MELANIE  
Alex! Alex, wait!

ALEX  
What do want?

MELANIE  
Did you talk to Gina?

ALEX  
(upset)  
We talked yesterday outside. You  
saw us. I'm sure you already know  
what we talked about. I'm also sure  
you keep poisoning her against me.

MELANIE  
Oh, believe me. You don't need any  
help in that department. Anyway,  
I'm worried. I've been calling her  
cell phone since last night and I  
keep getting voice mail.

ALEX  
So? What do you want from me?

MELANIE  
(getting angrier)  
I don't know what you told her  
yesterday, but I can almost guess.  
I hope for your sake that she's okay.

ALEX  
(in her face)  
You need to mind your own God damn  
business and--

MELANIE

(shouting)

She is my business! She's my best friend and a good girl, not like the ones you are use to!

ALEX

Are you referring to you?

MELANIE

It takes one to know one.

ALEX

You need to butt out, bitch!

MELANIE

(louder)

Not until you leave her the fuck alone, asshole!

GEORGE

Yo' yo'! Guys cool it!

ALEX

Shut up, fatso!

John walks in an catches Alex on George's face.

JOHN

What's going on?

MELANIE

Mr. Flanagan, you have a minute?

ALEX

You better keep your big mouth close!

JOHN

Hey! George sit. What's going on here? Jerome is gone. Angel is out sick and...Where's Gina?

John looks at Melanie and reads her worried face.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Copy your homework! Melanie outside.

Melanie and John step outside the classroom.

GEORGE

Yo, Alex man. What's going on, bro?

ALEX

Nothin' Georgie. Just bitches problem, bro. I'm sorry for yelling at you. I--I don't need anymore nails in my wood.

GEORGE  
You're good with me, bro.

LINDA  
Jerome, is gone. Gina and Angel  
out. We are losing everybody guys!

ALEX  
(resentful)  
We are fucked. All of us. What  
else is new?

HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY.

JOHN  
But, you haven't told me. What makes  
you think that Gina is in some kind  
of trouble?

MELANIE  
I'm sorry, sir, is a private matter.  
She has been going out with Alex  
and... He's no good for--

JOHN  
Don't say that, unless you are sure.

MELANIE  
I am sure, trust me. Something  
happened to her because she is not  
answering her phone! She was suppose  
to call me last night after...

JOHN  
After what..? Melanie?

MELANIE  
I can't tell you that, Mr. Flanagan.

JOHN  
I'll call her parents now. Let's  
get back inside.

MELANIE  
Thank you, Mr. Flanagan.

JOHN  
No, thank you for being such a good  
friend to Gina.

INT. SCHOOL OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

John's on the phone. The answering machine comes on-

ROBERT (V.O.)  
You've reach the Cavellie's residence.  
We are not home at the moment--

John hangs up and starts dialing another number from Gina's emergency contact card.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Most students are quietly doing an assignment. Alex is on top of his desk worried about Gina. Melanie approaches him.

MELANIE

(whispers in his ear)

I swear if anything happened to Gina--

ALEX

(enraged)

Why don't you leave me the fuck alone already!

TACHIA

Alex, man! You really need to start hammering those nails--

LISA

Yo' don't talk to her like that!  
Can you see she's worried for her friend.

ALEX

Listen, queen butch!

LISA

(grabbing him)

Listen, pendejo! I'm tired of your shit!

TACHIA

Come on guys! Lisa, its okay!

John enters.

STUDENT

Guys! Guys!

They ALL seat quietly.

MELANIE can read John's facial expression. He is serious and somber. He doesn't make eye contact with Melanie.

MELANIE

What--what's wrong Mr. F.?

(voice breaking)

Sir, did, did you get to speak with anyone?

JOHN

Bad..bad news.

MELANIE

No...no.

JOHN  
Gina...she--she tried to commit  
suicide last night and--

MELANIE  
No!

JOHN  
...she's in critical condition.

OVERLAPPING.

MELANIE  
(crying, to Alex)  
It's all your fault! You asshole!

ALEX  
No. No!

MELANIE  
...are you happy now?

ALEX  
(panicked)  
No! Shit no! NO!

Alex runs out and John follows him.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

JOHN  
Alex! Alex, please wait!

He stops. Ashamed, he faces John.

ALEX  
(with guilt)  
I--I never wanted to hurt her. Not  
intentionally. I didn't want this...  
I swear.

JOHN  
I know, son. But it happened.  
Intentionally or not you know in  
your heart, that you had something  
to do with this.

ALEX  
I did.

JOHN  
You need to go see her. She's at  
Mt. Sinai Hospital in Astoria. Let  
me get you a pass and take all the  
time you need. We will work something  
out if you have to miss class for a  
few days.

ALEX  
(holding back tears)  
Thanks.

SERIES OF SHOTS

A) Alex running on street that leads to hospital.

B) Hospital - Alex exits elevator on patients floor.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- MOMENTS LATER

Gina is hooked up to I.Vs and a breathing machine. Both her parents are kneeled praying with eyes closed.

Alex walks in slowly and approaches Gina's bed. Helen notices him first.

HELEN  
Excuse me. Who are you?

ALEX  
I...I'm Alex. Gina's boyfriend.

HELEN  
So, you're him. You're the kid who caused this?

ALEX  
Lady I--

HELEN  
And the father of--

ALEX  
What?

HELEN  
Oh, come on. You're going to deny it! No wonder my daughter tried to kill herself.

ALEX  
Yes, I am the father of her baby... How it she?

ROBERT  
Look at her! How do you think she is? Listen, young man. I don't know how my daughter, a good catholic girl, got involved with someone like you and what's worse, how did she let herself get pregnant. But, this is not the time or place to discuss that. We don't know you. I don't even think my daughter knew you either, so--

ALEX  
You're wrong about that.

ROBERT  
I don't think she knew what kind of person you are. But, we don't want you here right know.

ALEX  
Sir, I just want to be with her and--

Alex and Robert face each other. Alex in a defying manner.

ROBERT  
(menacing)  
You need to leave now!

Brief pause.

ALEX  
(studying robert)  
Gina told me about you. She feared you... Did you know that?  
(chuckles)  
But, you don't scare me. Nottin' scares me. So, I ain't leaving.

ROBERT  
You ain't leaving?  
(grabbing Alex)  
Listen you little fuck-!

HELEN  
(holding Robert)  
Robert please..! For God's sake, son! Please leave.

After a brief pause and feeling sorry for Helen, Alex speaks in a soft, but determined tone.

ALEX  
I will leave this room, but I will be out there... Your beautiful, kind, honest, sweet daughter, is not only the mother of my child, but my first true love and...my future wife.

ROBERT  
That..remains to be seen.

Both men stare at each other for a brief moment. Alex tries to get close to Gina and Robert grabs him by arm.

ROBERT (CONT'D)  
I said leave this room! You insolent punk!

HELEN

Robert, please don't make a scene!  
Young man, I beg you!

Alex nods at Helen in compliance to her supplications.  
Sadly looking at his girl, he exits the room.

ROBERT

Come on Helen, lets continue praying.

HELEN

You know? He's right. Gina is afraid  
of you.

ROBERT

Helen, I said let's continue praying  
for Gina, which is what she needs  
most from us right now.

HELEN

No. She needs us! She needed our  
love and understanding and we didn't  
give to her!

ROBERT

Helen, shut up and pray!

HELEN

I'm going to the chapel to pray...for  
you.

Robert kneels down by Gina's bed and he takes her hand and  
kisses it.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- LATER

Alex is in a chair outside the I.C.U. John approaches Alex  
holding a small bag.

JOHN

Son.

ALEX

Mr. Flanagan?

JOHN

I brought a sandwich.

ALEX

Thanks, but I'm not hungry.

JOHN

You can eat it later. How is she?

ALEX

I don't know. She seems like- She's  
sleeping. Her, her parents don't  
want me near her.

JOHN  
They're upset. Give them their time  
and space and-

ALEX  
I'm not leaving here until she's out  
of danger.

JOHN  
Good. I...I gotta go. Please, try  
to behave and eat.

As John starts walking away, Alex-

ALEX  
Mr. Flanagan...Thank you.

John nods and smiles.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- JOSE AND CRISTINA'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jose gets up and exits the room.

CLOSE on CLOCK on end table. Time 11:00 PM.

HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

When Jose passes the bathroom, he hears MOANING SOUNDS coming  
from inside. Concerned, he opens the door quickly. Angel  
startled, jumps up from the filled, bath tub. He drops a  
magazine outside the tub. He grabs a towel and covers his  
lower extremities.

JOSE  
(embarrassed)  
Son, I'm, I'm sorry--

ANGEL  
Dad! Couldn't you knock--?

JOSE  
I'm sorry I--I thought something was  
wrong! It's okay.. We guys have  
needs. I'll leave alone now..  
(picking up magazine)  
Here...  
(something catches  
his eye)  
What the...what the fuck is this?

Jose starts turning the pages.

ANGEL  
(panic)  
Dad--dad, please!

JOSE  
 (turning pages)  
 What the fuck is this shit?

ANGEL  
 Dad, I...I--

JOSE  
 Angel, tell me! Is this what you  
 are?  
 (hitting him with  
 magazine)  
 Is this what you like? Are you one  
 of these guys...? Answer me! Damn  
 it, answer me!

ANGEL  
 Dad stop! I--I don't know--

Angel's lip get's cut by the magazine. His lip bleeds.

JOSE  
 You don't know? These are guys  
 sucking and fucking each other.  
 (hitting him)  
 Faggots! Faggots!

ANGEL  
 Dad, please! I don't want mom to--

JOSE  
 (hitting him harder)  
 Be at least man enough to admit it...!  
 Let me see? Remove the towel.

ANGEL  
 Dad!

JOSE  
 (removing the towel)  
 Give me that fucking towel!  
 (sarcastic)  
 I see nothing wrong with your dick.  
 As a matter a fact, you got your  
 fathers dick.  
 (grabbing his face)  
 And that dick...is to screw girls,  
 to make babies and your ass is for  
 shitting! Not to get fucked, like  
 these queers!

ANGEL  
 (disgusted, crying)  
 Shut up! Shut up!

CRISTINA  
 Jose, what's going on? Oh, my God,  
 your bleeding! Did you hit him?

JOSE

Look what your son--

ANGEL tries to get the magazine back. His father pushes him back, knocking him down.

ANGEL

No!

JOSE

See Cristina? Look at this! Puro maricones!

CRISTINA

(looking away)

Stop it! I don't want to see that!

JOSE

(grabbing angel by neck)

Tell me kid? Have you been fucked yet?

CRISTINA

Jose! Please, you're hurting him!

JOSE

(pushing her)

Cristina, puneta!

ANGEL

(enraged)

Don't you fucking hurt her or I'll kill you!

JOSE

Wow! So, you are a big tough macho when it comes to defending your mommy. But you haven't answered my question! Have you been fucked?

ANGEL

No! Now, leave me alone!

JOSE

(very slow, stern)

I don't know how you started with this shit or how long. I don't know if this is a phase, a trend, an experiment or what ever the fuck they want to call it..! But, you will stop this behavior right now! Do you hear me? Because...

(to his face in disgust)

..I rather see you dead, than a faggot!

CRISTINA

(in tears)

No! Stop it! Angel, don't, don't listen!

JOSE

Cristina, please shut up!  
(to Angel)  
You and I will finish this conversation tomorrow and I will search your room for any other faggot material. So, if you got more, get rid of them or I promise you, I'll make you eat them!

Angel covers himself staring at his father with great hate and sorrow. Jose looks at him disgusted.

As Angel leaves the bathroom he looks at his mother ashamed.

ANGEL

(whispers sobbing)

I'm sorry, ma. I'm so sorry...

CRISTINA

(crying)

Ay, Angel. Sweet Jesus.

Angel exits.

JOSE

I knew it, but I didn't want to face the truth. My only son, un marica.

CRISTINA

Stop calling him that!

JOSE

That's what he is. But, he is still young. I'll straighten him out, even if I have to beat it out of him!

ANGEL'S BEDROOM

Angel is in bed, still naked with his legs up to his chest and his chin on his knees. Just sitting there in a daze, with a serious, empty look. All that keeps playing in his head is his fathers last words.

JOSE (V.O.)

I rather see you dead than a faggot!

Then he hears Alex's voice.

ALEX (V.O.)

You like that dick? You little faggot!

Overlapping with Tommy saying:

TOMMY (V.O.)  
You need to get out of your closet,  
sister!

All three VOICES play on his head over and over. He violently covers his ears for a couple of seconds until there is total silence. He can now hear his parents arguing in their room.

JOSE (O.S.)  
Who knows how many people already  
know about him!

CRISTINA (O.S.)  
Lower your voice, please!

JOSE (O.S.)  
I bet, even his teachers know. Or  
at least the one who called here  
does.

CRISTINA (O.S.)  
What teacher called here?

JOSE (O.S.)  
Some male teacher called about four  
or five weeks ago and left a message  
for us to call him, that he needed  
to talk with us about him!

CRISTINA (O.S.)  
And now you tell me!

JOSE (O.S.)  
*No te preocupes.* I'll take care of  
this problem myself. This is a family  
matter. Let's go to sleep. I got  
an early shift tomorrow.

Angel picks up his cell-phone. He scrolls through his phone contacts. THREE RINGS.

LISA (V.O.)  
Angel? What's wrong, sweetie?

ANGEL  
I'm sorry, Lisa. Did I wake you?

LISA (V.O.)  
No. It's only 11:20, I don't go to  
bed until midnight. What's up? Are  
you okay?

ANGEL  
No, Lisa. I'm not okay... I, I  
need a favor.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Same night. Alex is asleep in a chair. Melanie approaches him and sits next to him quietly. His head falls on her shoulder and he wakes up.

ALEX

Well?

MELANIE

Well, what?

ALEX

What are you doing here?

MELANIE

Excuse me, but have you forgotten that Gina is my--

ALEX

I mean, why are you next to me?

MELANIE

Honestly? Because Mr. Flanagan asked me to spend time with you.

ALEX

You know. You were right. If she had listened to you any of these- Its all my fault.

MELANIE

She believed that you needed someone like her in your life and she wasn't going to give up on you... Alex, do you love really love her?

ALEX

I don't know. All I can say is- I, I love her the way she taught me to love and I'm hurting. I'm really hurting for the first time in my life... This is why I didn't want to fall in love or know what really loving someone felt like.

MELANIE

You love her. 'Cause that girl truly knows the meaning of the word and now...so do you, thanks to her.

Brief pause.

ALEX

I'm sorry, Mel and thanks.

MELANIE

Sorry for what? Thanks for what?

ALEX

Sorry for everything and thanks for being here.

MELANIE

Now you can remove another nail from your wood and so can I.

ALEX

(falling asleep)

I--I guess, we're even now...We're even and it feels good...

MELANIE

We are. Thanks to our great teacher.

His eyes close from exhaustion and his head falls over on Melanie's shoulder. She looks at him teary eye.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John is seated by a large window, talking on the phone.

JOHN

It's okay, Lisa. Don't, don't worry about it. I'm still up... I'll do my best to--

LISA(V.O.)

But, Mr.F. are you going to tell him that you...?

JOHN

I will. It, it might help him... No, give it to me.  
(he writes in a pad)  
Got it. No, no problem- Thanks.  
Okay, bye.

Anthony brings John a cup of tea.

ANTHONY

Drink this. It's chamomile. It'll relax you.

JOHN

Anthony, I'm losing my students, one by one and there's nothing I can do...

EXT. JOHNS HOME -- WINDOW - CONTINUOUS

POV ANGEL -- Anthony takes John's hand kisses it, then they kiss on the lips.

CLOSE on Angel. Shocked by what he's seeing. He backs away, slowly, sad, confused, angry, deceived.

POV Angel -- John on window. Angel runs away.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Anthony wraps his arms around John.

JOHN

I don't know what to do about this poor kid. You know, he reminds me so much of myself when I was his age: afraid, confused, introverted, antagonized and, and still rejected by my own father... He should have been here already. I'm going to call him.

EXT. ANGEL'S NEIGHBORHOOD LOCAL STREET -- MOMENTS LATER

He is walking back to his house. CELL PHONE RINGS. He ignores the call.

INT. HOSPITAL INTENSIVE CARE UNIT -- NIGHT

Helen, walks by the nurses station and notices Alex, asleep in a chair on the hallway.

FEMALE NURSE (40'S) exits the I.C.U.

HELEN

How is she?

NURSE

The same... Why don't you go, rest. I will call you if--

HELEN

I'm okay. Listen, has that young man left the hospital at all?

NURSE

I just came on, but the other nurse told me that he wishes to remain there until we tell him that your daughter is out of danger. Hey, that's what I call real love.

The NURSE exits and Helen looks at Alex with a amazement. She approaches him.

HELEN

Son? Son?

ALEX

Oh! Anything wrong with Gina?

HELEN

She's the same. Son, have you had anything to eat?

ALEX

I, I had a sandwich about... I, I can't remember.

HELEN

Would you like me to get anything? There's a deli across the street-

ALEX

I'm fine.

HELEN

Okay.

ALEX

Thank you.

HELEN

Does your mother or father know you're here?

ALEX

My mother...she works nights. My father...I've never met.

HELEN

Sorry to hear that.

As Helen starts walking away-

ALEX

I love her. You know? Gina.

HELEN

(smiles)

I know. My..my husband went home. Would you like to come in?

Alex smiles and nods. He gets up and they walk in together.

INT. THE DIAZ HOUSE -- LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Angel walks in. Cristina who's been waiting, confronts him.

CRISTINA

(hugging him)

Oh, Angel. Thank God!

ANGEL

Mom, we already spoke on the phone. I needed to take a walk.

There is still that daze in his eyes.

CRISTINA

Angel, your father didn't mean what he--

ANGEL

Yes he did, mom. But, its okay.  
Don't worry... I'll be fine.

CRISTINA

What do you mean?

ANGEL

(hugging her tight)

I love you ma. I've loved you more  
than anything in this world and I'm  
so sorry. I never wanted you to  
suffer because of me.

CRISTINA

You have nothing to apologize for or  
be ashamed of! Angel, I will always  
love you no matter what. You hear  
me?

ANGEL

I know. Go to bed, ma.

CRISTINA

Angelito, are you sure you're okay?

ANGEL

(fake smile)

I will be. I don't want you worrying  
about me ever again. You've been my  
one and only friend in a world filled  
with bad, ugly, horrible people.

CRISTINA

(concerned)

Angel! Why are saying that? Mi  
hijo, what is it? You are not  
yourself tonight. I know you.

He just looks at her and closes his eyes tired. He hugs her  
and goes to his room. Cristina just stands there, very  
worried.

ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- CONTINUOUS

He sits in his bed just staring ahead. He takes out his  
diary from under the mattress, stares at it briefly and starts  
to write.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

John is standing by the window. Anthony gets up and wraps  
his arms around him.

JOHN

I'm sorry. I'm keeping you up.

ANTHONY

You have nothing to apologize for.  
I'm here for you.

JOHN

Thanks, Tony. I don't know what I  
would do without you.

ANTHONY

Nothing, because you're stuck with  
me for another ten years.

JOHN

Just ten?

ANTHONY

Well, at that time we can renegotiate.

JOHN

Sounds good to me, Mr. defense  
attorney.

ANTHONY

Now, why don't you come to bed and  
let this attorney caress your back.  
That always puts you to sleep.

INT. THE DIAZ HOME -- ANGEL'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

He is seated in his bed, fully dressed with black jeans, a  
dark t-shirt, and a black hoodie over his head.

CRISTINA AND JOSE'S BEDROOM -- MORNING

The alarm goes off. Jose shuts alarm off. It's 6:00 a.m.  
He turns to Cristina, who is in a deep sleep.

JOSE

Honey. Cristina! I'm going to take  
a shower. Breakfast in 30 minutes.  
Okay?

She ignores him. Jose get's up and takes a pair of clean  
underwear from dresser then enters the bathroom, but leaves  
door partially opened.

CLOSE on BELT HOLSTER WITH GUN on bathroom door.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE, SECURITY CHECK POINT -- MORNING

John walks in with a small bag with two coffees and his  
briefcase. RAMON (30s), heavy, hispanic guard is at the  
check-point.

RAMON

Good morning, sir. As always you  
are the first one here-

JOHN

No, Ramon you are. Here, I got a coffee just like you like it: black and sweet.

RAMON

Thank you, sir. You are spoiling me.

JOHN

Not at all. Is my pleasure. Have a great day, Ramon.

RAMON

Thank you! You too, sir.

INT. THE DIAZ HOUSE -- JOSE AND CRISTINA'S BEDROOM -  
CONTINUOUS

Jose in uniform is angry as Cristina awakens.

JOSE

Honey, you're just getting up? Come on its 6:15!. I gotta be out of here in 20 minutes!

CRISTINA

(in Spanish)

Okay, Stop shouting!

He walks over to the bathroom door to get his belt and gun. He notices the gun is not in holster. Starts to worry a little. He rushes to the closet to check gun container and opens it - is empty. Turns to his wife with panic in his eyes..

JOSE

Did, did you hide my gun?

CRISTINA

Why would I hide-? You checked the closet?

He rushes to Angel's room.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

Jose, what's going on?

He comes back to the bedroom.

JOSE

Angel is not in his room.

CRISTINA

What? It can't be. It's too early for him to- Jose? What are thinking? Oh, my God! No! Oh, no!

JOSE  
 (whispers)  
 I, I, I gotta call the station.

CRISTINA  
 Oh, Jesus no! You, you don't think  
 that-?

JOSE  
 He took my gun to school!  
 He runs to the phone.

CRISTINA  
 (crying)  
 Oh, my God! No, no, no. No! NO!  
 NO!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ENTRANCE, SECURITY CHECK POINT -- MOMENTS  
 LATER.

POV SUBJECT CROSSES THE SECURITY CHECK POINT. IT BEEPS. RAMON  
 IS NOT AROUND. SUBJECT WALKS PASS A BATHROOM WHEN THE DOOR  
 OPENS AND RAMON STEPS OUT.

RAMON  
 Hey you! Where are you going?  
 School's not open yet!

SUBJECT stops, quickly turns and we see Angel's face.  
 Emotionless he takes out a gun and shots Ramon down. He  
 runs upstairs.

INT. JOHN FLANAGAN'S CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

John who heard the shot rushes to the window, but everything  
 is calm outside. As he turns towards door, Angel is standing  
 there with the gun pointed at him. John backs up slowly. A  
 just stares at him sad and ashamed at the same time.

JOHN  
 Angel, what have you done? What are  
 you doing with that gun?

Brief Pause.

ANGEL  
 Why didn't you tell me?

JOHN  
 What--what do you mean?

ANGEL  
 I saw you and that man kissing.

JOHN  
 What man...? Oh. Angel, that's  
 Tony, he's my--

ANGEL

So, you are a homosexual?

JOHN

Yes, I, I am gay. But--

ANGEL

You are a homosexual! There is nothing gay in homosexuality! We both know it! We are forced to hide, lie, defend ourselves, even against our own fathers--

JOHN

Angel, its not all--

ANGEL

Forced to live in constant fear and shame. You know it's true.

JOHN

Angel, listen to me. It gets better.

ANGEL

(content)

But...I found a solution to both our problems. We--we won't need to hide any longer...

JOHN

Angel, let, let's talk--

ANGEL

We will both be free and find peace. They're all going to get what they want...

(crying)

starting with my own father... But so are we.

JOHN

(approaching him)

Angel, please! You don't know what you're doing! Give me that gun.

Lets sit down and--

Angel shoots John in the chest. John falls on his knees, out of breath, coughs blood. Angel puts the gun to his temple.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Angel...ple--please don't do it..don't! Don't!

Jose's last words to his son, echo in Angels head.

JOSE(V.O.)  
I rather see you dead, than a fagot!  
I rather see you dead! Dead! Dead!  
DEAD!

ANGEL  
(smiles and cries)  
I'll be all right now.

JOHN  
(screams)  
Angel! No, no, no!

BLAST! He falls down as John falls down at the same time. On the floor, both face each other. John is crying and gasping for air as he looks at Angel amazed of how serene, happy, with a slight smile on his lips and eyes as he takes his last breath. John's eyes begin to close slowly.

INT. HOSPITAL EMERGENCY ROOM -- MORNING

A team of doctors are trying to revive Angel by shocking his chest and with every medication possible.

DOCTOR  
Charge to 300! Clear!  
(shock)  
Let's call it. Time of death 0800.

NURSE(O.S)  
Mrs. Lopez!

CRISTINA (O.S.)  
I gotta see my son!

NURSE (O.S.)  
Madam, the doctors are still-

The doctor comes out from behind the curtain.

DOCTOR  
It's okay, Nurse. Mrs. Diaz?

CRISTINA  
Doctor, how's my son?

Jose, who's next to Cristina, notices Angel's lifeless body and face covered in blood as a nurse cleans him up.

JOSE  
(shocked)  
Angel!

Jose rushes in.

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry. We did all we could. By the time we got him-

Cristina slowly walks over to her son.

CRISTINA

(in a trans)

Angelito... Oh, God. My sweet,  
sweet, Angel. My baby...my baby.

(to Jose)

Are you happy now? This is what you  
wanted. Wasn't it?

JOSE

(kneeling down)

No. I... God no.

CRISTINA

(screaming)

You murdered him! You murdered my  
baby!

(over her son)

My sweet, beautiful baby... Oh...Oh  
God! Oh, God...

Jose takes his son's hand, crying in guilt.

JOSE

(whispers)

Son, I'm sorry! I'm so sorry...

Cristina with no mercy towards her husband.

CRISTINA

Out. I want to be alone with my  
son. Get out! Get out! Get out!

(hitting him, crying)

Get out!! Get out! Oh! Oh! Oh!  
OH...!

Pushing and hitting him. He exits. She just stays there  
caressing her sons face, hair, kissing him as the nurse closes  
the curtain to give her time and privacy. The scene ends  
with the MOTHER'S CRY ECHOING through the hospital hallways.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY -- DAY

Anthony is pacing back and forth nervously waiting for a  
doctor to give him news about John's condition. All that he  
can think of is the phone call from John's co-worker, who  
told him about the shooting.

FRANK (V.O.)

Anthony, there's been a tragic  
incident in our school. John was  
shot and it's in critical condition  
on his way to Mt. Sinai Hospital in  
Astoria.

The words: "John was shot" repeats twice in his head as a  
DOCTOR in operating attire approaches Anthony.

DR. JOHNSON

Hi, I'm Dr. Johnson and you are?

ANTHONY

My name is Anthony Desantis. I got a call that John-

DR. JOHNSON

Excuse me. What I need to know, what's your relationship to the patient.

ANTHONY

He..he's my partner.

DR. JOHNSON

He sustained a shot in the chest which collapsed the lung. We going to operate to remove the bullet...

Anthony's eyes start to water, as fear over power his hearing and the doctor's words begin to fade slowly.

DR. JOHNSON (CONT'D)

I can't tell you anything further for we are about to start surgery and I need to get back. As soon as I'm done, I will come out and....

SILENCE. Anthony shakes the surgeon's hand.

As the Doctor walks away Anthony sits down in shock, crying, lonely in the cold hospital hallway.

SERIES OF SHOTS - Anthony walks inside hospital chapel.

A) Anthony lights candle and kneels down and prays.

B) I.C.U. Gina's bed. Alex's head is on Gina's hand.

C) Hospital hallway. John on stretcher being wheeled to I.C.U. post surgery. Anthony follows.

INT. I.C.U. JOHN'S BED -- EVENING

Anthony is seated by John's bed holding his hand, praying.

SARA (50s) John's mother, is also praying by Anthony.

JOHN SENIOR (60s) Very conservative, a retired doctor, enters the room.

JOHN SENIOR

I...I spoke with the doctor, just now. He-he said John's young and he should make a full recovery.

SARA  
But, why all these tubs?

JOHN SENIOR  
Sara, he needs them.

ANTHONY  
Thank you, Dr. Flanagan, for checking.

JOHN SENIOR  
Not a problem.

ANTHONY  
And thank you both for being here.

SARA  
Anthony, please, he's our son.

John opens his eyes but unable to speak because is intubated, squeezes Anthony's hand.

ANTHONY  
John, calm, calm down. You can't  
speak John.

John nods.

JOHN SENIOR  
(holding his son's  
hand)  
Son, you need to stay calm. You  
have a tube, to help you-

John Jr. pulls his hand away from his father.

ANTHONY  
Johnny, I, I know you have lots of  
questions, but...

SARA  
Son, please, calm down.

After a brief moment Anthony tries to guess John's question.

ANTHONY  
Okay, Johnny. What is it that you  
want to know? Is it your student?

John blinks twice.

SARA  
That's it...!

ANTHONY  
Ma, I don't think we should tell-

JOHN SENIOR  
He died, John.

ANTHONY

Sir, please!

JOHN SENIOR

He needs to know. The kid who shot you, shot himself and he, he didn't make it.

John cries in silence.

SARA

Oh, Johnny, please don't cry-

JOHN SENIOR

I'm gonna get a nurse. He needs to sleep.

ANTHONY

Johnny, I'm sorry. Please don't cry. You, you need to get better. Why couldn't he wait to tell him? Johnny...Oh, Johnny...

Anthony lays his head on the bed. John caress Anthony's head.

INT. HOSPITAL GINA'S ROOM -- NIGHT

Alex is asleep in the chair with his head on Gina's bed and her hand is on his face. By now she's only on oxygen. Gina's parents walk in. Robert touches Alex, waking him. Alex gets up and proceeds to exit the room and Robert grabs him with a smile.

Alex not sure, looks at Helen and who nodes smiling and kisses him.

Gina opens her eyes. She smiles as she notices what is happening.

Alex approaches her and takes her hand, kissing it.

ALEX

Hi, baby.

GINA

Hi... Mom, dad..?

ROBERT

Sweet heart. I love you. Don't you ever forget it.

GINA

I know, daddy. Alex? Our baby?

HELEN

Everything is fine, honey.  
(MORE)

HELEN (CONT'D)

Just know that from this day on, you have nothing to worry about.

ALEX

Gina...I--I hope you will forgive me.

Gina takes Alex's hand and smiles nodding.

INT. HOSPITAL WAITING ROOM -- AFTERNOON

John Senior is by himself. Anthony enters.

ANTHONY

John.

JOHN SENIOR

How is he today?

ANTHONY

Why don't you ask him yourself? He's up having his meal.

JOHN SENIOR

I don't think he wants me here.

ANTHONY

He's hurt by your...indifference since he came out to you. But, I know he loves you.

JOHN SENIOR

Well, in any case, he's being discharged the day after tomorrow. We'll be going back home today. I think it's what's best with all the negative publicity, Sara and I don't to be dragged into-

ANTHONY

You are unbelievable. Do you blame him for what happened?

JOHN SENIOR

I..I think he bares some responsibility. You're a lawyer. Won't you agree?

BEAT.

ANTHONY

You know what..? You're right. I think it's best if you go home... Right now would be great.

John Senior smiles for a second, then exits.

INT. HOSPITAL -- JOHN'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

John is finishing his meal, with Sara by his side.

JOHN SENIOR  
Mm...you building an appetite. Good sign.

JOHN  
You should know, doctor.

JOHN SENIOR  
Retired doctor. Sara, I'm gonna go so I can start packing.

SARA  
Packing? I, I, I thought we were going to stay until-

JOHN  
Ma, its okay. I'm fine. I'll be going home in two days-

SARA  
But, Johnny, I-

JOHN SENIOR  
See? Besides he's got..what's his name-?

JOHN  
He's name is Anthony and his my husband of ten years.

JOHN SENIOR  
(chuckles)  
Husband?

SARA  
John, please, lets just stay until-

JOHN SENIOR  
Sara. Its best for all of us-

JOHN  
Just get the hell out of here!

ANTHONY  
Mother, please.

John Senior exits. Sara follows.

ANTHONY (CONT'D)  
Ma, keys! Leaved them on the kitchen table.

JOHN  
Ma, I'm sorry.

SARA

I love son. I love you both.

Sara kisses John, then Anthony and walks out holding back tears.

ANTHONY

You're stuck with me, kiddo.

JOHN

Till the day I day.

INT. ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- AFTERNOON

Cristina is in her son's room, for the first time since that tragic day. Some of her son's clothes are already packed in boxes labeled: church donations, pants and shirts. She starts taking the bed apart when she notices a book sticking out from under the mattress. She lifts the mattress and finds her sons diary plus the essay he wrote for John's class. She sits to read and is shocked by the essay's title: "The Day I was Molested". There's an A inside a circle.

CRISTINA

Oh, my God!

Begins reading.

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

The day I was molested, I was only-  
(in tears and shock)  
...seven years old...

ANGEL (V.O.)

My mother and I went to visit my aunt and uncle. Mom, went out with aunt Carmen shopping and we were alone. He took me to his dead son's room. My cousin had died that year and uncle Antonio asked me, if I'd wanted to see my cousin's airplane, model collections, which I always liked. I excitedly agreed.

FLASHBACK - INT - COUSIN'S BEDROOM -- DAY

Angel at seven years old in the room with his uncle ANTONIO (29) Puerto Rican, handsome, dark hair, moustache. We see parts of the molestation as Angel narrates it.

ANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

The first thing I remember was him getting behind me as he started pressing his penis against the back of my neck. He then began kissing and sticking his tongue in my ears.

(MORE)

ANGEL (V.O.) (CONT'D)

By this time I could feel his hard penis, pressing against the back of my neck. He then asked me to lay down in bed with him that he was very depressed because of his son's death. He only had on his underwear. He told me to lay on top of him and took my hand and asked me to caress his penis. He said-

ANTONIO

(in Spanish)

Don't be afraid, Angelito. Touch it, caress it.

ANGEL'S BEDROOM -- DAY - BACK TO PRESENT DAY

CRISTINA

Oh, Jesus!

Cristina continues reading, hearing her son's voice.

ANGEL (V.O.)

He flipped me over and my face was in front of his penis. He pull down my shorts and started breathing warm air into my penis. He asked me to kiss it, that it was okay.

CRISTINA

(enraged)

Bastard! How could you? A baby! My baby!

She continues reading.

ANGEL (V.O.)

I was so scared and confused, my heart was raising and if felt like it was going to explode out of my chest. He kept telling me that I must never tell anyone about what we had done, specially to my mother, for she would kill him and go to jail forever...

CRISTINA

You are right about that, brother in law! You son of a bitch!

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

John is in bed reading some get well cards that his students send with his co-worker Frank.

FRANK

I feel envy. Those kids really love you and miss you, John.

JOHN

I missed them too, Frank. You have no idea. By the way, Frank, how's Ramon doing?

FRANK

Who's Ramon?

JOHN

God, Frankie don't you know anything? The security guard that got shot!

FRANK

Oh, he's fine! Working already. But, what about you, John?

JOHN

I can't stop thinking about that day and about that poor kid. If only I would've acted sooner or if he never had come here and seen Anthony and I--

FRANK

John, he was a disturbed and traumatized kid. His parents should have taken action sooner and helped him. Instead they even ignored your phone call. When do you think you'll be going back to work?

JOHN

The police it's still investigating me. So, I don't even know if I'll have a job to go back to once-

FRANK

You're going to be fine.

Anthony enters.

ANTHONY

John, you have a visitor.

FRANK

I gotta go. You get well soon, John. Happy Thanksgiving, Anthony. That Christmas tree is coming out great.

ANTHONY

Thanks, Frank.

Frank leaves. Brief silence.

JOHN  
Who's downstairs?

ANTHONY  
That kid's mother.

JOHN  
What kid's mother?

ANTHONY  
The teen who shot you.

INT. JOHN'S LIVING ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

Cristina is seeping tea.

CRISTINA  
It wasn't until today, when I was cleaning my son's bedroom, that I found his diary and the essay he wrote for your class, when I realized what my poor son was going through since the day that animal raped him.

JOHN  
He made me promise for your sake not to say anything. However, I did leave you a message once I read--

CRISTINA  
I know. My husband never gave me the message. Angel feared that I would kill that bastard and he was right. I would've killed that animal with my bare hands! I'm so sorry my son did this to you. What I don't understand is why? I know for a fact, and it's in his diary, that he was fond of you...

(opens the diary)  
He writes here, the night before the shooting. "I decided to free myself and my good teacher Mr. Flanagan from the ones in this world, who want to hurt us and keep us in hiding and in shame. Today we will both be free, free at last"

(to John)  
I don't understand...

JOHN  
Angel came to visit me here that night, but he never rang the bell. He saw Anthony and I kissing.

CRISTINA  
I still don't understand?

JOHN

I never told him about my sexual orientation. I didn't want to influence him in any way. Plus, that's a part of my life I prefer to keep private. But, Angel in his tormented, confused mind, assumed that I was going through some of the same inner chaos that he was going through and that I lived in fear of being outed. So, he wanted to liberate us both from that burden.

CRISTINA

When his father found out, that last night, he beat him up and told him that...he rather see him dead than a faggot.

JOHN

(closing his eyes)

We've all heard those words from the ones we love most. Statements like that stay with you forever and the scars that they leave in our hearts never heal. Eighteen percent of gay teenagers suffer from depression and gay teens are six times more likely to commit suicide due to stressful life events and burdens. He was really afraid of you finding out about what his uncle did and about he's sexual identity.

CRISTINA

The bastard is finally where he belongs.

JOHN

What do you mean?

CRISTINA

His wife called me today from P.R. and said, he was arrested for molesting some kids in the neighborhood. These kids were not afraid to speak up. I'm leaving to testify on behalf of my son and to make sure that monster gets the maximum jail time.

JOHN

I hope for Angel's eternal piece, that you find strength and happiness again.

CRISTINA

I just wish he had confided in me.

JOHN

Sixty percent of teens don't tell their parents what they're going through. It's not easy for any of us to tell the persons we love most that we are not what they expect us to be. Rejection is our biggest fear. That statement his father made, is what pulled the trigger.

CRISTINA

(crying)

I know...

JOHN

I'll tell you something that might sound strange... But, I believe that for Angel, suicide was a victory. I saw it in his eyes as he was taking his last breath...on the floor facing me... He seemed..happy...at piece.

CRISTINA

Thank you for telling me this. I can see how hard it is for you to recall that moment.

JOHN

I love all my students as if they were my own children and I'm hurting, more than you can imagine.

CRISTINA

They are lucky to have you and now, you'll be able to go back to them. I just came from the police station. I gave the detectives the diary and the essay my son wrote. I also told them what my husband did to Angel. You, the guard and Angel are all victims of what that bastard in Puerto Rico did... You will be cleared of any wrong doing effective immediately.

JOHN AND ANTHONY'S BEDROOM -- EVENING

ON TELEVISION. A young female REPORTER is in front of a crowd of students of John's, from passed and present, in front of the board of education. John is watching.

REPORTER

I'm here in front of the board of ed. where many students from passed and present, of John Flanagan, the high school teacher who was shot and wounded by a student who then shot himself.

(MORE)

REPORTER (CONT'D)

Students are here to get the board to let their teacher go back to the classroom as soon as possible. Here are some of the students who wish to send their beloved teacher and the board of Ed a message. Hi, your name?

MICHAEL

My name is Michael Rizzo, I was a student of Mr. Flanagan in 2011. Mr. Flangan sir: just want you to know that myself as well as other ex students of yours, are here in show of support. You made a difference in my life not only as an educator, but also as an outstanding human being and we all know you are innocent of any wrong doing!

Anthony enters the room.

GINA, MELANIE/LISA

Hi, Mr. F. We miss you! Get well soon sir! We love you and we need you back!

ALEX

Hey, Mr. F. just like you never gave up on me, I'm not giving up on you, sir! I'm going to be a father. I need you to help me graduate. I, I won't make it without you, Mr. F!

REPORTER

There you have it, folks. A very strong sentiment of support here at--

John turns the T.V. off.

ANTHONY

John, those kids need you and you need them. They know how much you care about them and their future, like no else.

JOHN

Okay, enough! I'm tired.

ANTHONY

Tired or depressed?

JOHN

(breaking down)

Have you forgotten what I've been and still going through?

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

In a split second I nearly lost my life! I, I lost my sanity, my reputation... I've lost what-what I love to do most, which is teach...

ANTHONY

I know, John.

JOHN

Have you ever been shot..? Or worse, have you ever witnessed a child you cared for, blow his brains off in front of you...? Anthony, I, I'm not a lawyer... I'm not like you.

John covers his face.

ANTHONY

What is that suppose to mean..?  
Forget it! You're right. I'm sorry.  
Call me if you need anything.

Anthony exits. John lets it all out, crying and yelling.

INT. CRISTINA AND JOSE'S LIVINGROOM -- MORNING

Jose is in the sofa asleep and drunk. Cristina living room and drops down two suitcases by the Jose wakes up.

JOSE

So...that's it? You're leaving, end of discussion.

CRISTINA

There's nothing further to discuss between you and I. You killed the only thing that was keeping us together..

JOSE

I was only trying to protect him.

CRISTINA

Protect him?

JOSE

Yes! From shame and humiliation...  
From AIDS.

CRISTINA

You call what you did and said to him protection? Its from you that he needed protection. You executed him before he even had a chance to defend himself.

(MORE)

CRISTINA (CONT'D)

I would've preferred he had died from AIDS, but with the love and support of his parents around him. You murdered my son and I'll--

JOSE

Our son!

CRISTINA

No, my son! A father is suppose to advice, understand, love and accept his child no matter what. Not humiliate and hurt him the way you did. Angel was afraid not only of us finding out what he was, but he was afraid of himself and of what he was feeling, which was normal.

JOSE

(sarcastically)

Normal?

Cristina goes after her husband holding back tears, in deep anger.

CRISTINA

Yes, normal, for a teenager in search of his true self and his sexuality. But you, his own father, instead of supporting him, talking to him and telling him that no matter what, he was always going to be your son! You beat him up and said the words...the words...that pulled the trigger!

JOSE

(cursing her in Spanish)

Shut the fuck up! Damn it!

CRISTINA

I'm finished here. I got a plane to catch and another murderer to convict. Your brother. You will be getting divorce papers as soon as..that animal is put away.

JOSE

So..you're never going to forgive me?

CRISTINA

(cold, to his face)

Never.

CAR HORN SOUNDS as the two stare at each other for a moment in hate and despair, for the last time.

CRISTINA exits.

Jose picks up the bottle of vodka and smashes it against the front door.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The next day Anthony is finishing decorating the Christmas tree. He walks over to the stereo and inserts a CD of BRYAN ADAMS. John & Anthony's favorite SONG comes on: "Heaven".

Anthony sits on a chair admiring his work of art, his Christmas tree, which is now all decorated except for one item, the angel that goes on top.

Moments later, John is at the bottom of the stairs. He smiles, picks up the angel and shows it to Anthony.

JOHN

I think..this is all that's missing now?

ANTHONY

(taking it, smiling)

This..and you.

Anthony takes the Angel placing it on the tree.

John walks over to the dimmer, dims all the lights as Anthony turns the Christmas lights on.

JOHN

You did a beautiful job. As you do every year.

ANTHONY

My favorite holiday, our favorite song.

John smiles nodding inviting Anthony to dance. They slowly dance, speaking softly to each other's ears

ANTHONY (CONT'D)

I missed you.

JOHN

I missed you more. Thanks for being here.

ANTHONY

Always.

They kiss.

EXT. THE CAVELLIE'S HOME -- NIGHT

We see their home beautifully lid with Christmas lights as snow flakes fall and through a window in the dining room we

can see Gina, her parents, Alex and his mother, are all seated at the table, getting ready to eat.

They all hold hands and vow their heads to give thanks. Millie takes Alex's hand and kisses it. He smiles.

INT. JOHN'S HOME -- DINING ROOM - NIGHT

John and Anthony are also praying before dinner.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL -- JOHN'S CLASSROOM - MORNING

All students are seated quietly. There's a big WELCOME BACK sign with balloons. On the board in graffiti letters the words: Self-respect, Respect for others, Perseverance, Believe, Hope, Knowledge, Freedom, Empowerment.

HALLWAY -- CONTINUOUS

POV -- subject walking towards the classroom. The door opens.

JOHN'S CLASSROOM

All of the students faces drop as they see standing in front of the door, Frank, the substitute and not their beloved teacher.

FRANK

Good morning, all! Sorry I'm late-

ALEX

Yo'! Where is, Mr. Flanagan?

FRANK

I...I don't--

LISA

Listen teach. If our teacher is not coming back today as we were promised, we are all walking out!

ALL

That's right! Come everyone! We are out of--

THEY all start getting up and towards the door.

FRANK

But, guys wait!

The door suddenly opens and John is there smiling.

JOHN

Where do you think you are all going?

Lisa, Melanie and George hug John as other STUDENTS CHEER and scream-

ALL  
Welcome back, Mr. Flanagan!

John, smiles looking at Frank.

JOHN  
Okay. Everyone settle down! You're making, Mr. substitute teacher here jealous!

They ALL CLAP.

FRANK  
Welcome back, John. I'm really moved by how much they love you.

JOHN  
Its a two way street, Frankie. You give so you can receive.

As Frank opens the door, standing there is Jerome.

FRANK  
John? Is this one yours?

JOHN  
Oh, my God, J.T!

ALEX  
Yo, homey. Welcome back!

Frank exits and Jerome enters.

JEROME  
I had to come back. I missed New York too much.

JOHN  
Hey, that happens to all of us who grew up in this beautiful city. But what about your aunt and uncle?

JEROME  
My aunt got a teaching job in the city and we got a beautiful home here in L.I.C. My uncle is also here.

JOHN  
Well, there is your seat. Its still empty and waiting for you.

Jerome walks over and seats next to his girl Tachia.

TACHIA  
Welcome back. I missed you.

JEROME

I missed you too, T.

John stands in front of the class, thinking of what to say next after all that has happened in the last month. He takes them in one by one in gratitude, love, and pride.

JOHN

(moved)

Before we begin... I--I want to thank all of you for what you did. The love and support by all of you and your parents, I'll never forget. We have all endured a very tragic event where an innocent life was lost and many others were affected by it.

(pause)

I just pray and will pray everyday that something like this never happens again and I thank God that none of you were hurt.

LINDA and ALEX lower their heads in shame.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Which brings me to the assignment I gave all of you at the beginning of the school year. The assignment of the wood and the nails, which you were reminded by Mr. Mazzie, to bring in today. Take it out. I don't care if you completed it or not, that wasn't the purpose.

John walks around and sees that many have no nails on the wood and others, like Alex and Linda still have three nails on theirs.

JOHN (CONT'D)

I can see many of you removed most, if not all the nails. Now, my question to all of you is...what do you still see on the piece of wood?

GEORGE

Holes from the nails.

JOHN

Yes, but not exactly, George. That's too ambiguous. Pass your fingers through the wood and tell me what you feel.

Linda starts sobbing.

GINA

I know, sir!

JOHN

I know you do, Gina. But I need...  
(walking over to Linda)  
Linda, I know that you know.

LISA

Of cause she knows. So does, Alex.

JOHN

Lisa, please. Linda, I see you still  
have two nails in your wood. Do you  
care to share?

She can't stop crying. Alex gets it know.

ALEX

I--I also have two nails... If I  
may?

JOHN

Go ahead, son.

ALEX

One nail represents..Angel and the  
second is...you sir. I never got to  
apologize. As far as Angel..I, I'll  
never even get the chance to...

JOHN

That's right. But, what about the  
holes left by the nails? Pass your  
fingers over the holes! What do you  
feel?

ALEX

(voice breaking)  
Scars.

LINDA

Yeah.

JOHN

Right! And no matter what we do  
after we've hurt someone, the wounds,  
although healed, remain forever in  
the hearts of our victims.

LISA

So what, Mr. Flanagan? There are  
always going to be other Alexs' and  
Lindas' in the world.

JOHN

You're right, Lisa. But, I'm  
satisfied knowing that at least this  
Alex and this Linda, have both learned  
this life lesson.

(MORE)

JOHN (CONT'D)

As all of you have, I hope. You will now take this lesson with you and it will be your responsibility to teach it to your own children. Rejection, bullying, intolerance, racism, homophobia, molestation, absent, abusive parents...these are the scars we've all shared. I see true repentance from all of you, for the first time since our first day of class, when you were all hurting one another without an ounce of guilt or remorse. The late, Maya Angelou, a great poet and author, once said: "when we know better, we do better." Thank God!

(voice breaking)

Now, you, you all now better... You all get an A. Now lets-lets move on to--

Jerome raises his hand exited.

JOHN (CONT'D)

Jerome?

JEROME

Sir, before we go on, I would like to share with you and the class a passage from Frederick Douglass.

JOHN

Yes! Go ahead, son.

JEROME

Mr. Douglass writes about a friend. Quote "...thank heaven, I remained but a short time in this distress situation. I was relieved from it by the humane of Mr. David Ruggles, whose vigilance, kindness and perseverance, I shall never forget. I'm glad of an opportunity to express, as far words can, the love and gratitude I bear him..." You Mr. Flanagan, sir, through your vigilance, kindness, perseverance, love and passion for teaching...have inspired all of us and changed our lives forever, for the good. You raise us up each day by teaching us how to be kind, to have self respect and respect for others, regardless of our differences. You've pushed us to strive and to believe above all in ourself's and for that: I am grateful.

One by one ALL students get up in a chorus, repeating: I am grateful.

GINA/MELANIE/LISA  
(together)  
I am grateful.

ALEX  
(moved)  
I am grateful

John, smiles, crying tears of joy.

FADE OUT.