

EVERYONE HOPS A TRAIN

Written by

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C O N T A C T S

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FADE IN:

EXT. JACK LONDON SQUARE - NIGHT

It's a summer night unlike any other in an unexplained way. An elderly gentleman, TOM (mid-60s), dressed in a Hawaiian shirt and khaki shorts, creeps up to a slow-moving freight train blowing its horn and cutting through the historic restaurant district of Oakland, California.

SUPER: "JACK LONDON SQUARE, OAKLAND, CA., PRESENT DAY."

Tom nervously takes shorter steps as he gets closer to the train.

The train WHISTLES again and again to heed its warnings.

We see the backs of four Caucasian college men (18-19) in modern urban clothes and haircuts (later TOMMY, BOB, BILLY and DRAKE), who lunge forward to pull Tom back to safety. Tommy is slim and almost as tall as Bob and Billy. Drake is much taller, square-shouldered and muscular, like a football player. However, we only see their backsides.

We can barely hear their voices over the deafening clanging of the train and blaring horn.

TOMMY

What the hell are you doing? Trying to kill yourself?

Tom wrestles free, turns and points, laughing hysterically.

TOM

I knew you'd do that! That's what good friends do!

BOB

We're not your friends.

BILLY

Never seen you before.

TOM

Friends! They pull you up when you need help and push you clear of danger when they have to!

DRAKE

Let's go. Guy's nuts.

The four young men shake and scratch their heads in disbelief, as Tom yells over the sound of the train.

TOM

Was almost fifty years ago! My three friends and I, 'bout your age, did the bravest and dumbest thing in our lives.

The four young men raise their hands a little, tip their heads like they're rolling their eyes and shrug, unable to avoid Tom's inevitable story.

TOM (CONT'D)

It was summer, 1971...

SUPER: "Inspired by a true story, a lot of embellishment, and a poor memory of some actual events almost 50 years ago."

BEGIN MONTAGE (file footage)

1. Oakland A's <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XAV7F1lHhE8>

TOMMY

The Oakland A's with Reggie Jackson and Vida Blue were the team to beat!

2. Black Panthers <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7lptM-19hgw>

TOMMY (CONT'D)

The Black Panthers were still reeling from the murder of George Jackson in the streets of West Oakland.

3. Grateful Dead <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=srFjDNY8lzg>

TOMMY (CONT'D)

The Grateful Dead were rocking it across the Bay in San Francisco, while Santana was playing in Oakland.

4. Vietnam War <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DAPAsyUvview>

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Many of our high school friends were being drafted and sent to Vietnam to die in an unjust war...

5. Berkeley War Protest
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7tJBCVvTYzM>

TOMMY (CONT'D)

That many of our other friends were
violently protesting here at home.

END MONTAGE

EXT. GROCERY STORE - DAY

We see TOMMY (19) and BOB (18) exit in green grocery store aprons over wrinkled blue-collared shirts, black neckties and cheap slacks. Both boys hide their long hair with short-hair wigs, so basically they're in complete disguise, giving themselves and store customers a false sense of respectability. Tommy's name tag says "Will;" Bob's says, "Way."

TOMMY

Meanwhile, we specialized in
goofing off! Being aimless... and
knowing it! Earning just enough
money to get by. Life wasn't there
to teach us lessons. We were there
to show others how to live life.

(beat)

How to treat every day like a toy!

Tommy and Bob look out at a sea of shopping carts in the parking lot. They hear an angry female Customer (60) yell at them from the entrance to the store.

CUSTOMER (V.O.)

You're out of carts in here!

Tommy chuckles.

TOMMY

Bob, you take this one.

Bob yells back to the lady.

BOB

You don't see any carts in there?

The customer steps out of the store angrily, seeing all the carts in the parking lot.

CUSTOMER

No! I don't see any carts in here!

Tommy is cracking up. He knows what's coming next.

BOB

Huh? You don't see any carts in there. We don't see any out here. We're even!

Tommy shakes his head in wonder, as the furious customer returns to the store.

TOMMY

Thought of a new job title for us "baggers" when we chase carts.

BOB

What's that?

TOMMY

Customer Service Vehicle Coordinators.

BOB

What is it when we bag groceries?

TOMMY

Customer Service Packaging Technicians.

BOB

You think we'll ever be promoted to Cashiers?

TOMMY

What kind of degrading title is cashier? And we never discuss the future. Could be depressing!

BOB

Only one thing to do.

TOMMY & BOB

Make plans for the weekend!

BOB

Got any money?

TOMMY

Went for my rent.

BOB

Gas in your car?

TOMMY

Barely got me to work.

BOB
New girlfriend yet?

TOMMY
Mine don't grow on trees like yours.

BOB
Very funny from a guy whose last girlfriend ran off with a used-car salesman. Steady job! House!

TOMMY
It was the lease he could do. Didn't your last girlfriend run off with a shoe salesman?

BOB
What a heel, huh?

Tommy sees the mean Assistant Manager, MAC (50s), in a white shirt, black tie and black pants race out of the store looking for them.

TOMMY
(whispers to Bob)
Speaking of loafers, Ass-Manager, Mac. Remember when we found his name tag that said A-s-s-t Manager and we used white-out to cover the t. Took him weeks to see it.
(to Mac)
We're on the carts before we clock out, Mac!

Bob and Tom point to their name tags.

BOB
You know what they say, "Where there's a Will, there's a Way!"

The boys RACE off to different areas of parking lot to fetch shopping carts. Tommy looks into the camera, "the fourth wall."

TOMMY
I haven't talked to my father since he threw me out of the house a year ago at age 18 but I can still hear his voice of disapproval in everything I do and every choice I make.
(in his Pop's voice)
(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

"You don't have friends who pull you up. You have friends who weigh you down. You'll never amount to anything!"

Tommy shakes his head in disgust and gathers carts into a long train. Bob has only two carts so far, as he talks directly to the camera.

BOB

We aren't the best employees but we're backed by a very strong mob-organized union. We're like old rifles; they can put us in the corner but they sure couldn't fire us.

Tommy and Bob yell to each other across the parking lot, as they remove their aprons and toss them in a cart.

TOMMY & BOB

Quitin' time!

They yank off their short-hair wigs to reveal long hair. Tommy's is a bushy, curly afro and Bob's hair is in a ponytail. They smile -- freedom.

BOB

What can we do this weekend that's cheap?

TOMMY

Remove all the signs we see that say wet paint? Sit in my tiny apartment and try to read? Die of boredom?

(yells)

Nope! We need an adventure!

BOB

Adventure? Kristine and I could double-date with you and...

(laughs)

Sorry!

TOMMY

Real funny! I'll find another girlfriend someday.

(mumbles)

When I do, it'll be forever!

BOB

What was that?

TOMMY

(yells)

If only I was smart and clever!

(beat)

We should see what Billy is up to.

Tommy returns a long string of carts to one side of store, while Bob returns with just three carts. They laugh.

CUT TO:

EXT. FAST FOOD RESTAURANT, BACK - DAY

Billy steps out of the backdoor of the restaurant with two large garbage bags of trash. He wears a greasy, heavily stained apron, covering a white V-neck T-shirt, blue 501 Levi jeans and white high-top Converse tennis shoes.

Immediately upon shutting the door, he sets the garbage bags down and takes out a pack of cigarettes from his T-shirt shirt pocket. He takes a cigarette and lighter from his pants pocket and lights a smoke. Billy talks to the camera.

BILLY

I've known Tommy since kindergarten. Went to Catholic schools together first through ninth grade. Bob was spared the nuns but he lived in our neighborhood and the three of us have been tight for years.

Takes a drag off the cigarette.

BILLY (CONT'D)

All three of us worked here during high school. Damn we had fun. I'm not sure which one got fired first. Tommy always had the motto, "Treat every day like a toy." He goofed off every day! And Bob? Bob was in a rock n' roll band for years and I was the smart one in the group.

Billy tosses the two garbage bags in the dumpster and turns to the camera again.

BILLY (CONT'D)

Just kidding. We didn't have a smart one in the group!

He ceremoniously removes his greasy apron and tosses it in the dumpster. He smiles, turns and walks to his old rust-bucket of a car.

CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE, BATHROOM/BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

We SEE DRAKE (19), a tall, dark-haired, muscular football player just out of the shower wearing a large white towel around his waist and shaving. There are a half-dozen high school graduation photos of cute girls taped to his mirror.

We HEAR Santana's "Black Magic Woman," playing in the b.g.

Drake shaves with his right hand but suddenly winces in pain. He switches the razor to his left hand and continues shaving.

The phone in his adjacent bedroom RINGS.

He smiles and strides to answer the phone. We see his bedroom is adorned with football pennants, photos and trophies from befitting an all-star athlete.

He picks up the phone.

DRAKE

Hey, Billy. What's going on?

Drake listens, then answers confidently.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Arm's getting better. I took off the cast, doing my own P-T. I got this.

He listens.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Tonight? Nothing. Gotta meet a few friends first but I can meet you guys later for a couple hours. Where?

Drake is surprised.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Jack London Square? What for?

Drake laughs.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Tommy says it's for an adventure? Huh?

Drake hangs up. Puzzled.

EXT. JACK LONDON SQUARE - NIGHT

We SEE Tommy, Bob, Billy and Drake walking slowly toward Jack London Square but still about a block away.

Tommy has a big head of curly brown hair that looks like an Afro. He wears tan corduroy bellbottom pants, a brown, long-sleeved striped shirt without a collar, an oversized plaid shirt and black high-top Converse tennis shoes. He embarrassingly carries the first 100-pages of paperback book, "Don Quixote," with a rubber band around it, like he has no intention of ever reading it! He looks single.

Bob has long brown hair pulled back in a ponytail. He wears a red rock n'roll T-shirt and a tattered blue sweatshirt, blue jeans and hiking boots. He's the epitome of carefree.

Billy has wavy shorter brown hair and is handsomely dressed in a flannel shirt, Levi 501 jeans and white high-tops. He has the confidence of a guy with a hot date later.

Drake, the tall handsome football quarterback, has short-cropped hair and wears straight-leg Levi jeans, a tight polo knit shirt that's shows off his fit body and black high-top Converse tennis shoes. He carries his hooded sweatshirt over his shoulder. He almost struts when he walks but he smiles like an unassuming sports hero. He gives off the vibes of maturity, intelligence and confidence.

SUPER: "The story you are about to see is true. Some names have been changed to protect the innocent. Some parts have been dramatized, embellished, or forgotten as memory dictates."

We ZOOM in to pick up the ongoing, aimless conversation.

TOMMY

I dunno. I could use an adventure.
What do you wanna do?

BILLY

I don't care. Might be going out
with Vicki later.

DRAKE

Don't matter. Friday night. I got a
date later too.

BOB

We should all be trying to meet up with girls later. Kristine and I just started going out...

Tommy stops, a bit angry with Bob and points at his chest.

TOMMY

(interrupting)

Quit reminding me that I don't have a girlfriend, Bob.

BOB

It's your deaf grandma who always says, "Nothing's more expensive than a girl who's free for the evening."

Tommy pushes Bob playfully.

TOMMY

I'd give anything to find the right girl.

BILLY

Cut it out, you two. And Tommy, quit looking for exactly the right girl, when even a wrong girl would do.

Tommy shakes his head and laughs. They all laugh.

TOMMY

I'm over-thinking this.

DRAKE

I've never been accused of over-thinking girls.

They all laugh and continue strolling.

A GTO (or other muscle car) races in front of them as they're about to cross the street. It almost hits them. They jump back but no one gets alarmed.

BOB

Tommy and I got the weekend off. Nothing to do 'til Monday.

TOMMY

Anybody got gas money? We could go to the City.

BOB

Thirty-five cents a gallon? No way.

BILLY

Taking the bus ain't cool.

DRAKE

Beats walkin' but nope. Can't keep borrowing my dad's car and I got no money for Playland or the City.

BILLY

I heard Playland might be closing someday.

Tommy responds like he wasn't paying attention.

TOMMY

Disneyland? Who said Disneyland? That would be an adventure!

BOB

Nobody said Disneyland. That's like 400 miles away! And what's with that book you're carrying? That's why you're single!

Tommy looks away. Shrugs.

TOMMY

Don Quixote. I cut off the first hundred pages. It's like 750 pages long. Bought it three weeks ago, used, for fifty cents.

DRAKE

Summer school?

TOMMY

(laughs)

Nope. My first semester at Laney was last spring. I took one speech class and one creative writing class. Teachers said to work on some things.

(angry)

Okay. Get off my butt!

BILLY

What page you on?

TOMMY

Four. Promised myself I'd finish it.

DRAKE
(smirks)
Wow! Page four!

BOB
Four pages in six weeks. May not
live long enough to finish it!

They all laugh. Tommy pushes Bob with the book pages, then tucks it into his back pocket.

TOMMY
Pacing myself, assholes!

They all laugh as they approach the train tracks just as the train blows its HORN as it approaches from two blocks away. It slows down for safety through the busy area.

Tommy stops and they all do.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
Let's hop the train.

BOB
Nope.

BILLY
Dumb idea.

DRAKE
Really dumb idea.

The freight train slows and blows its horn frequently.

BILLY
It is heading south.

TOMMY
Probably to Disneyland.

DRAKE
Maybe to nowhere. Anybody got any
food? Chips or something? Casper's
hotdogs? Fentons?

BOB
Maybe I'll take the bus home.

Tommy intensely stares at the train.

TOMMY
We could ride it for a few blocks,
then hop off.

The others stare at Tommy like he's nuts.

BILLY
Couple of blocks?

The train moves slowly but the boxcar doors are closed.

BILLY (CONT'D)
Any other bright ideas?

DRAKE
They go slower than I thought.

Tommy sees a tri-level auto-transport train car approaching.

TOMMY
They gotta go slow down through
cities. It's the law.

BOB
What the hell.

Bob starts taking long strides in the direction the train is traveling, getting closer to the train.

TOMMY
We got this!

Billy and Drake follow Bob's lead. Tommy starts taking bigger steps.

BILLY
Bob and I got the front ladder.
Drake and Tommy, back one.

Drake laughs, as all four boys are running the speed of the train.

DRAKE
Crazy!

Bob climbs onto the auto-carrier car's first ladder with Billy right behind.

Drake and Tommy head to the second ladder and Drake athletically leaps up two rungs, but he winces in a little pain.

Tommy has trouble running alongside the ladder as the train gains speed.

TOMMY
I know! I know! I'm the one who
wanted an adventure.

Drake lowers his big muscular right arm to help Tommy, then Drake switches to his left arm.

Tommy grabs the ladder and Drake helps him up. They all turn and crouch behind their ladders and hold on.

EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

The boys yell out exhilarating screams of joy.

TOMMY

That was great! Thanks for the hand, Drake!

DRAKE

That's what friends do.

They laugh but feel the train slowly gaining speed.

BOB

Probably slow down again by the High Street Bridge.

BILLY

We can hop off there.

The train gains more speed.

DRAKE

Gotta be careful getting off. I can't get injured again or my college scholarship could get yanked!

TOMMY

That's terrible.

BILLY

(yells to Drake)
Getting injured? Or losing your scholarship?

Bob laughs as the train gains speed.

DRAKE

Ha! Either! You guys are nuts!

Tommy stares over the edge at the train wheels, which are gaining speed. He laughs.

TOMMY

Yep. Feels like she's slowing down!

Billy laughs.

BILLY
We're screwed.

Drake laughs.

DRAKE
What the hell were you guys
thinking?

Tommy clings tightly to the ladder but laughs.

TOMMY
Thinking? I'm thinking were on an
adventure!

The train gains speed. Everyone looks down to see small, sharp rocks lining the railway and Jack London Square behind them getting smaller and smaller.

DRAKE
Gotta slow down at High Street.

The train gains speed and sounds its horn.

TOMMY
Not so sure about that!

Bob acts surprised.

BOB
Probably slow down at the
Colosseum!

BILLY
Maybe. If there is an A's game.

TOMMY
A's are out of town.

The train passes the Colosseum and gains speed.

BILLY
We can always hitchhike home from
wherever it stops.

DRAKE
Better hope so. Los Angeles by
train must be ten hours away!

The absurdly stupid idea sets into them all.

TOMMY

Who knew?

BOB

Maybe this wasn't our best idea?

DRAKE

Our idea?

BILLY

Yeah, Tommy. A few blocks?

TOMMY

Next stop is probably San Leandro.

The train gains speed. Black soot starts sticking to their clothes. Tommy notices it first, on himself, then Drake sees the soot, laughs and puts on his hooded sweatshirt.

DRAKE

(sarcastic)

Well, this will be fun!

TOMMY

It's why God created dry cleaning!

(yells to Bob)

Hey, Bob! You're the rock climber. Why don't you check to see if any of these cars are unlocked? We could all cruise to Disneyland in comfort and style!

BOB

Great idea. Hang on, everyone.

Bob clings to ladders, cars and railings and checks every door. The train shakes and Bob loses balance but hangs on and keeps checking car doors.

Tommy, concerned, watches Bob carefully.

BOB (CONT'D)

Nothing so far.

BILLY

They're afraid we might steal a car?

DRAKE

They can't lock them all!

BOB

(laughs)

Tell them that!

Drake checks a few cars close to him but sees that the train is gaining speed.

The train turns slightly and blows its horn and Bob nearly gets thrown off -- but he holds on.

BOB (CONT'D)
I'll try the top level.

TOMMY
No way! Too dangerous!

BOB
I've free-climbed rocks that only the best climbers in Yosemite do.

DRAKE
They weren't moving on a rickety train!

Bob ignores them and checks the doors of the cars on the top deck.

Tommy looks worried.

Tense moments.

BOB
All locked. We're screwed.

TOMMY
Can't break in! That's grand theft auto and probably train robbery all at once!

Bob climbs back next to Billy.

BOB
Who would have guessed?

TOMMY
Somebody in their right mind?
(beat)
Train's gotta stop somewhere!

Billy yells down to Tommy and Drake.

BILLY
Hold on, we'll join you so we don't have to yell.

Billy's a little nervous as he slowly moves down the train car.

Bob laughs at Billy.

BOB
Hope the engineer doesn't slam on
the brakes!

Bob makes the journey easily. Tommy shakes his head.

TOMMY
Whose idea was this?

They all laugh and point to Tommy, as the train gains speed and the soot begins to stick all over them (but they don't seem to notice or care).

BILLY
San Leandro could be a while but
maybe it'll stop there!

Drake shrugs and laughs.

DRAKE
Why? What makes you think so?

BILLY
I don't know. Think I'll miss my
date with Vicki?

TOMMY
Not if she gives up her job at
Kentucky Fried Chicken and becomes
a hobo!

BILLY
I'll stop at the next pay phone and
call her. She'll understand.

TOMMY
(laughs)
Sure she will! Three of us worked
for KFC in high school and look
where we are today!

They laugh.

DRAKE
Is everything funny to you three?

BILLY
Not Vietnam.

BOB

Not Nixon.

Billy, Bob and Drake stare at Tommy.

TOMMY

I'm thinking.

(beat)

Nope! Everything has a funny side!
 Vietnam gave us the movie *Mash*,
 Nixon gave us the phrase *Tricky
 Dick* and tonight is going to be a
 load of laughs!

They all laugh. Then, Tommy looks away with a serious look.

DRAKE

Get comfortable and hold on. Looks
 like we'll be here for a while.

The train shakes as it moves along. The four young men crouch
 behind the last car and settle in.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Look at it this way; we could all
 be dodging bullets in Vietnam.

TOMMY

Scary thought thinking it all comes
 down to a draft board lottery
 number based on your birthday.

BILLY

Ha! My number was 362. Scott free!

DRAKE

That was lucky. I was 349. And
 what? Friends with lottery numbers
 under 40 went straight to Nam?

BOB

I got eleven based on my birthday,
 so I filed for a C-O, Conscientious
 Objector. Said my strong Catholic
 faith wouldn't allow killing.

TOMMY

Thou shalt not kill communist
 peasants defending their homes and
 their babies?

BOB

(laughs)

My uncle, Barba Louis, was ready to kill me and he goes to church every Sunday.

Tommy looks away.

TOMMY

It's just really fucked up that a person's life is reduced to a government-sponsored roulette wheel based on your birthday.

BOB

And bad luck!

TOMMY

(angry)

What if your mom gave birth at one-minute to midnight, or one-minute after midnight and the difference was going to Nam or not? It's a two-minute difference, not a whole day! Life or death?

(screams)

It's fucking crazy! Not bad luck!

DRAKE

Settle down. You'll rattle the train!

BILLY

My cousins went to Nam but they were on ships and didn't see any action, except they transported the injured soldiers and dead bodies back home. Messed them up. Kids their age without half their faces, missing legs and arms. That shit don't ever leave you, man!

BOB

Anybody got any gum. I keep breathing in soot.

TOMMY

No gum.

BILLY

Nope.

DRAKE

Nope, but still not as bad off as those dead or wounded soldiers, so tough it out!

TOMMY

(laughs)
You don't hang out with us much!
We're not tough.

DRAKE

I hang out with a bunch of different groups of friends.

BOB

We watch war protests in Berkeley, more as an entertainment. National Guard dudes can get rough.

TOMMY

Tell him about the guy with the gasoline.

Bob laughs.

BOB

Saw one idiot drop lit matches into a can of gasoline. Must have been super-stoned! Lucky it didn't blow up!

Everyone laughs. Drake looks away but only Tommy sees it.

The train shakes. The autos rattle. The teens hold on tight.

BILLY

(laughs)
Smoking weed can make you do stupid things.

Drake and Billy laugh.

TOMMY

Wouldn't know. Do plenty of stupid things without it!

BOB

Yes, you do!

DRAKE

This was pretty dumb!

Everyone laughs.

BILLY

Easy for Drake to say. He's the only one us with a good future!

Billy, Bob and Tom glare at Drake.

DRAKE

Hey, dudes, I didn't do anything wrong! Don't look at me! I didn't bring up the future!

The other boys criticize Drake in a joking way.

BILLY

Future football star quarterback in Kansas!

BOB

Dad's a professor at Berkeley or something.

TOMMY

My dad's a milkman.

BILLY

Civil servant and insurance salesman.

BOB

Mine was a bum who ran off!

Drake is uncharacteristically defensive.

DRAKE

I earned my college scholarship!

BILLY

All-star. We know.

BOB

Probably good at school too.

DRAKE

Make it seem like a bad thing.

BILLY

Probably graduate from college, get a great job and drive a sports car in Hollywood.

Tense moments.

TOMMY

(laughs)

We're just jealous. You got your dad's brains and we got stuck with our dads' brains. Milkman, insurance salesman and a bum. Like the draft lottery, only with brains.

Everyone laughs and tension is eased a bit.

BILLY

(to Drake)

Your dad a star football player too?

DRAKE

Real good! Played college ball.

BILLY

At Saint Theresa's, Tommy and me played baseball against Drake at Saint Augustus. You were like a grown man playing against a bunch of tiny Catholic kids. Home run. Home run. Home run.

TOMMY

It was like being fed to the lions at the Colosseum in Rome.

DRAKE

Right. Ancient history. Move on!

They HEAR a train's horn off in the distance.

BOB

That can't be good.

TOMMY

What?

BOB

Train is approaching.

The train slows a little, then jerks to the right, with loud scrapes of steel on steel.

BOB (CONT'D)

Switched tracks!

BILLY

Where we going now?

DRAKE
Still going south.

TOMMY
The other train's going north.

BOB
Can't let the engineers on the
other train see us when they pass
by.

TOMMY
Quick! Hide behind the cars 'til it
passes.

In a rush of adrenalin, Tommy leads the boys to the west side of the train car and they duck and hold on tight as the northbound train passes within inches of the train car to the east of them.

The train horns sound and they're terrifyingly loud.

When the northbound train finishes passing, the boys breathe a sigh of relief.

They relax their grip.

The train jerks to the left, with loud scrapes of steel on steel and the boys hold on tight again.

All the boys could do is laugh.

BOB
Ranks right up there with the
dumbest thing we've done, Tommy.

TOMMY
Borrowing that Vespa and driving
down the Berkeley Hills and finding
out the brakes didn't work!

BOB
Thought we were gonna die for sure!

BILLY
Tommy, remember you and your
brothers tossing that full-sized
dummy of a kid in a Halloween
costume into the middle of Broadway
Terrace.

TOMMY
Cars were skidding to a stop and
honking like crazy.

BILLY
Laughed like hell.

TOMMY
How 'bout when we used to catch the
backs of buses, standing on the
bumper and holding on the
advertisements?

Billy laughs hysterically.

BOB
'Til I fell off and got pretty
banged up!

The others laugh at Bob.

DRAKE
You guys sound lucky to be alive.

BILLY
Or not in jail! Cops got me for
stealing a car from Temescal Lake
but the keys were in it.

TOMMY
Not your fault then. Joyriding.

Drake laughs and shakes his head in disgust at Tommy.

DRAKE
Missing the point, Tommy. It wasn't
his car, dummy!

Tommy glares at Drake in a moment of tension.

TOMMY
You weren't smart enough not to get
stuck on this stupid train with the
rest of us idiots, were you?

Drake looks serious and forms a fist with his right hand.

Bob, Billy and Tommy stare at Drake waiting to see if he's
going to slug Tommy in the face.

Drake bursts out laughing, surprising everyone.

DRAKE
Guess I wasn't.

Everyone laughs but when the laughter ceases, Drake looks
away and his smile disappears.

Billy breaks the momentary silence, as they pass the Oakland Colosseum.

BILLY
How 'bout that Reggie Jackson?

TOMMY
Longest homer in All-Star history!

The story electrifies the boys.

BOB
Oakland A's rule!

DRAKE
Only thing that stopped it from going 600 feet was the ball hit a light tower.

BILLY
Even the pros were amazed! Harmon Killebrew, Hank Aaron, Frank Howard!

TOMMY
Sure gave our town a boost!

BILLY
Everybody smiled for weeks!

Billy, Bob and Tommy see Drake look away sadly.

BOB
Dude, what's the matter?

DRAKE
Reggie was a last-minute addition to the lineup after the Minnesota Twins' Tony Oliva had to drop out with an injury. Makes me wonder about my arm.

BILLY
Man, that's the money-maker.

TOMMY
How bad is it?

DRAKE
Don't know yet.

BILLY
Can you lose your scholarship?

Drake turns and glares at the boys like they crossed a line. He answers in a pointed manner.

DRAKE

Really? The Future! You wanna go there?

Silence.

BILLY

No. No.

Bob laughs to ease the tension.

BOB

You kidding me? We do everything we can to avoid the future!

TOMMY

Ya-man! That would suggest we have the ability to plan! Take tonight, for instance!

Everyone chuckles but this time Tommy looks away and Bob notices.

BOB

Not having a plan bothers you, doesn't it, Tommy?

Tommy snaps back.

TOMMY

Not as much as not having a girlfriend but it bugs me when people ask, 'What do you wanna be when you grow up?' and I got no fucking idea.

BILLY

Shit! Who does?

BOB

I sure as hell don't know.

DRAKE

I wanna be an architect.

Tommy points to Drake.

TOMMY

See! When my teachers, folks, or relatives ask me that, just to shut them up, I'd tell 'em I wanted to be background vocalist in an all-black female vocal group.

They chuckle.

BOB

Your brother, Georgie, used to say he wanted to be a shepherd.

(beat)

Just to be able to attend the annual shepherd's convention.

TOMMY

Older brother Jimmy would tell 'em he wanted to be a vegetable.

DRAKE

Parents must have been very proud.

TOMMY

Priest, cop, or teamster were the only acceptable answers in my family.

BILLY

Parents shouldn't ask that question unless they're ready to take any answer given!

TOMMY

Exactly my point. How 'bout, I just want be happy?!

(beat)

Change that! In love.

They all nod in agreement until Drake adds...

DRAKE

But that won't pay the bills.

Bob laughs.

BOB

You could hop trains for a living. Ya know, with that girlfriend you don't have!

BILLY

While being a background singer.

Tommy laughs.

TOMMY

Lot of help you guys are!

The train jerks to the left, picks up speed and boys have to hang on tightly as the train car shakes.

BILLY

Doesn't look like it's stopping anytime soon.

The train slowly passes the industrial neighborhoods of several towns and cities. We pick up bits of the ongoing conversation as the train moves along.

SUPER: "San Leandro"

Tommy and the boys get philosophical.

TOMMY

Everyone hops a train sometime in their lives.

BILLY

(laughs)
You mean, like a passenger train.

BOB

Yeah. On the inside.

DRAKE

Or the club car.

TOMMY

I mean, they go on an adventure to learn more of the world, or themselves.

BILLY

We learned Tommy's an idiot.

Everyone laughs and shrugs.

BOB

We took a risk.

DRAKE

Like "Call of the Wild," except Buck the dog was stolen and forced to go to Alaska.

TOMMY

We did hop the train at Jack London Square.

(laughs)

Coincidence? I think not.

Billy laughs.

BILLY

You do think not. That's why we're here.

TOMMY

My point is, we gotta take adventures.

Tommy whips out his partial book of Don Quixote from his pocket.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Back cover of Don Quixote said the crazy old man thought he was a knight and went on a bunch of adventures.

BOB

So why are you only on page four?

Tommy slaps Bob on the shoulder with the book.

TOMMY

Been busy hopping trains.

LATER

The book is back in Tommy's pocket and the boys continue laughing.

SUPER: "San Lorenzo"

DRAKE

What say we look for something to eat when we stop?

TOMMY

Near Disneyland?

BILLY

I'd settle for Hayward.

BOB

Yeah. It'll probably stop in Hayward.

SUPER: "Hayward"

The Train rolls on but the boys are still laughing.

DRAKE
Might be a little screwed.

BILLY
Can't be a little screwed.

TOMMY
It's like being a little pregnant.

BOB
We're really screwed!

SUPER: "Union City"

The faces look gloomier and covered with more soot.

Billy sounds a little angry at Tommy.

BILLY
Santana came the City, not Oakland.

TOMMY
(defensive)
I didn't know, okay?

BOB
Billy's right. Carlos Santana met
the keyboard player, Gregg Rolie,
at a party that was busted by the
pigs.

DRAKE
Read it too. In Rolling Stone.

Tommy looks away.

BILLY
The ditched the party out the back
door and hid in a tomato patch.

TOMMY
Tomato patch in the City?

BILLY
They talked about music all night,
and the Santana Blues Band was
born.

TOMMY
Okay, okay. Rolling Stone, huh!

SUPER: "Newark"

No one is smiling. Their faces are black.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Look at the bright side! Only about
nine more hours to Disneyland.

The boys hit Tommy as they snarl.

BILLY

Idiot!

DRAKE

Fool!

Bob laughs and protects Tommy with his arm.

BOB

I agree. It's bound to get better
from here.

TOMMY

Might be the soot in my eyes, but I
don't see how.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

The boys are covered with soot and very tired when the train
finally slows down in a pitch-black train yard.

BOB

Hey, we're stopping!

BILLY

Sure as hell ain't Disneyland!

DRAKE

South of Newark and North of San
Jose. Nowheres-ville!

Tommy is happy!

TOMMY

We made it! Safe and sound.

SUPER: "Freight Yard, Milpitas, California"

BOB

Did you hear that?

TOMMY

What?

BOB
Dogs barking.

DRAKE
Close by?

BOB
Don't think so.

DRAKE
Freeway has to be east.

They hear two dogs barking.

BILLY
German shepherds?

BOB
(sarcastic)
Great!

TOMMY
Probably Lassie coming to save us!

The boys glare at Tommy.

The train squeals to a stop. Two Engineers (50s) hop off the train wearing overalls and blue long-sleeve shirts and ball caps. They carry long-handled flashlights and begin searching the train for hobos and train-hoppers.

The boys whisper.

BILLY
Shit!

BOB
We gotta get out of here.

Drake hops off and runs like a track star due east.

DRAKE
This way! To the Nimitz Freeway.

The others follow. The dogs bark louder and are clearly closing in.

TOMMY
Run!

ENGINEER #1
Hey, you! Come back here!

BOB
 (laughs)
 Lassie, my assie!

The dogs give chase.

The boys have to hop over railroad tracks and between railway cars, to outpace the dogs but the dogs are gaining.

The dogs bark louder and the boys run faster. Drake is in the lead by five yards and the others are close behind but Tommy brings up the rear.

Drake sees the cyclone fence first.

DRAKE
 Ten-foot fence!

BILLY
 Shit!

TOMMY
 Shit!

BOB
 No problem!

DRAKE
 Single strand of barbed wire around
 the top.

BOB & BILLY & TOMMY
 Shit!

Drake squeals in pain but bites his tongue as he climbs the fence.

The dogs are close behind when Drake looks back to see the others racing to the fence.

DRAKE
 Pick a low spot for the barbed
 wire.

The other boys look up and judge their climb better as the dogs close in. One dog jumps at Tommy's bell-bottom pants and just missed them. Two Engineers arrive with flashlights and the two dogs bark, as the boys climb down the other side of the fence.

The boys laugh as they run to the lights of a restaurant.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The boys approach the restaurant searching their wallets and pocket change. They're laughing and smiling after their escape from the dogs and men at the train yard.

TOMMY

What an adventure, huh?

The boys laugh as they punch Tommy in the arm.

BILLY

Idiot. I could have been on a date with Vicki!

DRAKE

Could've got somebody hurt!

BOB

Lassie coming to save us?

The boys laugh.

TOMMY

Anybody got money?

DRAKE

Phone call money.

TOMMY

This sounds promising. Local or long distance?

Drake glares at Tommy.

BILLY

Buck and pocket change.

TOMMY

Enough for one cup of coffee to share and a side of pancake.

BILLY

You mean, pancakes? Plural?

TOMMY

Not if we split them. Bob, how much you got?

BOB

Under two bucks.

Tommy shakes his head and paces.

TOMMY

We're going to need a plan. What if a handsome, tall, dark quarterback can sweet-talk the waitress into buying us breakfast.

Drake looks stunned.

DRAKE

I'm filthy from the soot.

BILLY

We all are but you had the hooded sweatshirt.

BOB

Wash your face and hands. You'll look like a million dollars.

TOMMY

Which we don't have. You and I are the cleanest, so we'll go in first. I'll wash up fast and get us a table. Drake, you really clean up then join me at the table. Drake enters second. Billy and Bob will enter a few minutes later and clean up in the restroom before joining us.

The boys begin laughing.

DRAKE

You think this will work?

Tommy looks at his filthy friends.

TOMMY

Not a chance!

They all laugh louder as Tommy heads into the restaurant.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tommy sits alone at the table with four menus and four cups of coffee poured. Drake is making a phone call at the payphone at the entrance, Billy and Bob are still washing up in the bathroom.

Tommy pulls out the partial copy of Don Quixote (first 100 pages) from his pocket and begins to read page four. Tommy points to the words as he reads slowly, forming the words with his lips silently.

The Waitress comes by to warm up his coffee. Tommy looks up and smiles.

TOMMY

Thanks.

WAITRESS

What ya reading?

TOMMY

Don Quixote but it's not spelled like it sounds, the bookstore lady told me and it's like 750 pages long, so I just took the first 100 pages with me.

WAITRESS

For your little train adventure?

She glances out the window at Drake.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Your friend Drake told me all about it. Silly boys!

TOMMY

It was pretty stupid. My idea, so I gotta get us out of this mess.

She glances toward the bathroom and chuckles.

WAITRESS

Saw you tar babies come in. Bet that bathroom's a mess.

Tommy laughs.

TOMMY

You have no idea...

CUT TO:

INT. BATHROOM - NIGHT

Billy and Bob LAUGH and are using all the paper towels and toilet paper to get clean but the restroom is black with soot EVERYWHERE!

Billy stares down at his previously white high-top Converse to see them as charcoal black as his jeans are.

BILLY

My shoes were white.

BOB
So was the bathroom before we
showed up!

BACK TO:

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The waitress steals glances at Drake, while she hovers with the coffee pot.

WAITRESS
How old is Drake? Twenty? Twenty-one?

TOMMY
Nineteen. Football star in Kansas.
Gonna be an architect.

She smiles at Drake again as he smiles back while on the phone.

WAITRESS
My, my.
(to Tommy)
Don't point to each word and mouth
the words as you read and you'll
read faster.

Tommy, embarrassed, pulls his finger from the book and shoves the book in his back pocket.

TOMMY
Never good at reading.

WAITRESS
If you picked up Don Quixote,
something tells me you will be.

Tommy is surprised.

TOMMY
You read Don Quixote? I mean, the
whole thing? It's huge!

WAITRESS
English major in college.
(points to the book)
Senile knight errant battles
imaginary antagonists for an
unrequited love.

Tommy looks stunned and bewildered by her vocabulary.

TOMMY

Huh?

WAITRESS

Going for my teaching certificate now. Hence, the night shifts.

TOMMY

I'm working my way through too. Only took two classes so far.

The Waitress sees Drake strutting towards the table. She's breathless for a moment but whispers quickly to Tommy.

WAITRESS

Keep reading. You'll get better.

Tommy smiles at the waitress but sees that she's smiling at Drake.

TOMMY

Thanks, I will.

DRAKE

(to the waitress)
Coffee would be great, Gorgeous.

The waitress spins fully around, flirting with Drake as she pours his coffee. She rests her hand on the table near Drake.

WAITRESS

Sure thing, Handsome. Will you boys be ordering something besides coffee?

Drake places his hand on hers and charms the waitress with his biggest smile, as Bob and Billy join the table from the bathroom.

DRAKE

My colleagues and I find ourselves financially embarrassed after our spontaneous train adventure.

(point to Tommy)
Thanks to this idiot.

The waitress smiles at Tommy briefly, then glares at Bob and Billy who have clean faces and hands and wet hair but soot-covered clothes.

WAITRESS

Geez! What's the bathroom look like?

BOB
Could use more paper towels.

BILLY
And toilet paper.

BOB
I wouldn't go in right away.

Drake stands and steps up close to the waitress and smiles.
Drake whispers to her.

DRAKE
Maybe we can share a short stack of
pancakes, before hitching back to
Oakland? We sure are hungry after
those mean German shepherds chased
us. You understand, don't you?

Drake winks at the waitress. The waitress smirks.

WAITRESS
Freshmen! Ha! I'll see what I can
do.

She winks at Drake as she departs to the kitchen.

DRAKE
Called my dad to pick us up.
(chuckles)
He said no and hung up. Long
distance. Cost me the first dime
then thirty-five cents for the
first three minutes that lasted
thirty seconds.

TOMMY
That's most of your money!

BILLY
I'll call Vickie. She'll pick us
up.

BOB
There goes another forty-five
cents. I won't bother trying to
call Kristine.

BILLY
Come on, Bob. You can help me
explain.

Billy and Bob stand. Tommy's laughs at Billy's shoes.

TOMMY

White high-tops. Good choice.

Everyone laughs as Billy and Bob exit to the payphone.

Drake rubs his right shoulder as Tommy looks back toward the kitchen but Tommy looks back and catches him in pain.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Hurt your arm climbing the fence?

Drake glares at Tommy.

DRAKE

Better not say a word, or I'll tell 'em you can't read without mouthing the words. I saw you from the payphone.

TOMMY

Geez! No big deal. Don't really care.

Tommy looks at Drake to see the pain he's feeling.

DRAKE

Big deal to me. Scholarship money, education. My future down the fucking drain if our back-up quarterback takes over. Local boy from Kansas.

TOMMY

I won't say nothin'.

DRAKE

Better not.

TOMMY

But you're the most mature and educated of all of us. You'll be fine.

Drake whispers sadly.

DRAKE

It's all a facade.

Tommy turns his head. He doesn't understand the word.

TOMMY

Whatever! I won't say nothin'! Just thought you always had it all-together, that's all!

DRAKE

You think it's easy leaving home,
going to a state that never heard
of Santana and playing football
with a bunch of Neanderthals who
are out to kill you to make
themselves look better? It's fucked
up. I'm...

Billy and Bob enter, and Drake hears them. He immediately changes his persona to that of a confident scholar-athlete and speaks loudly and smiles.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

Saying that hopping that train
tonight was the dumbest thing I
ever did!

The waitress returns with four full breakfasts.

DRAKE (CONT'D)

And the smartest thing I've ever
did was to come in here and meet...

WAITRESS

Diana.

DRAKE

Diana! How can we ever repay you?

WAITRESS

It's just me and the cook tonight.
Leave a tip and long after you're
gone, I'll tell him you dine and
ditched.

Drake stands and kisses Diane on the cheek.

DRAKE

You are the sweetest...

WAITRESS

(interrupting)
Cut the crap. Pay me back if you
pass through again.

She smiles and hands out the breakfasts. The boys smile.

BOB

In that case, we could use a bit
more coffee!

Everyone laughs and the boys shove in pancakes like there's no tomorrow.

The waitress wipes down the counter several feet away, glancing over at Drake. Tommy sees this and excuses himself from the table.

TOMMY

I'm gonna ask Diana a few questions.

BOB

You're going to hit on the waitress.

TOMMY

She's really smart.

DRAKE

(smirks)
Sure she is.

Tommy glares at Drake and stands.

TOMMY

Be right back. Don't eat my pancakes.

BOB & BILLY

(laugh)
Right!

Tommy walks over to the waitress and whispers.

TOMMY

That stuff you said about Don Quixote.

She whispers back.

WAITRESS

Senile knight errant battles imaginary antagonists for an unrequited love.

Tommy smiles, infatuated.

TOMMY

I get senile.

WAITRESS

Knight errant is a medieval knight wandering in search of chivalrous adventures.

TOMMY

Chivalrous?

WAITRESS
 Courteous and gallant, especially
 toward women.

TOMMY
 And the rest?

WAITRESS
 Imaginary antagonists?

TOMMY
 I get imaginary.

The waitress smiles, clearly enjoying educating Tommy.

WAITRESS
 Antagonists? The bad guys in the
 story. Don Quixote battled a
 windmill he thought was a dragon.

TOMMY
 I didn't get to that part in the
 book yet. And that big word before
 love? Unrequited?

WAITRESS
 You're a good listener. That will
 serve you well. Unrequited means
 his love from Dulcinea del Toboso
 was not returned or rewarded.

TOMMY
 That's fucked up.

The waitress looks disapproving at Tommy.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
 I mean, sad.

The waitress smiles again.

WAITRESS
 His love for her was pure and
 chaste, needing nothing in return.

Tommy stops and thinks, while his buddies break out laughing
 at their table.

BILLY
 Those dogs might a been wolves!

Drake, Billy and Bob laugh.

Tommy turns back to the waitress.

TOMMY

I get it. The train engineers and dogs were our antagonists tonight.

The waitress leans in, touches Tommy's hand and whispers advice.

WAITRESS

I'm sure your antagonists go far beyond angry dogs and train engineers. You're running from something more.

Tommy turns his head like he doesn't understand.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

Edward Thorndike, a really smart psychologist and educator said, "Colors fade, temples crumble, empires fall but wise words endure."

Tommy smiles and he and the waitress share a moment.

WAITRESS (CONT'D)

And, the wolves are eating your pancakes.

Tommy races back to the table to resounding laughter.

EXT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

The four boys waddle out with smiles. Drake points toward the freeway.

TOMMY

That waitress, Diana, is the coolest! So smart...

Everyone ignores Tommy, as Drake interrupts.

DRAKE

Freeway's over there.

Billy slaps Drake on the back.

BILLY

That's the highway. The free way was the way you got us breakfast!

DRAKE

The high way was how I got into this mess.

Drake and Billy laugh.

BOB

Either way, we gotta get out of here before they see the men's room.

TOMMY

You guys didn't clean up after yourselves?

BOB

Hell no.

BILLY

All four of us made the mess.

Drake laughs first but they all crack up.

DRAKE

Let's get out of here!

The boys run.

EXT. FREEWAY ENTRANCE - NIGHT

The boys sit on a deserted northbound freeway entrance with their thumbs out. They laugh.

BILLY

Could we have picked a freeway entrance with less traffic?

TOMMY

Maybe in Antarctica.

DRAKE

Who picks up four hitchhikers?

TOMMY

Charles Manson cult members bus?

BOB

I agree. No one is going to pick up all four of us. Tommy, think we should go to Santa Cruz for the weekend?

Drake and Billy look at Bob like he's nuts.

TOMMY

With only a buck twenty-nine between us?

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

That's stretching the budget but I like the idea. Santa Cruz mountains, coastal redwoods, the Boardwalk and beach? Count me in!

Drake and Billy look at Tommy like he's nuts.

BILLY

Can't be serious after that horrible train ride.

DRAKE

Dogs and security guards chasing us.

TOMMY

We're off work 'til Monday!

BOB

Can't end the adventure too early.

A small Volkswagen Beetle turns to enter the freeway and stops. A Hippy driver (20s) rolls down the passenger window.

HIPPY

Where ya heading?

BILLY

Oakland.

HIPPY

I'm headin' to the City. Grateful Dead concert at the Fillmore. Got room for two, man. Lot a shit in the back. Sorry.

DRAKE

We're in, Billy. Thanks, man.

Drake and Billy hop in. Bob and Tommy laugh.

BOB

Don't worry 'bout us, dudes.

TOMMY

We'll be fine. Two more days on a buck-twenty-nine. No problem!

BOB

We'll send you a postcard from Santa Cruz!

TOMMY
If we can afford the six-cent
stamp.

DRAKE
(laughs)
If you two can write a whole
postcard!

The VW Bug pulls away.

Bob and Tommy walk to the deserted southbound freeway while
laughing and talking.

BOB
My grandpa has that old cabin in
Boulder Creek.

TOMMY
Little over an hour away? Highway
9, right? Any food in the cabin?

BOB
We'll have to break in and see.

TOMMY
Break in?

BOB
Grandpa will shit a brick when he
finds out.

TOMMY
Tell him I needed a vacation.

BOB
That'll help.

TOMMY
Never so truthful in my life.

Bob smiles.

BOB
The adventure continues!

TOMMY
If we ever get a ride!

BOB
Drake's a cool dude. Sure has got
it together.

Tommy sounds unconvinced.

TOMMY

Think so?

BOB

Football star, goes to a real university, not some crummy junior college and gonna be an architect! Way more grown up than we are! You don't think so?

TOMMY

I don't know. Everybody's got problems. When we met up at Jack London Square, you didn't think Drake was stoned out of his mind?

BOB

Hid it well if he was.

TOMMY

Exactly. Hid it from all of us.

BOB

Don't matter.

TOMMY

Does matter. I bet he was drunk, stoned, and on beanies.

BOB

You're crazy.

TOMMY

Pupils dilated, bloodshot eyes, only had one cup of coffee.

BOB

What are you? A narc?

TOMMY

Just saying, he has problems, and hiding 'em so well, even from us, is more of problem.

BOB

Maybe you're right.

TOMMY

I dunno.

Bob laughs, changing the mood.

BOB
He's got no problems attracting
women... like you!

TOMMY
(laughs)
Gotta keep reminding me. I hit a
dry spell, that's all.

BOB
Like Death Valley!

TOMMY
Okay, I get it.

Bob laughs louder!

BOB
Like the Sahara Desert!

TOMMY
Okay, lighten up!

Bob laughs even louder!

BOB
Like the sun!

Tommy cracks up and laughs with Bob, as they stand with their
thumbs out with no cars in sight.

TOMMY
Dollar-twenty-nine cents and two
days to kill. What could go wrong?

A California Highway Patrol car races next to them out of
nowhere! Tommy and Bob are unfazed as the PATROLMAN (30s)
steps out with a large flashlight pointed at their faces. The
Patrolman speaks in an authoritative voice.

PATROLMAN
What've we got here?

BOB
Not heading to Santa Cruz, are you?

TOMMY
Even a ride to Los Gatos would be
great.

The Patrolman is angry.

PATROLMAN

I'm not offering you a ride!
(shines the light in their
eyes)
You boys been drinking or smoking
grass? Take any pills?

TOMMY

No, Sir. Just pancakes and coffee.

The patrolman shines the light at the boys' clothes and shoes.

PATROLMAN

How'd you get so filthy?

BOB

(laughs)
Walking the train tracks.

The patrolman shines the light in their eyes again.

PATROLMAN

Show me some ID! You think it's
funny...?

The boys take out their driver's licenses and hand them to the officer.

TOMMY

(interrupts)
Gotta admit it's kinda funny.

PATROLMAN

While people are dying in Vietnam
and in race riots all over...

BOB

(interrupts)
We're just hitching to Santa Cruz
to swim in the ocean, walk the
Boardwalk and hitchhike home.

TOMMY

Promise not to riot or kill
anybody.

The patrolman studies the ID's.

PATROLMAN

Long way from Oakland. Could arrest
you right now for vagrancy.

TOMMY

Vagrancy? What's that?

PATROLMAN

State of California penal code
against unemployed bums wandering
from place to place. Alcoholics,
drug addicts, prostitutes...

BOB

I'd never accept money for...

PATROLMAN

(yells)
And homeless and penniless!

BOB

We both have homes. Tommy pays rent
for a really shitty studio
apartment. We both work for
Safeway.

TOMMY

As Customer Service Packaging
technicians.

PATROLMAN

Bag boys?

BOB

And Customer Service Vehicle
Coordinators.

PATROLMAN

You fetch shopping carts?

BOB

Proud NFL-EIO union members.

TOMMY

That's AFL-CIO union members.

BOB

Both college students, and we're
far from penniless.

TOMMY

We got a buck twenty-nine for
emergencies. Food emergencies,
medical, dental...

The Patrolman shakes his head in disgust.

PATROLMAN

Couple of filthy hippies going
nowhere.

TOMMY

Santa Cruz, redwood forests, the
beach, the Boardwalk.

PATROLMAN

They'll arrest you bums for
sleeping on the beach!

BOB

Staying with my Grandpa. Nice,
luxurious cabin in Boulder Creek.

TOMMY

Butler, maid, chef, ocean view...

BOB

Sooner we get there the better, so
if you could see fit to drive us to
a busier intersection...

The Patrolman tosses their ID's to the ground.

PATROLMAN

Get lost! Don't want to see you two
hippies ever again! Got it?

The Patrolman angrily returns to his car.

TOMMY

Does that mean we don't get a ride?

The Patrolman races away, as the boys pick up their IDs.

BOB

I learned my lesson. Always carry
at least a penny on us.

TOMMY

Wonder if Don Quixote was a
considered a vagrant?

BOB

Get past page four and you might
find out.

TOMMY

Jesus Christ wandered around from
place to place, homeless,
unemployed, penniless.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Think that patrolman would have arrested him and thrown the Good Book at him?

BOB

(laughs)

I don't get why he stopped to harass us, two fine upstanding members of the community.

TOMMY

Yeah, we'd never do anything wrong!

EXT. CABIN - DAWN

It's dark but rapidly approaching sunrise. We see the front of a small, rustic cabin in the Santa Cruz Mountains, surrounded by a thick forest.

We HEAR a small window in the backdoor being smashed by a rock. CRASH!

We SEE Bob and Tommy breaking into the cabin. Tommy laughs as Bob reaches in and unlocks the back door.

BOB

We'll pay Grandpa for the window.

TOMMY

And for all the food we're about to eat. Took us forever to get here. One-hour away, you said.

BOB

Three different rides.

TOMMY

Last one was spooky. Like a serial killer.

They enter the cabin.

INT. CABIN - MORNING

We see an old couch and chair, a twin bed with four folded blankets, a small kitchen with a wood-burning stove and a tiny toilet in a closet.

BOB

You shouldn't have provoked him with all those ax comments.

(imitates Tommy)

(MORE)

BOB (CONT'D)

Can I ax you a question? Can you
accelerate like a getaway car? Are
you accepted by your peers?

(beat)

Good thing he wasn't an ax
murderer!

Tommy looks around in disgust.

TOMMY

Maid? Butler? Chef?

Tommy sees that the refrigerator door is propped open by a
piece of firewood. Tommy checks out the empty fridge.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Plenty to eat, if we were termites.

BOB

Must be canned food here somewhere!

TOMMY

Hungry enough to eat the cans.

(beat)

Doesn't use the place often.

BOB

How can you tell?

TOMMY

More dirt inside than out.

BOB

I'll tell him to fire the maid.

TOMMY

I think the chef ate her.

(beat)

After the butler.

BOB

Town's just two miles up the road,
we'll buy all the supplies we need.

TOMMY

With a dollar twenty-nine?

BOB

Dollar twenty-eight. Gotta save the
last penny.

TOMMY

So we're not vagrants.

They laugh as they exit.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The beautiful road is lined with coastal redwoods. We pick up the conversation (friendly argument) mid-course as they walk.

TOMMY

So you're saying they should cut down these beautiful trees for lumber?

BOB

(laughs)

Every last one. Just kidding. These redwoods are beautiful.

TOMMY

Yep. Love em! Just like in the Oakland Hills but I like 'em tall and... what's the word?

BOB

Moronic?

TOMMY

Majestic!
(beat)
Got a love 'em!

BOB

But, we live in houses made of wood. That book you're not reading?

Tommy stops and stares up at a beautiful redwood tree. He takes the book out of his back pocket and stares at it, and then the top of the tree. He pauses and thinks, making the connection.

TOMMY

(sadly)

Paper. I get it!

BOB

(sarcastic)

Firewood? Let's see, what's that made of?

TOMMY

(angry)

I get it! Wood. But you can get your wood from somewhere else.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

I like these beautiful trees right here!

BOB

Just select ugly trees for cutting from ugly forests? Is that it?

TOMMY

I don't know.

(beat, sad)

Just something this beautiful shouldn't be touched. The waitress called it unrequited love.

Bob stops walking.

BOB

What? The waitress at the diner?

Tommy stops.

TOMMY

Graduated from college and gettin' a teaching certificate. She's really smart.

BOB

Not if she gave us breakfast without us paying!

TOMMY

Charity. Expecting nothing in return. Like she said about Don Quixote and the lady he fell in love with. Didn't want to touch her.

Bob starts walking again and laughs.

BOB

She's nuts. Don Quixote's nuts. And so are you!

Tommy shakes his head in disgust and starts walking again.

Bob puts his arm around Tommy as they walk.

BOB (CONT'D)

And that's why you don't have a girlfriend and you wouldn't touch her if you did? I'd toss that book away if I was you.

They both laugh!

TOMMY
Might be right.

BOB
Unrequited love, my ass!

They walk on.

LATER

They walk on the other side of the same road, this time carrying a dozen eggs, a loaf of white bread and a quart of milk. They look around, laugh and smile.

TOMMY
Love these tall trees!

BOB
Me too! I think I want to work in the timber industry when I get older.

TOMMY
You? Cutting down trees?

BOB
And planting them. Making myself and trees useful. Are you gonna be useful?

TOMMY
I doubt it! Ha!

BOB
But you gotta feel lucky today!

TOMMY
Couldn't be luckier. Fifty-three cents with tax for eggs, thirty-five cents with tax for bread and thirty-nine cents with tax for a quart of milk!

Bob holds up a penny in triumph.

BOB
And one penny left from our dollar-twenty-nine so...

TOMMY & BOB
We're not vagrants!

Bob and Tommy dance and laugh as they walk down the road.

BOB
So, what's the plan?

TOMMY
You'll grow up to be Paul Bunyan,
marry Babe the Blue Ox and you'll
have three beautiful baby cows
together.

BOB
Did you flunk biology too? While
you drop out of junior college to
become a knight of the square table
like Donkey Somebody?

TOMMY
Don Quixote!

BOB
I mean, what's the plan today?

TOMMY
Eggs and toast for breakfast with a
splash of milk. Gotta ration our
supplies.

BOB
Followed by a fried egg sandwich
and a splash of milk for lunch.

TOMMY
Topping the night off with what? An
omelet? Just for variety!

BOB
We could forage for blackberries or
maybe find a fruit tree.

TOMMY
I don't know. This is way different
than in Oakland. I know every berry
patch and fruit tree in the
neighborhood.

Bob laughs.

BOB
That's 'cause your mom was a lousy
cook!

Tommy takes the book out his back pocket, turns angry and
slaps it against his other hand.

BOB (CONT'D)
What got into you?

TOMMY
That waitress made me think!

BOB
Oh no. Not that!

TOMMY
I got so pissed off.

BOB
Didn't show. We all thought you
were undressing her with your eyes.

TOMMY
Never told you this before. Never
told anyone. From sixth grade on,
all the way through high school, I
didn't get better at reading.

Bob is stunned!

BOB
What? Everybody gets better at
reading!

TOMMY
I didn't. And, nobody cared. I took
a free reading test at Laney Junior
College when they tried to figure
out what English and Literature
class I should be in.

BOB
Uh oh.

Tommy laughs disingenuously.

TOMMY
Said I need remedial English with
the foreign kids. Read like a fifth
grader.

BOB
What about those nuns you had 'til
eighth grade?

TOMMY
Kept passing me. Said I didn't try
my hardest on tests. Folks kept
paying tuition, so I kept moving to
the next grade.

BOB
High school?

TOMMY
Same thing. Got Cliff Notes for books we were supposed to read. I listened in class. That helped a lot. Teachers give ya the answers ahead a time if you listen. Remembered or guessed on tests.

BOB
Nobody noticed?

TOMMY
Hid it from everyone. Took me two hours to take my driver's test. No time limit.

BOB
Why didn't you tell somebody?

Tommy stops. Tears form in his eyes and he turns away.

TOMMY
I dunno. Embarrassed. Didn't want to admit it. Didn't want anybody to know. I dunno, okay.

BOB
Can't go to college reading like a fifth-grader! Did you sign up for remedial English?

TOMMY
Nope. First semester at Laney, I took a speech class from Ned Averbuck and a creative writing class from Smokey Wilson -- classes where I thought I wouldn't have to read. Best teachers I ever had in my life. Believed in me.

Bob laughs.

BOB
How'd that work out for you? I was in U.S. History and Biology and Poli Sci, where you had to read a lot!

TOMMY

Can't fool college teachers! Both passed me and both pulled me aside and encouraged me to get help.

BOB

Did you?

TOMMY

Nope. Semester ended. Summer came. Half the summer went, and here I am.

BOB

On page four of a 750-page book.

TOMMY

(dejected)

Top of page four.

(beat)

I can always drop out and get a job as a milkman like Pops and my brothers.

BOB

Or learn to read.

TOMMY

That's what the waitress told me.

(beat)

Funny. Hearing it from parents, nuns and the Brothers of Mary at high school didn't matter to me at all growing up. But hearing it from teachers at Laney who really cared about me and a waitress, who didn't know me from Adam, meant the world to me.

BOB

Go figure. What are you gonna do?

Bob puts his arm around Tommy.

TOMMY

Nineteen years old and I don't have a clue!

BOB

(laughs)

Join the club!

Tommy smiles, genuinely.

TOMMY

Eat eggs and bread. Hunt for wild berries in a beautiful redwood forest, I guess. Doesn't get much better than this!

Bob looks concerned for his friend.

BOB

Doesn't, does it?

EXT. BERRY PATCH - DAY

The boys pick and eat wild berries, happy as can be.

TOMMY

What's a facade?

BOB

Facade? Like a cheap front of building?

TOMMY

I dunno. Facade.

BOB

What do you care?

TOMMY

Worried about Drake.

BOB

(laughs)

Right. Football star, goes to a real university and gonna be an architect!

TOMMY

Something he said to me at the diner, that's all.

BOB

He said facade? Talking about the front of the restaurant?

TOMMY

No. Talking about himself.

BOB

Didn't mention it to me.

TOMMY

You and Billy were making a phone call.

BOB

What did he say? Exactly.

TOMMY

Said he didn't have it all together like everyone thinks.

BOB

Could've fooled me.

TOMMY

Said it was all a facade.

BOB

Fake? Can't be. He's got it all. You heard him wrong. Simple as that!

Tommy looks away.

TOMMY

If you say so.

BOB

He probably said, "You should all applaud."

TOMMY

Applaud don't sound like facade.

Bob flings a berry at Tommy and changes the subject.

BOB

I never called Kristine last night. I'm screwed.

Tommy throws a berry back at Bob.

TOMMY

Or not screwed as the case may be.

BOB

Like you, then.

TOMMY

Very funny.

It's an all-out berry fight with a lot of laughs.

INT. CABIN - NIGHT

The boys are scrubbing dishes. The egg carton is empty and the milk is gone. Four pieces of bread remain.

A small fire burns in the wood stove and small stack of firewood sits ready to burn.

Bob and Tommy bicker, as usual, at first in a funny way.

BOB

Never told me you've been listening to KQED National Public Radio for two years. Don't make you smart!

TOMMY

Didn't say that. Said listening to "All Things Considered" beats reading a newspaper any day.

BOB

That's 'cause you're slow.

Tommy gently shoves Bob.

TOMMY

Not slow! Just a slow reader. Radio helps. They also play old comedy routines. Freaking hilarious!

BOB

Name one.

Tommy faces Bob with a serious look.

TOMMY

Burns and Allen. George walks in the house and sees Gracie arranging flowers in a vase.

BOB

Not funny.

TOMMY

George says, "Gracie, where'd you get the pretty flowers?"

BOB

Still not funny.

TOMMY

Gracie says, "Well, George, it was your idea.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

You said to visit my sick friend in the hospital and take her flowers."

Silence.

They both burst out laughing.

BOB

Okay. That's funny.

TOMMY

They say a ton of smart shit, I mean, wise things, on "All Things Considered."

Bob glares at Tommy suspiciously.

BOB

That's supposed to make you wise?

TOMMY

Diana the waitress said Edward Thorndike, a really smart psychologist and educator said, "Colors fade, temples crumble, empires fall but wise words endure."

BOB

You remembered that word for word?

TOMMY

I remember a lot of what I hear.

BOB

You're still an idiot for getting us all to hop that train to begin with.

Tommy pushes Bob.

TOMMY

You're an idiot for not hitching back to Oakland after the diner and breaking and entering your Grandpa's cabin!

Bob pushes Tommy.

BOB

You're the idiot who wanted an adventure, remember.

Tommy pushes Bob.

TOMMY

You're the idiot who didn't ration our food. We got two pieces of bread each to eat all day tomorrow and all we got is one cent!

Bob pushes Tommy and a raging wrestling match continues as they trade barbs.

BOB

Your father was right. You should become a milkman. Drive around in your milk truck delivering milk while listening to public radio.

TOMMY

What if I do?

BOB

You'd be the wisest milkman on the route and the biggest idiot in the world for not achieving your potential!

Tommy freezes. There's a tear in his eyes.

Bob stops wrestling and hops up. He puts out an arm to help Tommy up but Tommy is too bitter to accept the help.

TOMMY

I get it. You were taking U.S. History, Biology and Poli-Sci, where you had to read a lot and I was taking dummy classes like speech and creative writing and soon to be remedial English with the foreign kids!

BOB

It's not a competition! You've gotta go your way and I gotta go mine!

Tommy slowly gets up. He's still angry.

TOMMY

Go ahead then. Take your transferable classes and leave me behind! And I still don't know what I wanna be when grow up!

Bob tries to reconcile but it doesn't work.

BOB
 I didn't mean nothing by it. You
 know that. We always argue. Then,
 we're fine, right?

Tommy looks away, dejected.

TOMMY
 Yeah. We're good.

Tommy trudges out the front door.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Tommy looks up to the stars.

Tommy hears the voices of his friends from earlier that
 night.

BILLY (V.O.)
 Idiot. I could have been on a date
 with Vicki!

DRAKE (V.O.)
 Fool!
 (beat)
 Could've got somebody hurt!

BOB (V.O.)
 You're the idiot who wanted an
 adventure, remember.

Tommy hears himself speak in his Pop's voice.

TOMMY (V.O.)
 (in his Pop's voice)
 "You don't have friends who pull
 you up. You have friends who weigh
 you down. You'll never amount to
 anything!"

Tommy stares up at the stars. He's alone.

We hear crickets.

EXT. CABIN - DAY

Bob yawns and stretches as he exits the cabin to find Tommy
 in the same spot as the night before, with a blanket around
 him and gazing up at the trees. He nervously carries two
 pieces of white bread in each hand.

Tommy turns and smiles at Bob.

BOB

We good?

Tommy stands to accept the bread from Bob.

TOMMY

We're always good! Thanks for the bread. Our little arguments always make me think!

Tommy puts his arm around Bob

BOB

Me too.

(beat)

I didn't sleep so good. Somebody took one of my four blankets!

(beat)

Think we should hitch home?

Tommy is alarmed.

TOMMY

That's funny! I slept great! Outdoors! I never slept outdoors before!

(stands, points south)

Santa Cruz, the beach and the Boardwalk are only a half-hour away.

Bob laughs.

BOB

Yeah. Half-an-hour away, if we're picked up in a police car!

TOMMY

True. We need to wash ourselves and our clothes in the ocean if we're ever gonna get a ride back to Oakland.

Bob looks at himself and laughs.

BOB

Right! We look awful!

TOMMY

And we have a stop to make first at Ben Lomond four miles down the road.

BOB
Ben Lomond?

TOMMY
I told you my family used to
vacation there when we were kids.

BOB
Last time was when you were twelve.

TOMMY
Yep. Thought about it last night. I
want to try to understand why I
quit practicing reading around that
age.

BOB
You think seeing the little town of
Ben Lomond is going to help.

TOMMY
I dunno. Just want to retrace my
steps and see.

Bob shrugs, happy with the answer.

BOB
It's your adventure. Maybe we'll
find some berries on the way.

TOMMY
First, we have to patch the broken
window and clean the place up.

BOB
Good thinkin'. Grandpa's gonna be
mad enough!

TOMMY
And it's our adventure! My part was
the crazy train hopping. Your part
was the breaking and entering.

Bob and Tommy laugh as they enter the cabin.

LATER

Bob and Tommy exit the cabin to see an angry NEIGHBOR (60s)
holding a shotgun at his side waiting for them. The broken
window is patched with a thin piece of wood nailed from the
inside.

NEIGHBOR
What are you two doing in there?

TOMMY

That's Bob Teran. Put down that gun! Came by to fix his Grandpa's broken window.

BOB

That's right! Who are you?

NEIGHBOR

Neighbor. We don't take kindly to strangers.

Tommy acts like an attorney and stands in front of Bob.

TOMMY

You put away that shotgun or we'll have you arrested for aggravated assault.

BOB

Yeah. What he said.

NEIGHBOR

Who's your grandfather?

BOB

Roberto Teran.

NEIGHBOR

Roberto didn't tell me you were coming.

TOMMY

Fixing the broken window for him was a surprise. We were on our way to Santa Cruz.

Bob gets into the act and paces as he speaks passionately, as he whips out his driver's license and shows it the neighbor.

BOB

You try to be good Christians. Do a good deed for someone. And, this is how society treats you!

TOMMY

Come on, Bob. Let's get out of here! I can tell when we're not wanted!

The Neighbor scans Bob's driver's license, un-cocks his shotgun, and hands Bob's license back.

BOB
Yeah. Let's get out of here!

Bob and Tommy start walking away.

TOMMY
Think we should report him and get
him tossed from the Good Neighbor
Sam Club?

NEIGHBOR
Sorry, okay? I didn't know.
(beat)
Tell Roberto I said hi!

Bob spins to the neighbor.

BOB
You wouldn't happen to have a
couple of apples we could have for
breakfast?

TOMMY
Or donuts? Coffee?

The Neighbors eyes open widely.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

The two boys are eating apples as they walk and talk.

BOB
You were pretty convincing back
there. Aggravated assault?

TOMMY
Watched a lot of Dragnet.

BOB
Maybe you should be a lawyer?

TOMMY
Lie for a living? Don't want to be
that guy!

BOB
What's so special about Ben Lomond?

TOMMY
Memories. Mostly great. We
vacationed in the cheapest old
cabins you could rent for a week
for under ninety bucks.

BOB

Ninety bucks. For a week?

TOMMY

Lodge was run down for decades but where else could a family of seven get away from Oakland for a week. Pops got one week vacation a year. We went for six years straight ending when I was twelve.

BOB

What'd you and your brothers do? Burn the place down.

TOMMY

Hardly. We loved it. Had a small swimming pool, ping pong and shuffleboard. Hot dogs and watermelon every night, except one.

BOB

Except one?

TOMMY

As a poor family of seven, we never went out to a restaurant, except one night, while on vacation here and before we went to the Boardwalk. It was the one day a year we felt rich.

BOB

Where'd you eat? Fancy restaurant in Santa Cruz?

TOMMY

Old Italian place on Highway Nine. Always Thursday night, family night, where kids ate free spaghetti. Nothing like your mom cooked but it was free.

(beat)

And noisy and sloppy. We made a mess.

BOB

Then the Boardwalk?

TOMMY

We'd mow lawns and save money all year to blow on rides.

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

We'd eat cotton candy and drink a ton of Coke, then ride the Ferris wheel, the Wild Mouse and the Big Dipper roller coaster 'til we puked!

BOB

Sounds like a blast.

TOMMY

With my brothers? Are you kidding? It was great.

BOB

Then it all stopped when you were twelve?

TOMMY

No more vacations. Maybe Pops got too busy at work.

BOB

Or maybe he couldn't stand being in a tiny cabin with you five knuckleheads for a week.

Tommy turns sad.

TOMMY

Maybe. Hoping to jog my memory when I see Ben Lomond.

They keep walking. This time in silence.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Tommy stops and they turn to look back at the sign for Ben Lomond.

BOB

Has it changed?

TOMMY

No but I have.

BOB

Town look smaller?

TOMMY

I got bigger. See things differently. It's why you can't go back. Know what I mean?

(MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Public Radio says the universe is always expanding, so the Earth is moving 240 miles per second.

Bob is stunned in disbelief.

BOB

Shit, we'd better hold on!

TOMMY

I know, right? No brakes!

They laugh.

BOB

Don't believe everything that you hear!

TOMMY

I don't. Just the science stuff.

BOB

Maybe you're going to be an astronaut.

TOMMY

Creek used to have a huge rope swing. Too dangerous for me but not Jimmy and Georgie. Anyway, can't be an astronaut if you're scared of heights. I don't want to be that guy!

BOB

You chicken?

TOMMY

And proud of it. But at age twelve, when quit believing in Hell, the nuns and my parents didn't like me anymore. Maybe on reason the family quit going on vacations. To avoid arguing.

BOB

That was the year you quit being Catholic. I get it now.

TOMMY

Yep. Quit believing shit that couldn't be proven. Really pissed Pop's off.

They turn and put their thumbs out.

BOB
(laughs)
Afraid of death and going to hell?

TOMMY
Nope. Still don't believe in hell.
No proof.
(beat)
I guess I hopped another kind of
train that year.

They both pause to think.

TOMMY (CONT'D)
You still believe in God?

BOB
What are you nuts! You bet?
(looks at a big tree)
Only God can make a tree.

TOMMY
So you can cut it down? I don't
want to be that guy!

BOB
Don't start another argument.

TOMMY
(laughs)
Fair enough! Let's get to the
Boardwalk, clean up and hitch home.

BOB
We still got a penny.

TOMMY & BOB
Not vagrants!

An old pickup truck stops and Tommy and Bob hop in the back.

BOB
Great. We'll be at the Boardwalk
before lunch.

TOMMY
At 240 miles per second, we might
be there before that!

Bob laughs.

BOB
You're an idiot!

TOMMY
With a penny!

The truck races away.

EXT. SANTA CRUZ BEACH - DAY

It's a hot sunny day and the boys wade in the ocean fully dressed, except their tennis shoes resting on shore with Tommy's book. They act like they're in the shower, laughing as they scrub off the soot and wash their hair. They laugh. The Ferris Wheel and Big Dipper are in the distant background.

TOMMY
I feel bad about causing all this water pollution.

BOB
Would have washed into the ocean during the next big rain anyway!

They exit the water and sit on a deserted section of beach to dry off. They ring out their shirts and socks.

TOMMY
Nobody stole our shoes, wallets, or penny.

BOB
Dry off and hunt for lunch?

TOMMY
When we were kids, we used to set our popcorn, candy and cokes next to pinball machines at the arcade. Half the time, we forget about them and move on the next game.

BOB
Sounds promising.

TOMMY
Light snack, then hitchhike home?

BOB
Sounds good. Gotta work tomorrow.

TOMMY
We should call Billy and Drake and make sure they got home okay.

BOB

When did you all of a sudden turn responsible?

TOMMY

Since I talked everybody into hopping that train! Last night, all I could think about is what if someone would have gotten hurt. Especially Drake. He had the most to lose!

BOB

Most to lose?

TOMMY

I know now what a facade is. He was trying to tell me he was in trouble.

BOB

You're an idiot. He has it all!

Tommy turns serious.

TOMMY

On the outside. Not on the inside. He was screwing up, maybe like we do, maybe worse, but he had the most to lose.

BOB

You're nuts! When you were cleaning up in the bathroom at the diner, he told me and Billy that he was going back to Kansas the minute he got home for extra physical therapy and studying.

Tommy is surprised.

TOMMY

He said that?

BOB

Yep.

TOMMY

And you believed him?

BOB

Why the hell not?

TOMMY
I dunno, I guess.

BOB
Said he's done hanging out with us.
(laughs)
Thought we were all nuts!

Tommy looks away.

TOMMY
(sad)
Maybe we are? But I'm worried about
Drake, and maybe Billy a little
bit.

EXT. FREEWAY ENTRANCE - DAY

Bob and Tommy look cleaner than they've looked since they hopped the train. They stand with their thumbs out for only a few seconds when an open-top flat-bed truck with wooden sides drives up with three mattresses in the back. An African American DRIVER (40s) stops his truck.

DRIVER
Where you headed?

BOB
Oakland.

DRIVER
Going right past Oakland to
Berkeley. Need some weight on the
mattresses so they don't blow out
of my truck on the freeway!

TOMMY
It's your lucky day! That's all
we're good for!

DRIVER
Hop on!

Tommy and Bob laugh as they hop into the back of the truck and atop the mattresses.

BOB
Thanks a bunch, mister.

TOMMY
Yeah, thanks.

The driver pulls away.

EXT. TRUCK - DAY

Tommy is wide awake but Bob yawns immediately.

BOB
Wake me when we're home.

TOMMY
Will do.

Tommy watches Bob close his eyes.

BOB
Where there's a will, there's a way!

Tommy looks around.

TOMMY
Isn't it weird? Oakland's just ninety-minutes away but it feels like a million miles from here.

Tommy looks back at Bob, who is already asleep.

Tommy laughs and slowly pulls the Don Quixote book out of his back pocket. He turns to page four and closes the book.

He pauses and looks around, as he recalls scenes of the past two days and nights.

BEGIN MONTAGE

EXT. JACK LONDON SQUARE - NIGHT

Tommy and the boys hop the train.

EXT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Tommy and the boys get shaken and covered with soot on the train.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - NIGHT

We see the boys being chased by barking dogs and climbing the fence.

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Tommy gets schooled by the waitress.

EXT. CABIN - NIGHT

Bob and Tommy break into the cabin.

EXT. ROAD - DAY

Tommy and Bob marvel at the big trees.

EXT. SANTA CRUZ BEACH - DAY

Tommy and Bob scrub clean and lay on the beach to dry.

END MONTAGE

Tommy excitedly opens the book and begins to read at the top of page four without pointing to words or mouthing them.

Tommy pauses and looks into the camera (the Fourth Wall), and he smiles.

Tommy goes back to reading and smiles as he turns the page.

The truck moves slowly down the road.

EXT. OLD OAKLAND NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

The mattress truck slows to a stop as Tommy finishes reading the last page (page 100; he didn't take it all).

Bob wakes suddenly and looks around and smiles.

BOB

Home! Thanks, dude!

Tommy and Bob climb out of the back of the truck.

DRIVER

Would have lost a mattress or two
in that wind. Thank you.

TOMMY

Thanks, mister.

The boys wave as the truck drives slowly away.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

Should call Billy and Drake later
and make sure they're okay.

BOB

You worry too much!

Tommy hits Bob with the book and takes fast steps.

TOMMY

Finished it! Quick. I gotta get home.

BOB

Page four!

TOMMY

No! The first hundred pages. Come on! Hurry. I've got wrongs to right!

Bob walks faster to keep up as Tommy talks excitedly about the book.

TOMMY (CONT'D)

It's 500 years ago in La Mancha, Spain. Alonso Quixano is like fifty but his mind is going fast. He loved books about knights and always wanted to be one so he goes on a sally, which is really an adventure!

BOB

Slow down, will ya?

Tommy doesn't slow down.

TOMMY

He renames himself and becomes Don Quixote. He names his old horse, Rocinante, like it's a young steed. And, he renames a bar maid Dulcinea, just like the waitress said in Milpitas! Don't you see?

BOB

She read the book?

TOMMY

I know she did but this book says you can be anyone you want to be.

(beat)

I get it now! The question that parents and teachers ask us growing up is "what do you want to be?" The question they should be asking is "what kind of person do you want to be?" Don Quixote wanted to be chivalrous knight. Chivalrous means...

BOB
 (interrupting)
 I know what chivalrous means!

TOMMY
 The point is, we aren't defined by
 who we are born to, or what jobs
 they have. We can be anyone!

BOB
 All this from a hundred pages?

TOMMY
 I gotta get home and read the rest!
 He battled windmills he thought
 were ferocious giants. At his
 home, his niece and a priest were
 burning his books! I couldn't
 believe it!

BOB
 Great! Now, will you slow down?

TOMMY
 Sancho Panza, his buddy and squire,
 is a simple man and I gotta see how
 they get out this mess with the
 goat herders. Come on!

Bob shrugs.

BOB
 Guess there's no chance of going by
 the store and picking up our
 paychecks and going out with me and
 a couple girls to Fentons.

TOMMY
 (laughs)
 I'll be deep into another kind of
 sally. I gotta finish the book.
 First hundred pages left me
 hangin'. Know what I mean?

Bob puts his arm around Tommy as they walk.

BOB
 You're gonna lock yourself up in
 that crappy studio apartment and do
 nothing but read?

TOMMY
 Got a lot of catching up to do.
 Next week we'll do Fenton's, okay?
 (MORE)

TOMMY (CONT'D)

(mumbles)

After Don Quixote, Mark Twain,
Billy Shakespeare, the comedy plays
of Neil Simon...

BOB

You poor, poor guy!

CUT TO:

EXT. JACK LONDON SQUARE - NIGHT

SUPER: "JACK LONDON SQUARE, OAKLAND, CA., PRESENT DAY."

It's the same summer night and the elderly gentleman, TOM
(still dressed in a Hawaiian shirt and khaki shorts),
continues to hold the attention of the four Caucasian college
men who look conspicuously like TOMMY, BOB, BILLY and DRAKE.

TOM

That's the whole story, best I can
remember it, with maybe a little
stretch of the truth or
embellishment here and there for
dramatic purposes.

BOB

Can we go now?

TOM

Don't ya want to know what happened
to everyone?

BILLY

We should get going.

TOMMY

I'm a little curious. What happened
to Drake?

The other boys are clearly upset. They shift their weight on
their feet, shrug and all but Tommy look away.

TOM

Funny you should ask.

We see Tommy's face. His eyes are fixed on Tom's eyes.

TOMMY

I stayed in close contact with
Billy and Bob over the years but I
didn't hunt down Drake until a few
weeks ago thanks to Google.

Drake turns, now fixated on the story's ending.

DRAKE

Really? You lost track of him for almost fifty years?

TOM

That's what happens to some friends. They take different forks in the road and you lose them. Harder to lose people now days with cellphones, Google and social media but it still happens.

The four young men look at each other, then Drake looks back at Tom.

DRAKE

What happened to him?

TOM

Had a few rough years, like we all do but he graduated from Cal and later worked as an architect like he always dreamed. He never gave up!

DRAKE

Go Cal!

TOM

Go Bears.

Tom stares at Tommy briefly before addressing Drake.

TOM (CONT'D)

He played a little football for the Bears after transferring from Kansas State and landed nicely in a nice house and family in Novato, less than an hour up the road.

BOB

What happened to Billy?

TOM

Billy had a couple of rough years too but ended up marrying Vicki, his high school sweetheart and having a great career in the construction business, workplace safety, everything. Lives in Napa, only 45 minutes from Drake and never knew it!

BILLY

Nice!

TOM

Bill and Vicki visit us in Colorado from time to time and we hook up with them when we're in California. Interesting thing is, our conversations take up right where we left 'em. Like we see each other every week. I hope you boys can say the same someday.

BILLY

What about Bob?

TOM

(laughs)

Bob admitted to his Grandpa that we broke into his cabin. His Grandpa was shocked by his honesty and let us slide. Bob and I remained very close over the years, despite the fact he ended up cutting trees -- and to be fair, planting hundreds of thousands of more trees up in Oregon. It's not what you do for a living as what kind of person you become. Happily married over forty years...

TOMMY

(interrupts)

Wait! That makes you the lame kid, Tommy, who couldn't read?

TOM

Didn't read, not couldn't read!

TOMMY

Did he?

TOM

Did he?

TOMMY

Did you finally learn to read?

TOM

(laughs)

Once I started, I couldn't stop. I graduated from Berkeley, went on for a Ph.D.

(MORE)

TOM (CONT'D)

at Davis, and had a great career as a scientist, and fell in love with the woman of my dreams six months after hopping the train and I finally learned to read well, but I'm not the story here.

BOB

So you were never going to hop that train when we pulled you back?

TOM

(laughs louder)

Thanks again for pulling me back. That's what good friends do! They pull you up when you need help and push you clear of danger when they have to! I was fortunate to have such good friends.

DRAKE

(emphatic)

You were never going to hop that train!

TOM

Think I'm crazy? That's not only illegal, it's very dangerous. I know people who have lost legs, tripping and getting stuck under the wheels, blood every...

BILLY

(suspicious)

So, did you, or didn't you?

Tom looks around and whispers to the boys.

TOM

I've always enjoyed stories about, "What would you tell your younger self?"

DRAKE

Unrealistic proposition!

BOB

Can't go back in time.

BILLY

Probably wouldn't listen to yourself anyway, right?

Tommy clicks his fingers all excited.

TOMMY

That's it isn't it! All of it!
Unrealistic proposition! Can't go
back in time. And, you probably
wouldn't listen to yourself anyway,
right?

Tom does a little happy dance! He points at Tommy, turns, and starts to walk slowly away, as the boys watch him.

TOM

That's it! You're on your own, kid!
Everyone hops a train.
(beat)
One kind of train or another.
(beat)
Every day! All the time!
(beat)
Makes us not only who we are today,
but who we become tomorrow!

Tommy turns to the boys and yells.

TOM (CONT'D)

I'm going to meet some dear old
friends at Fentons Creamery
tonight. Who wants to join me? I'm
buying!

Tommy turns and walks away at a good pace.

The boys stare at each other with slight smiles.

In the distance, we see a train approaching and hear its blaring horn.

The boys hesitate as the train approaches and the horn gets louder. They look at each other with questioning faces, and their eyes open widely.

FADE TO BLACK.

ROLL CREDITS

INT. FENTONS CREAMERY - NIGHT

The actual Tom, Bill, Bob and Drake (and their wives and families), eat ice cream sundaes with the actors who played them.

As we look around, we see many other members of the cast in present-day clothes (of their choice), and enjoying sundaes, coffee, and tea.

They laugh a lot!

THE END

FADE OUT.