BRAD'S STATUS

Written by

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FADE IN:

1 INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

BRAD SLOAN, lies in bed, staring anxiously up at the ceiling. His wife, MELANIE, is asleep beside him. Moonlight illuminates the room. It is deathly silent, then we HEAR a NARRATOR’s voice.

NARRATOR
Brad was lying in bed at 3AM wondering why he felt so anxious.

CLOSE ON BRAD as his mind wanders from thought to thought.

NARRATOR
He scanned through all the possible sources of his dread - as there were many - until he seized upon the Architectural Digest.

Brad winces as his memory is stirred.

2 INT. SACRAMENTO LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

TEN PEOPLE are gathered in a living room, drinking and chatting.

NARRATOR
That night, he and Melanie had gone to a dinner party with some of her co-workers.

Brad spots an ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST on the coffee table. He notices the cover and picks it up.

ON ARCHITECTURAL DIGEST

Photos of some sleek modern house.

NARRATOR
There was a photo spread of a hideous steel and glass monstrosity in Los Angeles.
The page flips. The owner of the house, NICK and his LATINO BOYFRIEND sit on the couch, grinning, in one of the photos.

NARRATOR
Brad realized the home belonged to a college friend, Nick Pascale.

ON BRAD - he grimaces at the photo - a stricken look. *

NARRATOR
The article stated he bought the house for nine million dollars and put another two into it.

BACK AND CLOSER ON PHOTO OF NICK AND HIS HUSBAND.

NARRATOR
Brad knew Nick had become successful, but felt gut-punched nonetheless.

Brad tosses down the magazine. *

OMIT 3

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

As the other GUESTS, including Melanie, laugh and chat, Brad glumly stares into space.

NARRATOR
This ruined the dinner party for Brad. He stared into space mostly.

GLIMPSES of the other DINNER GUESTS, talking and eating.

NARRATOR
He realized the other people at the table were mediocrities. Underachieving beta males, living in Sacramento, a secondary market. Guys thinking they were big fish in the most inconsequential of ponds.

Brad looks around at the others with a sour expression.

NARRATOR
He felt contempt for himself and everyone there.
INT. BRAD’S BEDROOM – NIGHT

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Brad rolls over in bed, restless and agitated. He picks up his cell phone on the side table. It GLOWS to life.

NARRATOR
Brad’s mind went to other successes that pained him.

ON PHONE – MOMENTS LATER

We SEE Brad’s finger scroll across a SERIES of GOOGLE IMAGES of Craig Fisher – a political wonk and talking head. Craig – in a studio, posing with the President, getting interviewed.

NARRATOR
There was Craig Fisher – who had worked for the White House. He had written two successful books and was always on TV. He had always been a self-confident know-it-all and now life had affirmed his delusions of grandeur.

We now SEE Brad’s fingers ZOOM in close on a PHOTO of Craig, his WIFE and TWO DAUGHTERS all smiles, at an event.

ON BRAD – illuminated by the light of the phone, he grimaces. He puts the phone down. He looks back up at the ceiling.

NARRATOR
He thought about Jason Hatfield...

EXT. MANHATTAN STREET – DAY

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JASON HATFIELD walks with TWO EXECS. An attractive ASSISTANT intercepts him and they hop in the back of a waiting SUV.

NARRATOR
...whose hedge fund had made him obscenely wealthy. That he was a nice guy who was a philanthropist and had even given money to Brad’s non-profit somehow made it even worse.

EXT. MAUI BEACH – DAY

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A tan BILLY WERSTLER sits on the beach with TWO YOUNG SURFER GIRLS, chatting them up.

(CONTINUED)
NARRATOR
And Billy Werstler who had made enough money from his tech start-up to retire in Maui before he was even forty.

INT. BRAD’S BEDROOM - NIGHT
Brad grits his teeth, his mind reeling.

NARRATOR
Everyone had won the lottery but him. Bitter adrenaline pumped through Brad’s body. He was never going to get back to sleep.

INT. BRAD’S LIVING ROOM - DAY
Brad’s son, TROY, age six, is playing something for him on an * electric keyboard. Brad looks over at...

...THE TV - where Craig Fisher is being interviewed on a news program.

NARRATOR
He remembered the first time he’d seen Craig Fisher being interviewed on TV.

ON BRAD - he stops listening to Troy and stares mesmerized at the TV. He rises, pointing at Craig’s talking head.

NARRATOR
The memory was like a cluster of needles in his heart. This wasn’t a fleeting jealousy. It was pain. It was real pain.

BRAD
(calling toward kitchen)
Melanie!

CLOSER ON BRAD - as he digests this vision.

NARRATOR
Why was it so painful? What was wrong with him?
Agitated and trying to get comfortable, Brad accidentally swats Melanie in the face, waking her.

MELANIE
Brad!

BRAD
Shit, sorry.

MELANIE
(half-asleep)
What the hell? You just hit me in the face.

BRAD
Sorry, sorry. I can’t sleep.
(beat)
How much do you think your parents house is worth?

MELANIE
My parents’ house? I don’t know.

BRAD
Like two million? Two and a half?

MELANIE
I don’t know.

BRAD
You’ve never thought about it?

MELANIE
Not really.

BRAD
(grabs his phone)
It’ll say on Zillow. *

MELANIE
Why are you doing this? *

BRAD
(types into phone)
It says 1.857. That seems low, no? *
For Seattle? 4300 square feet. *
Zillow is always low. I bet 2.5 at least. Don’t you think?

(CONTINUED)
MELANIE
What does it matter?

BRAD
Well, aren’t you getting the house when they die?

MELANIE
When they die? I mean, I split it with my brother.

BRAD
Really?

MELANIE
What?

BRAD
But your brother married into a ton of money. He and Vanessa don’t need your parents’ money.

MELANIE
It doesn’t matter anyway, Brad. I mean...

BRAD
Why? Because of climate change? You think the world’s gonna end before we retire?

MELANIE
Uh, no.

BRAD
We might need that money, Mel.

MELANIE
I think they’re considering leaving it all to the grandkids.

BRAD
What do you mean?

MELANIE
Splitting everything among the grandkids.

BRAD
What? Steve has three kids. And they’re already rich. We only have one. How’s that fair?
MELANIE
It’s not up to me. They’ve also thought about just leaving it all to charity so who knows?

BRAD
Seriously? That’s absurd. That’s mean.

MELANIE
You work for a non-profit – and you think that’s absurd?

BRAD
Right. I work for a non-profit. And you work for the government. We need the money.

MELANIE
Look, I’m gonna be so distraught when my parents die, I’m not gonna give a fuck about the money.

BRAD
Really? Not at all? I think you will.

MELANIE
What about your dad? You have money coming to you.

BRAD
He’s an academic. Two hundred thousand dollars maybe.

MELANIE
It’ll help pay for Troy’s college. Is that why you’re worrying about money? We’ll be fine. We’ll figure it out.

BRAD
Thank god we only had one kid.

MELANIE
Oh my god.

BRAD
How much do you think your parents are worth total? Four? Five? Split in half. Then taxes. That’s like 1.5, 1.2.

(MORE)
And they’ll probably have health care shit to pay for — those senior living places can eat up the whole entire thing in no time...

MELANIE
What is wrong with you?

BRAD
I just feel like we’re running out of time here. There’s no more potential — this is it — we’ve plateaued — and clearly there’s not gonna be some windfall out of nowhere that’s gonna change the situation...

MELANIE
We’re not poor, Brad.

BRAD
In some circles. Yeah.

MELANIE
What circles? The one per cent? Please. Go to sleep.

Brad rolls over, then rolls back to her.

BRAD
I can’t.

MELANIE
Stop thinking about this.

BRAD
We didn’t work this hard to end up dying in a flophouse. You know?

MELANIE
(turning away from him)
You’re freaking me out. Enough. We have a great life.

BRAD
I think you should talk to your parents and get some clarity. The grandkids don’t need the money. Especially Steve and Vanessa’s. I’ve seen their posts. They live like Saudi Arabian princesses. They have their whole lives ahead of them anyway. You and I are done!

(Continued)
MELANIE
Please shut up.

Brad shuts up. He stares into the middle distance.

EXT. SACRAMENTO NEIGHBORHOOD - DAWN
The sun is rising over Brad’s residential neighborhood - modest, but attractive homes.
A YOUNG CYCLIST barrels down the center of the empty road.
SPRINKLERS go off at a nearby house. *
A NEIGHBOR closes his trash can and pulls it up the drive. *

EXT. BRAD’S HOUSE - DAWN
ESTABLISHING SHOT as a CAR drives by. *

INT. BRAD’S HOUSE - MORNING
A few images of the house.
A FRAMED PHOTO of Brad, Melanie and their son, Troy - in the photo, maybe nine years old. They are all smiling.
A SUITCASE on ROLLERS is placed by the front door.

INT. TROY’S BEDROOM - MORNING
Troy, now 17, sits in a towel on his bed, with his BULLDOG. Troy stares lovingly at the dog.
CLOSE on Bulldog as he lifts his neck so Troy can scratch it.

TROY
I know you get mad when I go away.
Please don’t piss on the bed.

Brad opens the door.

BRAD
We have ten minutes.

TROY
(rising)
Yeah, I’m ready. I just gotta put on my clothes.
(MORE)
TROY (cont'd)

(as BRAD lingers)
Can you give me a second?

BRAD
(surprised)
Troy - you suddenly have the body of a man, man.
TROY
Please don’t be weird, Dad. I’m stressed.

INT. MELANIE’S CAR - TRAVELING - DAY
Melanie drives, talking to Troy, who sits in the back. Brad is in the passenger seat, looking out the window.

TROY
I have it, Mom. It’s all on my phone.

MELANIE
Will you forward it to your dad? I don’t think he has any sense of the schedule. Do you Brad? (no response) I don’t think he has any idea. So it’s really on you, honey...

CLOSE ON BRAD - he is lost in thought. We can HEAR Melanie and Troy continue to talk in the b.g.

NARRATOR
The entire ride to the airport, Brad kept thinking about his protege, Chris Kanew - and about how Chris Kanew had quit that week. And all the things he said.

INT. CHIPOTLE - LUNCH
Brad sits at a LUNCH PLACE with a young colleague, CHRIS.

BRAD
So wait - I don’t understand? Sounds like you’re quitting.

CHRIS
(solemn nod)
I am quitting. I got another job actually. I start in two weeks.

BRAD
What? Where?

CHRIS
San Francisco. At City National. In their brokerage office.
BRAD
Wait a minute. You’re getting into banking?

CHRIS
(nods)
I’ve loved working with you, Brad. I’ve learned a lot from you. But I think this job has made me... kinda depressed. And I actually think I can do more good by just making a lot of money - and giving it away. Instead of spending all my time asking other people for their money to give away. You know?

Brad stares at him, floored.

INT. MELANIE’S CAR - TRAVELING - DAY

As Melanie and Troy chat, Brad stares out the window, sinking into a deep funk.

NARRATOR
As he remembered the exchange, Brad felt a hot flush of humiliation. He felt exposed in some essential and embarrassing way. It seemed so obvious that his life’s work was an absurdity. It might as well be tattooed across his face.

Brad absently covers the invisible tattoo on his forehead. *

EXT. SACRAMENTO AIRPORT - DAY

Brad pulls their bags from the trunk. Melanie comes gives Troy a big hug.

MELANIE
Call me all the time. I want to know everything. This is so exciting! I love you!

TROY
Thanks, Mom. Should be cool.

Melanie approaches Brad. She’s emotional.
MELANIE
I can’t believe this. This is crazy.

BRAD
He’s not leaving yet. We’re just looking at schools.

MELANIE
(in tears)
I know. It just feels like a big moment. I’m so jealous. I wish I didn’t have this stupid conference.
(composes herself; smiles)
The flight info’s all on your phone - the hotels - it’s all there. Be happy. Be present. Okay?
(hugs BRAD)
And take pictures. I love you.

Melanie gives Troy one last kiss, then gets back in the car. They wave her off.

INT. SACRAMENTO AIRPORT - DAY
Brad hands his and Troy’s tickets to a TSA OFFICER.

TSA OFFICER
The economy entrance is that line.

BRAD
Well, what is this?

TSA OFFICER
Business, first class only. Are you TSA Pre?

BRAD
No, but I have a Silver Flyer card.

TSA OFFICER
Sorry.

Brad nods and shuffles off, with Troy in tow.

INT. AIRPORT GATE - DAY
Brad and Troy sit in the crowded terminal, waiting for their flight to board. Troy listens to music.

(CONTINUED)
Brad watches - a YOUNG FATHER, nearby - playing with his TODDLER SON.

After a moment, Brad turns to Troy and motions for him to take off his headphones. Troy does.

BRAD
You know what I’m thinking? Let’s try for an upgrade.

TROY
What do you mean?

BRAD
This is a big moment. You’re gonna go find your college. You and me - how many trips are we gonna have like this again? Let’s fly business.

TROY

BRAD
I have a lot of miles I think. Might cost a little money. It’ll be fun. Let’s make this fucking special. Right?

TROY
I’ve never flown business.

Brad gives Troy an emphatic that-settles-it grin then rises.

INT. GATE COUNTER - MOMENTS LATER

Brad has waited his turn in line. He approaches the FEMALE AIRLINE REP.

AIRLINE REP
How can I help you?

BRAD
Hi. I’m flying today with my son - he’s a senior in high school and we’re going East to look at colleges. (no response) Pretty cool. Umm, wondering if there’s any room in business so we could upgrade.

(Continued)
AIRLINE REP
Let me see. I believe there might be. Two of you are traveling?
(taps away on computer)
Good news. There are two seats available in business.

BRAD
Awesome.

AIRLINE REP
Can I see your tickets?

Brad hands over his tickets. As she types...

BRAD
I was hoping I could use my miles. I have a bunch of miles I think...

AIRLINE REP
Unfortunately, no - not for this flight, you can’t. The cost to upgrade to business would be eight hundred and twenty one dollars a ticket.
(types away)
So the total would be sixteen hundred and forty-two dollars.

BRAD
Sixteen hundred dollars? For a domestic flight?

AIRLINE REP
Sixteen forty-two, yes.
(as he stalls)
Do you want to go ahead and purchase the tickets?

BRAD
Uh... hmmm... sixteen...

AIRLINE REP
Do you want to sit down and think about it while I help some of the other passengers in line?

BRAD
You know what, let’s just do it.
(gets out wallet)
I’ll put it on the Amex. I mean, the MasterCard. No, the Amex.

(CONTINUED)
AIRLINE REP
(takes card)
Great! Let me just run that.

BRAD
(justifying)
It’s a once in a lifetime thing.
My only kid - going to college.

AIRLINE REP
Mr. Sloan, actually, unfortunately - we can’t upgrade you. I’m sorry.

BRAD
Why not?

AIRLINE REP
It seems as though you bought your tickets on a discounted website.
With that type of ticket, we can’t upgrade you.

BRAD
Even if I pay sixteen hundred dollars?

AIRLINE REP
There’s actually no amount of money you could pay to get an upgrade.
I’m so sorry. Anything else?

BRAD
Uh, no. It’s no big deal. What if I’m a Silver Flyer Member...?

The Rep shakes her head and waves the next customer up. Brad, disappointed, returns to his seat.

INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Troy and Brad board the plane, passing...

...the PASSENGERS in FIRST CLASS. They are being served mimosas and champagne. They’re all wealthy and well-dressed.

Brad looks at them as he slowly makes his way down the aisle.
INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

Troy and Brad sit toward the back of the plane. They look cramped and uncomfortable. Brad pulls out his SILVER FLYER CLUB MEMBER CARD from his wallet.

BRAD
I’m sorry I couldn’t get us the upgrade. I...

TROY
It’s no biggie.

BRAD
This Silver Flyer Card is totally meaningless. It means nothing. It gets you nothing.

TROY
Well, get rid of it.

BRAD
I’m gonna. I’m tossing it. Should I? Yeah, fuck it – it’s trash. (nowhere to throw it)
I’ll just keep it for now.

Brad puts it back in his wallet and SIGHS.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Troy listens to music and thumbs through a magazine. Brad, deep in thought, looks out the plane’s window.

NARRATOR
On the flight, Brad wondered when was the last time Craig Fisher flew economy. Probably not in decades.

INT. FIRST CLASS - DAY

We SEE Craig Fisher, sitting in First Class, drinking a mimosa, approached by a FLIGHT ATTENDANT.

NARRATOR
Brad imagined Craig enjoying all the perks of first class.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT
Mr. Fisher, can I offer you a warm towel?

(CONTINUED)
CRAIG
Warm towel. Yes, thank you.

With a tong, she hands him a towel.

Craig places it over his face and reclines in his cushy seat.

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - DAY

Jason Hatfield and his ELEGANT WIFE and their FOUR TOWHEADED CHILDREN cross a tarmac towards their PRIVATE PLANE.

NARRATOR
Then Brad thought about how Jason Hatfield has his own private plane. Probably never has to fly commercial at all.

EXT. AIRPORT TARMAC - DAY

Nick Pascale and his BOYFRIEND and their DOGS get out of a HELICOPTER and cross the tarmac, then walk the stairs to their private plane.

NARRATOR
Nick Pascale probably flies private, too. Brad thought what a high it must be for these guys to always feel important and special and better than. It must be like a drug - a drug Brad distrusted yet coveted, and never seemed to have the opportunity to try.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - DAY

The Hatfield family enters the plane. They begin eating, playing, taking pictures.

NARRATOR
Brad imagined all the great vacations they went on - the exotic destinations.

Jason and his wife drink champagne from flutes, then chuck the glasses. She then takes a selfie of her and Jason.
INT. AIRPLANE - DAY

The same SELFIE PHOTO is on an INSTAGRAM page of JACQUELINE HATFIELD.

WE SEE Brad scrolling through Jason’s wife’s Instagram page, a sour look on his face.

ON PHONE - more PHOTOS of Jason’s family living the good life.

NARRATOR
The adventures. And the sense of possibility. No door ever closed. Everything an option.

Brad puts away the phone and stares out the window. *

NARRATOR
The world for them is not a battlefield. Not even an obstacle course.

He looks out at the clouds and the landscape below.

NARRATOR
It’s a playground. A dream. A Heaven manifest.

Troy taps Brad on the shoulder. A FLIGHT ATTENDANT stands behind him with her cart.

TROY
Dad, can I get some Pringles? They’re seven dollars.

BRAD
Seven dollars? Yeah. Okay.

TROY
I need your credit card.

Brad pulls out his wallet and hands over the card.

INT. AIRPLANE - LATER

Troy has fallen asleep. Brad sits and stares, thinking.

NARRATOR
Brad’s thoughts soon drifted back to his college days at Tufts.
EXT. TUFTS UNIVERSITY - SUNSET

The late ‘80’s. From a grassy knoll, we WATCH a GROUP of MALE STUDENTS gather and greet each other. It’s a nostalgic, beautiful image.

NARRATOR
Wasn’t Brad then the golden boy? Wasn’t he the one destined for great things? How did he end up the one compromised by life and living in the margins? Brad likened it in his mind to a love affair. When he was young, he was in love with the world. And the world loved him.

EXT. SHOT OF PLANE LANDING

The SCREECH of TIRES on the runway.

INT. AIRPLANE - AFTERNOON

The plane has just landed. It taxis across the runway.

NARRATOR
It pained him to admit the world had fallen out of love with him first. This realization made him want to cry.

Brad looks like he might cry, then realizes Troy is talking to him.

TROY
...they say air travel leaves a huge carbon footprint - and with so many people flying now, it’s a big contributor to global warming. Kinda sucks.

Brad snaps out of it, feigns attention to Troy.

FLIGHT ATTENDANT (O.S.)
Welcome to Boston. Local time here is 6:15 PM...

EXT. BOSTON - DUSK

ICONIC BOSTON SPOTS from inside a moving TAXI.
Brad and Troy are in the back of a taxi.
NARRATOR
In the cab ride to the hotel, Brad tried to locate the moment where things had gone wrong for him. And when. His first thought was Melanie.

INT. BRAD’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Brad works at the dining room table. He looks over at Melanie - she has pulled Troy close to her and plays with his hair as they watch TV. The Bulldog is in Troy’s lap.

NARRATOR
Yes, Melanie was a great mother and she loved Brad and was clearly happy with their life together.

Melanie looks over at him and smiles. He smiles back.

INT. BRAD’S HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT
Brad and Melanie are having a discussion in the kitchen as they make dinner.

Brad approaches her with a spoonful of sauce to try.

NARRATOR
But she was also easily satisfied - and maybe her contentment undermined his ambition.

Melanie tastes the pasta and smiles, nodding. Brad remains skeptical that it tastes good.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - DAY
Nick Pascale’s Boyfriend shows him a watch in a magazine.

NARRATOR
Nick Pascale’s boyfriend obviously loved expensive things. Maybe his appetites spurred Nick’s drive to succeed.

Nick takes out a WATCH BOX and hands it to Xavier. Xavier opens it - it’s the same watch. Xavier exults.
INT. PRIVATE PLANE - DAY

Jason Hatfield’s elegant Wife smooths down one of her daughter’s pinafores and arranges her hair.

NARRATOR
And Jason Hatfield’s wife was a blue blood.
(MORE)
She had introduced him to rich clients, given him entree and status, and showed him the ways of the American aristocracy.

**EXT. RED CARPET - NIGHT**

Craig and his wife, DIANE, are both being interviewed separately on a red carpet before an event.

NARRATOR
And Diane Fisher was a celebrated intellectual herself. She and Craig competed with each other – and that dynamic had driven Craig to become a stand-out in his field.

They stop and pose for photos.

**INT./EXT. TAXI - TRAVELING - DUSK**

Brad’s PHONE – he is now looking at PHOTOS of Craig and Diane at the same event on his phone.

NARRATOR
Maybe Brad had married the wrong woman.

Brad reacts to the photos.

BACK ON PHONE – an incoming call – the screen reads “MELANIE”. He answers.

BRAD
( into phone)
Hey, honey. Yep, we made it – we’re on our way to the hotel. How’s it going there? Yeah?

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT**

Brad hands over his credit card to the EMPLOYEE at the REGISTRATION DESK. Troy lingers nearby. As the Employee runs Brad’s card...

...Brad eye-balls an OLDER MAN beside him, complaining to another HOTEL EMPLOYEE.
OLDER MAN
There’s this draft, moving the curtains - and I’m hearing this constant whistle and it’s driving me crazy...  *

NARRATOR
Brad’s suspicions then turned to his father.

INT. BRAD’S PARENTS’ HOUSE - NIGHT

BRAD’S DAD, a rumpled academic, sits in a reading chair, jotting his thoughts onto a yellow legal pad.

NARRATOR
His dad had been a professor and had spent years writing an exhaustive study on Institutional Fascism that was never published.

Brad’s Dad reads over what he’s just written, finds it lacking and scratches it out. He starts over.

NARRATOR
Brad found his father self-pitying and defensive.

INT. BRAD’S PARENTS’ KITCHEN - NIGHT

Brad and his dad, now older, have an argument over dinner.

BRAD’S DAD
I don’t need the humiliation. I know they have no interest. It’s not about vampire children - or whatever. These publishing houses...

As his dad pontificates, we HEAR:

NARRATOR
His lifelong commitment to exposing the tyranny of the powerful had hardened over the years into a crippling paranoia. It bothered Brad that his father had no perspective on his own failings - but found fault everywhere else. The Sociology department, the University, corporate America.

(CONTINUED)
The values of society have become the values of the ruling class. Forget about subversion.

Brad, exasperated, shakes his head and gives up.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE LOUNGE - DAY

Jason Hatfield’s FATHER and MOTHER have joined the family. They are a distinguished-looking older couple. Jason and his Father have an animated conversation, while his Mother attends to her grandkids. We SEE the plane in the b.g.

NARRATOR
Meanwhile, Jason Hatfield’s dad had been a state senator and a businessman. Steadfast, uncomplicated, cheerful. Of course Jason had been given all the tools he needed to succeed.

They all stand to exit. A hand reaches in for a forgotten sweater.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

As Troy unpacks his bag, Brad sits on the bed, thinking.

NARRATOR
Unlike Brad, who had inherited his father’s indecisiveness, his authority complexes, his tendency to lay blame. Even now, here he was blaming his father for his own disappointments.

Brad shakes his head with self-loathing.

NARRATOR
Enough. Brad’s choices were his. Brad did it. He’s the piece of shit.

Suddenly, Troy tosses his baseball cap, hitting Brad’s head.

TROY
Dad.

Brad looks up, a bit stupefied.
TROY
You deaf? I was asking you if you wanted to go get some food.
BRAD
(rallying)
Yeah. Let’s do it. Let’s get some food. I’m hungry.

TROY
All I’ve eaten today is that can of Pringles.

INT. CHINESE RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Troy and Brad sit, looking at menus. Everyone else in the restaurant is old and Chinese.

TROY
This menu is pretty weird.

BRAD
Not sure where else to go.

TROY
I thought you went to school here.

BRAD
Tufts is another part of town. And it was twenty-five years ago.
(forces a grin)
This is cool, hunh? We’re really doing it! You want to go over your schedule?

TROY
Not really, but okay.
(off BRAD’s look)
It’s on your phone. I sent it to you.

Brad takes out his phone and looks up the e-mail.

BRAD
(reading)
Okay, tomorrow Harvard – interview and tour.

TROY
And then I’m supposed to meet up with this girl from high school who goes there. She’s in the music department so...
BRAD

Wednesday - Tufts interview and tour. That’s gonna be weird - I haven’t been back there in so long.

(shrugs)

Okay, then Thursday - we rent the car - drive to Amherst - then Williams...

(looks up)

These are all competitive schools, Troy. You have some safety schools you’re applying to?

TROY

Yeah, sure.

BRAD

Just try not to get too caught up in the game. The brands. Don’t put too much pressure on yourself. It all works out. In the end, you end up at the right place.

TROY

I’m not worried.

BRAD

You shouldn’t be.

TROY

I’m just stoked to get out of Sac. Everything else is gravy.

BRAD

Ahh, Sacramento’s all right.

Troy lets out a little laugh.

BRAD

You’ll miss your parents.

TROY

That’s true.

BRAD

When I was your age, I was so freaked out about college. I wanted to go to Yale. I was obsessed. I don’t even know why. Why Yale? Then I got wait-listed - and then I didn’t get in. But it all worked out. I loved Tufts. Tufts was a fantastic school.

(MORE)
Made great friends. I had a professor - Bob Connor - took me under his wing - blew my mind - changed my life - made me want to save the world.

Brad’s mind drifts for a bit, then he returns.

BRAD
Anyway, fuck Yale. You know what I’m saying? And if you don’t get into Tufts, fuck Tufts.

TROY
My counselor thinks I’ll get into Yale.

It takes Brad a moment to process this.

BRAD
She does?

TROY
He does.

BRAD
He does?

TROY
(off TROY’s nod)
Why does he think that?

TROY
I don’t know. My grades. My scores. My compositions - I guess a lot of these schools want to fill orchestral spots.

(shrugs)
My counselor’s pretty confident I’ll get in everywhere I apply.

(off BRAD’s look; laughs)

BRAD
No. I just... do you think this guy knows what he’s talking about?

TROY
He’s been doing it for twenty years.

BRAD
He thinks you’ll get into Yale?

(off TROY’s nod)
That’s amazing. Really? Wow.

(MORE)
BRAD (cont’d)
I mean, I knew you had good grades.
I’ve always thought you were a
genius. But I just... That is so
awesome, Troy.
 (beams, then...)
But we’re not visiting Yale.

TROY
I don’t want to go to Yale.

BRAD
Why not?

TROY
I’m hoping I’ll get into Harvard.
There’s a music professor there -
this guy, Jerome Backaly. And he’s
doing really cool stuff. And I
don’t know – it’s a cool program.
I just have this feeling...

BRAD
You should meet him while you’re
here!

TROY
I’d like to. My friend from school
- she says, there’s a concert
Wednesday night she’s playing - and
he might be there. So...

BRAD
(amazed)
You’re going to Harvard.

TROY
Well, maybe - I don’t know.

BRAD
Does your mother know this?

TROY
She knows I want to.

BRAD
I just can’t believe I didn’t know
this.

TROY
You knew we were coming here.

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
I knew we were checking out the school - but I didn’t know you were actually gonna get in.

TROY
I might not get in.

BRAD
But it sounds like you might?

TROY
(smiles)
Yeah, I might.

BRAD
(elated)
My kid’s going to Harvard.

TROY
Well, don’t fucking jinx me, dude.

Brad is soon full of emotion. He works to keep it in check.

TROY
You okay, Dad?

Brad nods, composing himself.

BRAD

Brad looks like he might cry. The WAITRESS arrives.

WAITRESS
What can I get you?

BRAD
(looks up)
Hi. We’re here visiting colleges. My son’s first choice is Harvard.

Troy rolls his eyes, embarrassed.

WAITRESS
Okay. And what would he like to eat?
INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Brad and Troy lie back on their twin beds, both illuminated by the glow of their laptops.

On Brad - he is wide-eyed, energized - as he stares at the computer screen. We can HEAR classical piano leaking from his ear buds.

NARRATOR
Brad was electrified by this latest development. Here - suddenly - an unexpected lifeline - something tangible - an outward proof.

ON COMPUTER - Brad is watching a home video of Troy playing piano. He’s clearly a prodigy.

NARRATOR
Of course. His child. His son.

Brad has tears in his eyes as he watches the video.

NARRATOR
A genius. With substance. His heart could burst with this deep satisfaction.

He looks over at...

...Troy, watching GAME OF THRONES on his laptop.

NARRATOR
Brad realized along the way, he’d somehow lost the plot. Cured of his amnesia, he now remembered what he’d been doing for the last seventeen years.

Troy senses he’s being watched. He looks over.

Brad gives Troy a big, prideful grin.

NARRATOR
Planting and nurturing and modeling for this miraculous creature.

Troy smiles back, bemused, then turns back to the show.

Brad looks out into the middle distance, contemplative.

(CONTINUED)
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CONTINUED:

NARRATOR
It occurred to Brad that Billy Werstler and Nick Pascale didn’t even have kids.

EXT. NICK PASCALE’S HOUSE – DAY

Nick and his Husband have a pool party at their LA mansion with a bunch of YOUNG, ATHLETIC GUYS.

NARRATOR
The pleasures in their lives were like candy, Brad thought.

EXT. MAUI BEACH

Billy makes out with an attractive GIRL in the ocean.

NARRATOR
Sugary, addictive, but ultimately empty, even potentially harmful.

INT. HOTEL – NIGHT

Brad puts away the laptop, smiling to himself.

NARRATOR
Not like the profound and sustaining pleasure Brad was experiencing right now.

Troy is now crouching in front of the mini-bar cabinet.

TROY
Dad, can I have this Toblerone?

BRAD
Of course.

As Troy opens the Toblerone...

NARRATOR
In this new light, Brad reconsidered all his regrets.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE – DAY

It’s mayhem in the Hatfield family’s private plane. The kids are all acting bratty, complaining and arguing.

(CONTINUED)
Jason Hatfield looks irritated, ignoring the chaos as he tries to work on his computer.

NARRATOR
If he had pursued money and power like Jason Hatfield, Troy might have ended up spoiled and entitled.

One of the young boys snorts a line of COCAINE off a tray.

NARRATOR
Maybe on hard drugs.

INT. NEW YORK RESTAURANT - DAY

Craig and Diane Fisher and their TWEEN TWIN GIRLS, in their Brooklyn hipster fashion, have a discussion over brunch.

NARRATOR
And if he had married a striver like Diane Fisher and stayed in New York, his kids could have been self-important and unbearable.

TWEEN TWIN ONE
We need capital for our digital newsletter. You must know investors.

CRAIG
Well, what is it exactly?

TWEEN TWIN TWO
We’ve told you, Dad. Feminist theory and shopping tips.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Troy hands Brad the last chunk of Toblerone. Brad pops it in his mouth.

BRAD
(to himself; chewing)
Thank God for Sacramento.

TROY
 Hunh?

Brad suddenly tickles Troy. They rough house a bit before Troy pushes Brad away.
INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Troy and Brad sleep soundly in their beds. They both SNORE.

NARRATOR
For the first time in months, Brad slept through the night without waking.

EXT. HARVARD BRIDGE - MORNING

Troy and Brad walk the bridge from Boston to Cambridge.

EXT. HARVARD UNIVERSITY - MORNING

Troy and Brad enter the Harvard gates.

EXT. HARVARD UNIVERSITY - MORNING

Troy and Brad walk to the ADMISSIONS BUILDING.

BRAD
You nervous?

TROY
Not really. I guess, a little.

BRAD
I know you. You’ve got this.

TROY
Thanks, Dad.

Brad opens the door to the ADMISSIONS OFFICE and they enter.

INT. ADMISSIONS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Brad looks at some photos on the wall:

An old photo of YOUNG, WHITE HARVARD STUDENTS from the 1800’s.

Another old photo of YOUNG, WHITE HARVARD STUDENTS from the 1950’s.

A third photo of YOUNG, ETHNICALLY DIVERSE STUDENTS from the present day.

Brad crosses and sits, next to another waiting MOTHER.

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
You have a son? Daughter?

MOTHER
Yes, a son - he’s interviewing.

BRAD
Mine, too. Where you from?

MOTHER
St. Petersburg.

BRAD
Russia??

MOTHER
(shakes her head)
Florida.

BRAD
Oh, right. Okay. My son is a very talented musician. Pianist. Keyboard. And he composes his own music so...

MOTHER
Wonderful.

BRAD
Looks like he’s gonna have a lot of decisions to make. I think Harvard - is definitely in the running though.

MOTHER
(dry)
You think Harvard has a chance?

BRAD
What does your son, uh, do?

MOTHER
What does he do? He’s a student in high school.

BRAD
Right, right.
(sizes her up)
Okay.

Suddenly, a sheepish Troy appears.
Hey, Dad.

(confused)
What happened? Is it over?

I got the day wrong.

What?

I got the day wrong. It’s yesterday.

Yesterday. What do you mean?

Yeah, I don’t know, I fucked it up. It was yesterday.

Did they give you a time to come back?

I think they’re pretty booked up. They said I could do an alumni interview back in Sacramento.

Noooo. You don’t want to do that. You want to do it with one of these guys. These are the guys that decide.
(to the MOTHER)
Right?

The Mother shrugs.

I’m just gonna go on the tour. It’s not a big deal.

It IS a big deal. Let me talk to them.

No, Dad, no.
BRAD
Yes, I’m going to. We didn’t come all this way so you could have an interview in Sacramento.

INT. ADMISSIONS OFFICE - RECEPTION AREA - DAY

An ADMISSIONS OFFICER talks to Brad. Troy hovers, anxious.

ADMISSIONS OFFICER
I’d love to be able to accommodate you guys – but our schedule’s been set – for months.

BRAD
We flew from Sacramento.

ADMISSIONS OFFICER
We have a pretty small staff here...

BRAD
I just want you to get a sense of my son. Harvard is his first choice. So...

TROY
Dad – it’s okay.

BRAD
He’s a pianist. He does community service. His counselor says he’s Harvard material.

ADMISSIONS OFFICER
It’s not necessary to have an interview here. Alumni interviews are just as good.

BRAD
Oh, come on. I know how important face time is, okay? We’re here. Come on. Don’t shine us.

TROY
Dad!

BRAD
Can’t you just sit with him for ten minutes? What are you doing right now?

(CONTINUED)
ADMISSIONS OFFICER
I have a staff meeting.

TROY
(grabs Brad’s arm)
Please, please, please. Please.

Brad registers Troy’s plaintive look and relents.

EXT. ADMISSIONS OFFICE - DAY

Troy and Brad have exited. They argue on the lawn.

TROY
What the fuck, Dad? You think arguing with the admissions officer is gonna help my chances?

BRAD
He won’t remember this.

TROY
I think he will.

BRAD
I don’t understand - how can someone who has the brain to get into Harvard, not have the brain to remember what day he made an appointment - so he could get into Harvard?!

TROY
I don’t know. Fuck off.

BRAD
Don’t tell me to fuck off.

TROY
I’m sorry. Can we walk somewhere else please? They’re about to start a tour.

BRAD
So what?

TROY
I don’t want everyone seeing me get bitched out by my dad, okay?

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
I’m not bitching you out. I’m trying to solve a problem here. You need to have an interview. I mean, we’re here. That’s the point.

TROY
I thought the point was for me to get a sense of the school.

BRAD
No, the point is for the school to get a sense of you. You need to make an impression. I know you think you have this in the bag. But it’s Harvard. Even geniuses get rejected, Troy.

Troy looks over and sees – a group of APPLICANTS and their PARENTS gathering for a tour.

TROY
Oh my god.

BRAD
You realize we’re competing with kids from Hong Kong and everywhere! Okay? You’re a white kid from the suburbs without a sob story. And you’re not even a legacy. We’re underdogs here – we need to do everything we can.

TROY
(embarrassed)
Dad – I’m about to flip the fuck out. Please shut up.

BRAD
Let me think. Go on the tour – and I will meet you back here when it’s over.

TROY
What are you gonna do?

BRAD
I’m gonna make some calls.

Troy looks uneasy – but the tour is leaving.
TROY
Just don’t do anything uncool.

Brad grimaces and takes out his phone.

INT. BRAD’S HOUSE – MORNING

Melanie is feeding the BULLDOG, on her CELL PHONE.

MELANIE
Hey.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

BRAD
Troy messed up – we’re here at Harvard and he doesn’t have an interview. He got the day wrong. * Do we know anyone at Harvard? I want to get him an interview. They need to meet him.

MELANIE
Who’s at Harvard? Like a... like a... like a... dean?

BRAD
(excited)
Babe, Harvard is Troy’s first choice. Did you know that? And his counselor thinks he can get in? Did you know that? Who do we know at Harvard?!

MELANIE
I don’t know. I mean... I gotta think. Toni Morrison?

BRAD
Toni Morrison? You know Toni Morrison?

MELANIE
No.

BRAD
She teaches at Princeton, Melanie. What the fuck are you talking about, Toni Morrison?

(CONTINUED)
MELANIE
I don’t know. Who would I know at Harvard?

BRAD

MELANIE
I met one of the Kennedys in San Francisco.

BRAD
Yeah?

MELANIE
She’s a yoga instructor. Doesn’t Craig Fisher teach a class there?

BRAD
What? No. Does he?

MELANIE
I think I read that somewhere. I think he’s a visiting lecturer or something. He flies up from D.C.

BRAD
He lives in New York now.

MELANIE
He flies up from New York then. I’m pretty sure he lectures there, teaches a class or...

BRAD
Fuuuuucck!

MELANIE
What?

BRAD
I think you’re right. Now that you mention it... shit!

MELANIE
What’s wrong?

BRAD
I don’t want to call him. Ugh. Goddammit.
MELANIE
What’s the big deal?

BRAD
(sighs; full of dread)
I’ll call you later.

Melanie realizes he’s hung up.

EXT. HARVARD UNIVERSITY - DAY
Brad exits the campus, deep in thought.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE - HARVARD LAMPOON BUILDING - DAY
Brad walks through Cambridge.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE - NEAR CHARLES RIVER - DAY
Brad crosses toward the Charles River.

EXT. CHARLES RIVER - DAY
Brad sits on a bench, watching STUDENT ROWERS in BOATS pass.

NARRATOR
Brad thought about the last time he’d seen Craig Fisher.

INT. MANHATTAN DINER - DAY
Brad and Craig have lunch in a crowded diner.

NARRATOR
They had both been in New York City for different reasons - and decided to meet up. Brad had just started his non-profit - and was full of enthusiasm.

Brad animatedly pitches Craig.

NARRATOR
He had hoped Craig might want to get involved in some way. Offer up his famous friends.

(MORE)
Craig listens politely - takes a bite of his sandwich.

**INT. BRAD’S HOUSE – OFFICE – DAY**

Brad sits at his computer and feverishly types an e-mail.

*NARRATOR*

Later, back in Sacramento, he decided to be more direct. He sent Craig an e-mail, asking him to come onto Brad’s board of directors. He wrote passionately about the worthiness of the cause, his deep respect for Craig and how much it would mean to him, personally.

Brad reads over his e-mail, pleased.

**INT. BRAD’S HOUSE – DINING ROOM – NIGHT**

Brad, Melanie and a Young Troy (six) eat dinner.

Brad checks his Blackberry – nothing.

*NARRATOR*

Brad never heard back.

**INT. BRAD’S HOUSE – LIVING ROOM – NIGHT**

Brad, sitting alone, watches...

...Craig being interviewed – on a CABLE NEWS SHOW.

*NARRATOR*

In fact, he never heard from Craig again.

Brad grimaces and changes the channel.

**EXT. CHARLES RIVER – DAY**

Sitting on the bench, Brad stares at his phone, considering what to do.

**BRAD**

Fuck it.
He places the call to Craig. He HEARS...

    WOMAN’S VOICE
    Welcome to Verizon wireless. Your call cannot be completed as dialed. Please check the number and try again.

Brad hangs up, annoyed.

INT. EXECUTIVE SUITE – DAY

An EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT in a handsomely-appointed office suite answers the phone.

    EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
    Jason Hatfield’s office.

EXT. CHARLES RIVER – DAY

Brad rises and paces near the river.

    BRAD
    Hi. Brad Sloan calling for him.

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

    EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
    Jason’s not available right now. Can I take a message?

    BRAD
    It’s kind of time-sensitive. Can you just tell him Brad Sloan is calling?

    EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
    I would, but he’s on a plane.

    BRAD
    Oh. I see. I’m trying to get a phone number – I’m an old friend of his from college – and I’m looking for a phone number of another friend of ours...?

    EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
    Does Jason have your number?

    BRAD
    I think so, but maybe...
EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT
I’ll let him know you called.

BRAD
Okay, but, maybe could... hello?

He realizes she’s hung up. Annoyed, Brad wracks his brain.

EXT. MAUI BEACH - DAWN
Billy Werstler walks the beach with his DOG. He answers his PHONE.

BILLY
Brad?!

EXT. JOHN WEEKS BRIDGE - DAY
Brad paces along the pedestrian footbridge.

BRAD
Yo! What’s up?! Billy! How’s it going?

BILLY
Dude! I’m good! It’s like six AM here.

BRAD
Ah, shit. Did I call too early?

BILLY
Nah, man - I’m already on the beach - taking my dog for a piss.

BRAD
Great, cool, well, how’s life?

BILLY
Life’s fucking good, dude! It’s excellent!

BRAD
You’re like retired. Amazing!

BILLY
I know!

BRAD
In Maui!

(CONTINUED)
BILLY
I know!

BRAD
You’re like living the dream!

BILLY
Pretty much! Although I’m not really retired. I put some money into this beach bar here - and then it just blew up. Now, it’s getting franchised all over Hawaii. And it’s even coming to the mainland. So that’s keeping me busy.

BRAD
Wow, great.

BILLY
And I’m also involved in this Polynesian cultural society which is really cool - trying to get the islanders more involved in local politics...

BRAD
Good for you, man.

BILLY
And I’ve got these two beautiful wahine who live with me. And they’re fucking gorgeous and cool. They make these amazing necklaces made from shells and shit - I’m helping them open a store. *(laughs)* *(laughs)* *(laughs)* *(laughs)* *(laughs)* We surf and fuck then surf - it’s awesome.

BRAD
Wait - so you have two girlfriends - that live with you?

BILLY
It’s pretty fluid. We’re making it up as we go along. You know. Anyway, what’s up with you?

BRAD
Oh, I’m in Boston right now with my son, Troy - we’re looking at colleges. Yeah. He’s probably gonna go to Harvard.
BILLY
Yeah?  Sweet.

BRAD
Yeah.  He’s a smart kid.  The real deal.  Anyway, hey, do you happen to have Craig’s number?  I wanted to ask him something and I guess he changed it...

BILLY
Yeah, I can text it to you.  I just saw him in LA at Nick’s wedding.

BRAD
Wait - Nick got married?  To who?

BILLY
To Xavier.

BRAD
I thought they were married.

BILLY
No, they just lived together.  They finally got married in July.

BRAD
Oh.

BILLY
I thought I’d see you there for sure.  Craig was there.  Jason and all his Aryan spawn were there.  It was actually cool.  Beautiful ceremony.

BRAD
Yeah?  I didn’t know about it.

BILLY
It was real small.  Somebody mentioned you.  I forget who.

BRAD
(stung)
Uh-huh.

BILLY
Wondering where you were.  Or what happened to you.  Who was it?

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
Oh. Hunh. Well, I’m just doing my thing.

BILLY
Dude, it’s good to hear your voice. My dog just took a shit though and I gotta pick it up.

BRAD
Okay. Good to talk to you, Billy. Text me that number, would ya?

BILLY
Yup. I’ll send it right now. Come to the islands sometime, brother. Later!

BRAD
Bye.

Brand hangs up. He looks gut-punched. He sits for a moment, stewing. His PHONE BUZZES. He looks down – it’s a text from BILLY with Craig’s number. Brad stares at the number and frowns. He presses the number, calling. The PHONE RINGS once, then goes to VOICE MAIL.

AUTOMATED VOICE
Please leave a message.

BRAD
(into PHONE; stammers)
Hey, Craig – it’s, uh, Brad Sloan. *
Ummmm... I’m at Haryard with my son. He’s ummm... if you could – if you have the time, uhhh, could you call me back? It’s kind of on the urgent side. Thanks.

Brad hangs up and SIGHS.

EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - DAY
Brad wanders across from the campus, in a funk.
Brad felt numb. The fact that he’d not been invited to Nick Pascale’s wedding seemed to confirm every doubt he ever had — about his friendships, himself and his place in the world.

Brad stops in his tracks.

A small wedding party. Nick and Xavier are congratulated by Craig and Diane, then Jason Hatfield and his family.

Brad kept picturing the wedding party in his mind. Everyone there, enjoying themselves. Basking in each other’s glow.

We watch Nick and Xavier exit the house and greet people on the expansive lawn. They are approached by Billy and his Two tan Girlfriends.

Brad wondered if he’d been excluded or simply forgotten and couldn’t decide which was worse.

Everyone continues hugging each other and enjoying the day.

Brad shakes his head, grimacing.

Whatever. He was a non-presence. A blip. A zero. A no-name. For a moment, he wished he were dead.

TWO HARVARD GIRLS pass by him, laughing about something. This snaps him out of it.

He watches them pass, then looks over...

...under a tree, there is a HOMELESS WOMAN, talking to herself. She looks miserable.
Brad takes her in - his compassion visible on his face.

NARRATOR
Brad felt a sudden kinship with everything that was ever unloved.

CLOSE on Brad as he spots about other sad creatures.

- A MISERABLE TEEN GIRL, looking lonely, passes; An ASIAN LADY, struggling with a heavy grocery bag; An OLD MAN, alone on a bench, feeding pigeons.

He then looks at the HEADSTONES of an old GRAVEYARD.

NARRATOR
The abandoned, the forgotten, the despised - those who never found love. Never, ever, ever.

INT. BRAD’S PARENTS’ HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

Brad’s Dad, looking old and frail, searches for something in his den.

NARRATOR
Brad thought about his father and how his book had been rejected by every single publisher. How lonely he was. How little affirmation he received - even from Brad.

EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - DAY

Brad is now emotional as he wanders back toward the campus.

NARRATOR
How cruel is this world. How unfair. The prejudices of humans who shower their attention on the already popular - and ignore those who need it the most.

Brad wipes his tears, just as...

...a chipper Troy appears.

TROY
Hey, Dad.
(sees his face)
What’s wrong?

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
(composing himself)
Nothing. What happened to the tour?

TROY
It’s over.

BRAD
Already?

TROY
I’ve been gone an hour and a half.

BRAD
Really? Oh.

TROY
Wanna get something to eat?

Brad nods and they head off.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - DAY

Brad and Troy walk a busy street.

BRAD
What about here?

Brad points to a MEXICAN RESTAURANT that is completely empty - save for an OLDER WOMAN, working the counter.

TROY
There’s no one in there, Dad. What about that place?

Troy points across the street, where there’s a FESTIVE LUNCH PLACE and a CROWD is dining, al fresco.

BRAD
Just because no one’s in here doesn’t mean it’s not good, Troy.

TROY
Usually it does, actually.

BRAD
No, it doesn’t. Why don’t we go somewhere that really needs our business instead of some trendy popular place where we’d have to wait to get a table?

(CONTINUED)
TROY
I don't really feel like Mexican, but okay.

Troy follows Brad inside the restaurant.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - DAY

TWO PLATES OF UNAPPETIZING FOOD are set down on the table.

Troy frowns at the sight. Brad looks up at the OLD LATINA and smiles brightly.

BRAD
Muchisimas gracias!

OLD LATINA
(lackluster)
De nada.

The Old Latina walks off.

BRAD
So I may have a connection at Harvard - and I made a call. But I don’t want you to get your hopes up.

TROY
It’s not that big a deal.

BRAD
I just wish I could help you here.

Brad shakes his head, glum.

TROY
I have interviews everywhere else. And I can do an alumni interview for Harvard. It’s fine.
(looks at BRAD)
Something wrong, Dad? You seem a little off.

BRAD
No, it’s just... nothing... it’s stupid...

TROY
What?

(continued)
BRAD
Ah, just some... I don’t know...
some old friends got together
and...
(struggles; softly)
...didn’t invite me... ‘cause I’m
not, you know, at their,
whatever... they’re... it’s just random...

TROY
What? You’re kinda mumbling.

BRAD
(shrugs)
I wouldn’t have even wanted to go
if I’d been invited, but - it’s
just kinda, I dunno... lame.

Troy gives his dad a consoling look.

TROY
I’m sorry.

Brad shrugs it off, forcing a grin.

TROY
They sound like dicks.

Brad lets out a wry laugh, brightening.

Suddenly, Brad’s PHONE BUZZES. He takes it out and answers.

BRAD
Hello? Heeey, Craig!

Brad gives Troy a hopeful look, pointing to phone.

BRAD
How’s it going, man?! What? No,
nobody died.

INT. SOUND STAGE - DAY

Craig stands in the wings of a NEWS STUDIO SET. We can SEE a
CAMERA CREW and NEWS ANCHORS in the b.g.

CRAIG
You sounded weird on the message
and you said it was urgent so I...

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
No, no. Sorry, didn’t mean to...
I’m just up here in Cambridge with
my son, looking at Harvard - and he
was supposed to get an interview at
the admissions office. And someone
messed up over there. Yeah!

Brad notices Troy scrutinizing his every word.

BRAD
Hold on a sec - I’m in a restaurant
- just gonna step out.

Brad rises and exits. Troy watches him go.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - MOMENTS LATER
Brad paces on the street.

BRAD
I knew you taught a class up here
or something. I thought maybe you
could help me out...

CRAIG
Sure, Brad. No problem. I can
call over there after I finish this
taping.

BRAD
Really? That would be so amazing.
Thank you! Harvard is Troy’s first
choice - I mean, obviously...

CRAIG
You know, I’m actually flying up
there tomorrow. You guys still
gonna be around?

BRAD
Tomorrow? Yeah, we’re here. We
leave Thursday.

CRAIG
Maybe we can grab a bite to eat.

(CONTINUED)
That’d be great! Cool, listen, one last thing – Troy’s a musician – like a true prodigy – I’m not saying that just ‘cause he’s my kid. Anyway, there’s a professor here he’d really love to meet with. Oh, shit.
Brad runs into the restaurant, frantic.

BRAD
(cupping phone)
What’s the name of that music professor?!

TROY
What?!

BRAD
The music professor! The one you like! C’mon, c’mon!

TROY
Jerome Backaly?

BRAD
(into phone)
Jerome Backaly. Yeah. That would be terrific, Craig. Man, I owe you. Fantastic! Yeah, dinner tomorrow. Yep! Talk soon! Hey - have a good, uh, taping!

Brad hangs up, feeling a mixture of emotions.

TROY
What’s going on? Dad?

BRAD
I’m on it, okay? I’m on it.

Brad gives Troy a confident, cryptic look.

Troy rolls his eyes and returns to his burrito.

Troy strolls the aisles, looking at various books on music.

Nearby, Brad pulls a book off a display table.

ON BOOK - “POLITICAL BEASTS by CRAIG FISHER”.

Brad reads a little of the book - contempt all over his face.

He turns over the book...

(Continued)
On the back - a PHOTO of Craig, arms folded, with a take-me-seriously expression.

Brad sticks out his tongue, nauseated.

Suddenly, Brad’s PHONE BUZZES. He takes it from his pocket.

BRAD
(into phone)
Craig! Hey! Guess what? I’m in a book store right now, looking at your book! The new one, yeah. It’s got a big display here! *
(eyes widen)
Yeah?! Seriously? Man, you are the best! I don’t even know how to thank you! *

But in his excitement, Brad drops the book onto the table.

BRAD
I can’t wait to tell Troy!

INT. CAMPUS BOOK STORE - MOMENTS LATER

An excited Brad approaches Troy.

BRAD
Guess who you got a meeting with tomorrow morning!

TROY
Who?

BRAD
Jerome Backaly.

TROY
Shut up!

BRAD
And after - you’ve got an interview - with the Dean of Admissions himself!

TROY
No way!
BRAD
Way!

TROY
Now, I’m nervous!

BRAD
Come on!

TROY
Shit! Wait, but tomorrow I have Tufts.

BRAD
Fuck Tufts!

TROY
Right, right.

BRAD
We’ll go in the afternoon.

TROY
Dad!

BRAD
What?

TROY
You’re the King!

BRAD
(grins)
I got you, pal.

They high-five, both in great spirits.

INT. CAMPUS BOOK STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Brad approaches Troy with a Harvard sweatshirt.

NARRATOR
Coming through for his son made Brad giddy. What if these meetings really did help Troy get into Harvard?

Troy shakes his head, but then takes the sweatshirt with a sheepish smile.
INT. BRAD’S HOUSE - DAY

A euphoric Troy races into the room.

TROY
I got in!  I got in!

At the table, Brad and Melanie leap to their feet, exulting.

NARRATOR
And what if, looking back, this was the fateful moment that started Troy onto a path of unimaginable glory.

EXT. MAGAZINE STAND IN SACRAMENTO - DAY

Melanie and Brad pull a WIRED MAGAZINE off the shelf.

The cover is a picture of TROY with the headline - “WUNDERKIND STARTS A MUSICAL REVOLUTION”.

NARRATOR
He pictured Troy as an adult, happy and wealthy, even famous.

Brad and Melanie hold each other as they stare at the cover.

INT. HOTEL RESTAURANT - DAY

Troy, well-dressed and confident, sits across from Melanie and Brad. Troy has a beautiful GIRLFRIEND by his side.

TROY
Dad, Mom, I love you so much.  All my success is because of you.

Melanie and Brad react, touched.

TROY
Guess what?  I bought an island!

As Troy starts to show them photos on his phone, we HEAR...

NARRATOR
He pictured Troy’s triumphs eclipsing those of Brad’s contemporaries. How gratifying that would be.
EXT. CAMPUS BOOK STORE - DAY

Brad and Troy have exited the store with their purchases. *
Troy tries on the sweatshirt for his dad. *

Brad’s expression seems to change as Troy models his new Harvard sweatshirt.

NARRATOR
Suddenly, Brad was struck with a pang of anxiety.

Troy takes the sweatshirt off again - embarrassed. *

NARRATOR
What if Troy lorded his success over Brad - or hoarded it away?

INT. BRAD’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Brad and Melanie watch...

ON TV - Troy is being interviewed by JIMMY KIMMEL.

NARRATOR
What if, in the end, Troy’s wins made Brad feel even more the loser?

In his chair, Brad is feeling a mixture of emotions.

MELANIE
Did he call you back yet?

Brad shakes his head. Melanie frowns.

NARRATOR
What if they became estranged, alienated by their diverging fortunes?

INT. BRAD’S OFFICE - DAY

A stung Brad takes down the framed WIRED MAGAZINE COVER of Troy from the wall above his desk.

NARRATOR
What if Brad ended up envious of his own son?

Brad drops the FRAMED PORTRAIT into a storage box.
Brad and Troy walk across a busy intersection. Brad’s expression has turned grim.

NARRATOR
The thought horrified him.

At the corner, they pass a YOUNG BUSKER, singing and strumming his GUITAR.

Brad pauses for a moment.

NARRATOR
But, then again, musicians don’t really make money.

Brad looks over at Troy - who has also stopped to listen, enjoying the music.

NARRATOR
Maybe even with an expensive education, Brad could wind up a struggling artist.

Now, it is Troy busking on a Cambridge street, playing music on his keyboard for the PASSERS-BY.

NARRATOR
Maybe Troy will take after Melanie - perfectly satisfied with practically nothing.

A PEDESTRIAN drops a dollar into Troy’s upturned hat. Troy smiles, appreciative.

Troy, looking like a white-trash thug, and a few DIRTBAG FRIENDS smoke a joint and drink beers on the corner.

NARRATOR
Or worse, end up like Brad - bitter and restless and full of regrets. Maybe even blaming Brad for all of life’s disappointments.
TROY
(to another GUY)
My dad’s a fucking loser, too...

Troy takes a swig, then tosses his beer can into the street.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - DAY

Brad and Troy listen to the Busker finish his song. The song ends. Brad and Troy and a few others CLAP. Troy drops a FIVE into the Busker’s hat.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - DUSK

Brad and Troy change clothes for dinner.

BRAD
If you’re just gonna be a musician, do you even need to go to college?

TROY
Hunh?

BRAD
It’s a fair question.

TROY
Just a musician?

BRAD
I’m just saying - do you need a Harvard diploma to play music in a band? Isn’t that what you want to do?

TROY
I don’t know what I want to do, Dad.

BRAD
Well, you need to start thinking about it - ‘cause this isn’t cheap, Troy. You’re assuming a lot if you think I can pay for all this without taking out loans - and you taking out loans - and trying to get scholarships - and financial aid...

(CONTINUED)
TROY
What the fuck just happened?

BRAD
(softens)
I’m just thinking out loud, okay?

TROY
I don’t expect you to pay for everything.
(beat)
Are you not gonna be able to pay for everything?

BRAD
We’ll see. Look, I don’t want you to worry about that - yet.

TROY
Clearly.

BRAD
Hey, it might not be a big issue. Maybe one of your grandparents will die.

Troy reacts, disturbed.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

As Brad and Troy step off the elevator, they see...

...a beautiful young Indian-American woman, ANANYA, (21) standing in the lobby.

TROY
Hey!

ANANYA
Hey, Troy.

She approaches and they hug.

TROY
This is my dad, Brad.

ANANYA
Hey, dad Brad. I’m Ananya.

Ananya and Brad shake hands.
BRAD
So you guys were friends at Country Day?

TROY
Not really. Well, Ananya was a Senior and I was a Freshman...

ANANYA
(protesting)
We were friends.

TROY
You were nice to me.

ANANYA
We were in orchestra together.

TROY
Ananya’s an amazing musician.

BRAD
And now you go to Harvard?

ANANYA
(nods)
I’m a Junior.

BRAD
Are you liking it?

ANANYA
I am. It gets cold, but yeah, I love my classes. Great people. Yeah, no complaints!

TROY
Is it a lot of work?
(off her emphatic nod)
Listen, if you have a lot of work to do, you don’t have to go to dinner with us. Please...

ANANYA
No, no, no. I turned in a paper this afternoon. I’m done for the night. And I’m glad to see faces from home! I got a reservation at a place around the corner. Should we go?

Ananya leads them toward the door.
INT. HIPSTER RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Brad and Troy sit across from Ananya.

ANANYA
That’s cool you got a meeting with Jerome Backaly. How’d you manage that?

TROY
My dad’s friends with a professor here.

ANANYA
Oh, yeah? Who?

BRAD
His name’s Craig Fisher.

Ananya grimaces, then recovers.

BRAD
What?

ANANYA
What?

BRAD
You made a face.

ANANYA
I did?

BRAD
You definitely made a face. You can say whatever you want. We’re not close or anything. We were friends a long time ago.

ANANYA
Well, I just took his class last year - he’s kind of the worst.  
(smiles; self-conscious)
Should I have not said that?

BRAD
No. Say it. Why?

ANANYA
He’s just condescending. And I don’t know - he’s pretty sexist.

(MORE)
ANANYA (cont’d)
He’s just got this air of someone who thinks they know everything because they’re on TV and... they have contacts at the White House.

BRAD
So how do you really feel?

ANANYA
The way he sees politics - it’s all a game. Who’s up. Who’s down. It’s doesn’t inspire me. Honestly - by the end of his class, I wanted to quit my major.

BRAD
Aren’t you a music major?

ANANYA
(shakes her head)
Government. I love music, but I want to get into public policy.

TROY
My dad majored in Government.

BRAD
Communications and Government. This was at Tufts. Actually, Craig and I were in all the same classes.

ANANYA
Really? Was he like... a cocky prick then, too?

BRAD
(smiles)
Not as bad, I don’t think.

ANANYA
So what do you do now?

BRAD
I have a non-profit I started a few years ago.

ANANYA
Really? Awesome.
BRAD
We help other non-profits use social media to get the word out about what they do - help them find members and donors and...

ANANYA
Like crowd sourcing or...?

BRAD
Some of that. We’re consultants, basically. It sounds boring...

ANANYA
It doesn’t sound boring. It sounds amazing.

BRAD
(pleased)
Well, thanks.

ANANYA
I’m actually writing my thesis on NGO’s - maybe I could talk to you at some point...

BRAD
Of course. Whatever you need.

ANANYA
Thanks. I once told my dad my dream job was to work at Amnesty International - he was like devastated. He wanted to disown me.

(to TROY)
You’re lucky your dad’s so cool.

TROY
(nods)
I am lucky.

BRAD
Tell us about your thesis...

ANANYA
Really? It’s not fully formed but I want to write about the history of white missionary women - you know, the wives? - and how they came to India and Sri Lanka to “convert the heathens” but laid the ground work for social reform...

(continued)
As Ananya talks, Brad soaks her up. Ananya’s voice fades as we HEAR:

NARRATOR
As she spoke, Brad became increasingly smitten. Ananya seemed to embody all the qualities he still loved about humanity. Here was someone who was young, but wise. Engaged, aware - but still idealistic. She almost gave Brad hope for the future of the species.

MOMENTS LATER

Their food has come. Ananya talks and eats.

ANANYA
It’s basically about cultural identity as it relates to women’s rights and how one of the sad legacies of colonialism...

Brad continues to listen, mesmerized.

NARRATOR
He felt a long-dormant stirring. He wanted to possess her - her energy, her passion, her beauty. At moments, this longing to absorb her became almost unbearable.

Brad looks pained by his train of thought.

Suddenly, another student, an Asian-American, MAYA, appears at the table.

NARRATOR
Then her friend, Maya, showed up.

Ananya introduces her to them. Troy and Brad shake her hand.

ANANYA
You guys, this is my friend Maya. I told her to stop by. I hope that’s okay.

BRAD
(enthusiastic)
Of course! Please sit down. Maya?

MAYA
Yeah! Thanks. How’s it going?

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
You go to Harvard, too?

Maya nods and joins them at the table.

ANANYA
Maya plays the violin.

BRAD
And what do you play?

ANANYA
I play the flute.

She mimics playing the flute. Brad reacts, impressed.

MOMENTS LATER

Brad, Ananya and Maya enjoy wine and dessert. Troy sips a Coke.

MAYA
I just don’t feel like it’s my job to be the ambassador to all these Chinese students. I mean, of course I want to help them assimilate, but I don’t even speak Mandarin. What the fuck?

Brad listens with a dumb grin frozen to his face.

NARRATOR
She was just as beautiful, just as compelling.

Brad’s expression transforms into visible distress.

Across the table, Ananya and Maya laugh about something.

NARRATOR
Brad suddenly felt a kind of grief - for all the women he would never get to love and all the lives he would never get to live.

Brad catches a glimpse of himself in a reflection. He appears old.

NARRATOR
Brad never felt so old. Why did time compromise everything? Was age a hard truth or a defect of perception?
The girls laugh even harder. Troy laughs, too. Brad tries to join in, forcing his laughter.

EXT. GREEN PASTURE - DAY

Brad, Ananya and Maya run, laughing and happy through a green park full of trees and green. *

NARRATOR

Couldn’t life be constantly renewed? Couldn’t we be forever reborn in each new fleeting moment?

INT. HIPSTER RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Ananya and Maya raise their glasses. A smiling Brad toasts them with his glass of wine. The mood is festive.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - NIGHT

Brad, Troy, Ananya and Maya have exited the restaurant and congregate on the street.

ANANYA

Thank you so much for dinner!

MAYA

Yes, thank you!

BRAD

Hey - thanks for taking the time. I know Troy appreciates it.

TROY

Yeah, it was cool.

ANANYA

We’re meeting a few people at the Druid for drinks, if you guys wanna come.

BRAD

(intrigued)

Oh, yeah? Where’s that?

(CONTINUED)
MAYA
(points)
Just across the street.

BRAD
(off TROY’s look)
Troy has these big meetings in the
morning. He needs his sleep so...

ANANYA
Not even for one drink?
Brad looks to Troy.

TROY
I’m not twenty-one - I don’t think
I could get in even.

ANANYA
Oh, yeah, shit. That’s right.

BRAD
But you guys have fun, all right?

ANANYA
Oh, and we’ll see you tomorrow
night at the concert.

BRAD
You will?

TROY
Not you, Dad. My dad has a dinner
with his friend. But I’ll be there.

BRAD
Oh, yeah. Craig Fisher.

Ananya fake retches at the mention of Craig’s name.

ANANYA
Have fun with that. Okay, well,
bye!

MAYA
Bye! Nice to meet you!

Ananya and Maya head across the street, giggling.

Brad watches them go with a look of longing.

Brad and Troy walk back to their hotel.

TROY
Seems like you wanted to go.

BRAD
No, no, no. Just being polite.

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - NIGHT

Troy and Brad pass a DOORMAN.
DOORMAN
Good night.

BRAD
Good night.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT
Troy is fast asleep in his bed.
Brad, in the other bed, is still in his clothes, on his laptop. He looks over at Troy.

**BRAD**
(softly)
Troy? You awake? Troy?

No response. Brad puts down the laptop and rises.

**INT. HOTEL LOBBY - MOMENTS LATER**

Brad steps off the elevator and crosses toward the exit. He stands in the lobby, having second thoughts. He shakes them off and heads out, passing the same Doorman.

**INT. THE DRUID - NIGHT**

Ananya, Maya and a few other STUDENTS are drinking at a booth. The Bar is crowded.

Brad watches them, from the bar, looking awkward. He turns and calls out to the BARTENDER.

**BRAD**
I think I’m just gonna close out my tab!

**BARTENDER**
Just the whiskey? Eight dollars.

Brad takes out his wallet and pulls out a TEN. He drops the bill on the bar and turns, startled to see...

...Ananya has approached. She gives him a cheery smile.

**ANANYA**
Hey! You made it!

**BRAD**
Hey - I was having a little insomnia so I just got a whiskey!

**ANANYA**
We’re over in the corner! Come join us!
BRAD
Ah, nah, that’s okay! You guys are having fun! I just couldn’t sleep!

ANANYA
Oh, come on! We’re not having fun – we’re organizing a protest!

BRAD
Are you really?!

ANANYA
Kind of! To protect need-blind admissions!

BRAD
Oh, yeah? A protest?!

Ananya looks a little buzzed. She puts her arm around him.

ANANYA
Everyone at that table is a future do-gooder! Like you!

BRAD
Yeah? That’s cool. I’m really impressed by you.

ANANYA
Yeah?

BRAD
Yeah – it’s cool to meet someone your age who’s so aware of what’s going on – but you’re also hopeful – and your values seem to be in the right place and...

ANANYA
Well, thank you.

BRAD
It reminds me of when I was your age and going to school and...

ANANYA
So what’s your advice to me?

BRAD
My advice?
ANANYA
Yeah! If you could go back in time and give yourself advice — what would you say?

BRAD
 Seriously? Honestly?!
ANANYA
Yes, honestly. I’d love to know.

BRAD
Honestly? I’d say, forget non-profits, Brad. And just go make a lot of money!

He sorta laughs. Ananya looks quizzical.

ANANYA
Shut up! Are you serious?!

BRAD
Yes, I’m serious! If you want to make an impact in this world - and have respect - go be Bill Gates! Go make a lot of money - then do good stuff with it!

ANANYA
(grimacing)
That’s what you would say?

BRAD
Look, I go to a dinner party - and I tell people what I do - and for about three minutes, they act like they admire me and they’re interested - and then after three minutes, I’m invisible! They don’t admire me - and worse, they think I’m gonna ask them for a donation! And sometimes I do!

Ananya’s eyes narrow. He can tell he’s losing her.

BRAD
What? Do I sound jaded? Just know I started out as idealistic as you or any of your friends! Believe me!

Close on Ananya, listening, with an attitude.

Then on Brad, talking a mile-a-minute, gesticulating.
Brad’s voice fades under the VOICE of the NARRATOR.

NARRATOR
Brad could tell he had lost Ananya -
lost her respect - and he
desperately wanted it back. He
thought if he could summarize the
trajectory of his life - she would
understand him - maybe even respect
him - as someone who had lost the
good fight - but had fought it
nonetheless.

INT. THE DRUID - LATER
Brad and Ananya are now seated at the bar with new drinks.
Brad continues talking. Ananya just listens, a blank
expression on her face.

NARRATOR
He told her about his career
mistakes - his years in journalism
just as the newspaper business was
folding. His attempt to start a
digital muckraking magazine in San
Francisco but how no one wanted to
read long-form pieces anymore - and
how he had won a few prestigious
prizes, which he rattled off - but
his magazine still had gone bust.

As Brad spews, Ananya takes a big GULP from her drink.

INT. THE DRUID - NIGHT
Ananya and Brad sit at the booth with her friends. As Maya
and the other STUDENTS laugh and chat, Brad continues to
monologue his life story for Ananya.

NARRATOR
He talked about Craig Fisher and
his other college friends and how
they had sold out and gotten rich
and how they didn’t even invite him
to their milestone events anymore
even though he had been the heart
and soul of their group. Brad may
have failed in their eyes, but at
least he still had his integrity
and could sleep at night.

(CONTINUED)
Ananya just listens - but we sense she is judging him.

INT. THE DRUID - LATER

The bar has almost emptied. Maya and the other Students are gone. Brad and Ananya are the only ones left at their booth. Brad has not stopped talking.

NARRATOR
And even though his consulting non-profit had been struggling lately - he still felt he had done some real good with it.

BRAD
Maybe if I were more in the field - and really meeting more of the people that we’re helping - but I just feel kind of disconnected...

On Ananya - she is silent, but there’s visible contempt in her eyes.

NARRATOR
Ananya just listened, saying nothing, taking him in. Finally, Brad became so self-conscious, he couldn’t stand it anymore.

Brad, suddenly embarrassed, blurts...

BRAD
What is that look?

ANANYA
What?

BRAD
What are you thinking? Please tell me.

ANANYA
I’m thinking... you’re lucky. You’re fifty years old and you still think the world was made for you.

BRAD
I’m forty-seven.
ANANYA
It’s like you’re mad because you don’t like your position in the ruling class. Most people don’t even have a position. Most people can’t even get in the door to see what’s inside. Do you even know poor people?

BRAD
Of course.

ANANYA
When I visit my mother’s family in Delhi, a lot of people there live on two dollars a day.

BRAD
Right, I get that...

ANANYA
They don’t complain about being ignored at dinner parties. They’re happy they get dinner.

BRAD
Right - but I’m not competing with those people. You compete with the people who are your markers in life.

ANANYA
Why are you competing at all?

BRAD
It’s the way this world is.

ANANYA
From my point of view - you competing with your friends from college? That competition is the history of colonialism, okay? And the oppression of women - and the fucking up of the environment...

BRAD
Look, don’t go there, okay?

ANANYA
Stop competing already. The future of the world depends on it...
BRAD  
(talking over her)  
I’m not the problem, all right? I work for a non-profit for fuck’s sake.

ANANYA  
Sounds like you just kinda backed into it ‘cause nothing else worked out.

Brad is momentarily silent, stung.

BRAD  
That’s not nice.

ANANYA  
(softens)  
Sorry. It’s just - from where I sit, it kinda sounds like white privilege, male privilege, first-class problems.

BRAD  
Maybe I seem like a cliche to you - but this is my life, you know?

ANANYA  
(nods)  
Just don’t ask me to feel bad for you. You’re doing fine. Trust me. I promise you. You have enough. I’m going to use the rest room.

She rises and walks off. Brad takes out his wallet.

EXT. CAMBRIDGE STREET - NIGHT  
Ananya walks across the street and disappears into the darkness.

A forlorn Brad stands on the corner, watching her go.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT  
Brad, now in his underwear, quietly crawls into bed. MOONLIGHT illuminates the room.

Troy is still asleep in the other bed. He doesn’t stir.
Brad lies in bed and stares up at the balcony doors. A draft of wind pushes the curtains and creates a whistling noise.
Brad knew he had blown it. He could have gotten the validation he needed from this girl, but had gone about it the wrong way. He was too honest, too open. Nobody wanted that. That was never attractive. The story of his life.

Brad rolls over in bed. He sees...

...Ananya, lying in the next bed, smiling, warmly at him. *

ANANYA
You’re amazing.

They share a warm smile. She waves him toward her. *

Suddenly, Maya appears, popping up on the other side of him.

MAYA
Totally.

Maya leans in and kisses Brad on the lips.

Alone in bed, Brad’s eyes are closed – he kisses the air, fantasizing.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE on BRAD – even though he is asleep, there is a yearning expression on his face.

Troy, in a towel, stands over him.

TROY
Dad! Dad!

Brad rouses – rubbing his eyes.

TROY
We gotta go. I have my meeting.

BRAD
Ugh. I’m hung-over.

TROY
Why? You only had one glass of wine.

Brad says nothing. Troy heads into the bathroom.
EXT. HARVARD BRIDGE - MORNING
Brad and Troy cross the Harvard Bridge toward Cambridge.

EXT. HARVARD QUAD - MORNING
Brad waits on a bench for Troy to get out of his meeting. Brad is deep in thought.

NARRATOR
The next morning, Brad turned on Ananya. He kept replaying in his mind things she had said.

INT. DRUID - FLASHBACK
Ananya, at the booth...

ANANYA
Sounds like you just kinda backed into it ‘cause nothing else worked out.

EXT. HARVARD QUAD - DAY
Brad grimaces at the memory.

NARRATOR
Youth can be so arrogant and unforgiving. He doubted she would ever live up to her own lofty ideals.

INT. PRIVATE PLANE - DAY
CLOSE on ANANYA, smiling with satisfaction.

NARRATOR
He could identify a strain of superiority in her. He bet if her circumstances were different, she would be singing another tune.

We PULL BACK TO REVEAL Ananya on a private plane with Jason Hatfield. Maya is here, too.

They all hold flutes of champagne and toast each other.

(CONTINUED)
NARRATOR
One taste of luxury - and how quickly she might forget the suffering of the masses.

They guzzle down their champagne, toss their flutes to the floor and LAUGH.

EXT. HARVARD QUAD - DAY
Brad shakes his head at the thought.

NARRATOR
Brad realized he was just trying to make himself feel better.

INT. RESTAURANT - FLASHBACK
Ananya, talking at dinner, full of passion.

NARRATOR
Ananya had a good heart - she seemed wise.

Brad smiles at her from across the table.

NARRATOR
She reminded him a lot of Melanie.

Melanie has replaced Ananya. She talks animatedly, looking radiant.

EXT. HARVARD QUAD - DAY
This latest thought causes Brad to snap out of his reverie.

BRAD
Melanie. Shit.

Brad takes out his PHONE and calls Melanie.

BRAD
(into phone)
Hey, hon. Trip’s going great. Troy is meeting with one of the music professors here right now and then he’s got an interview with the Dean of Admissions. So yeah - it all seems to be working out.
Brad spots...

...Troy and an African-American professor, JEROME BACKALY, exiting a building. Troy and the Professor shake hands.

The Professor returns inside as Troy heads toward his dad.

    BRAD
    Anyway, Troy’s here now so call me back later. I’ve got dinner with Craig Fisher...
      (sarcastic)
    ...so I’m really looking forward to that, as you can imagine. Love you, honey.

Brad hangs up and puts away his phone.

    BRAD
    How was it?

    TROY
    Good. He listened to some of my stuff and I think he liked it.

    BRAD
    That’s awesome, Troy!

    TROY
    He said he was gonna put in a call to the admissions department, too.

    BRAD
    What?! See! There you go! Connections and talent. I give you the lay up - you swish it in.

Troy nods and smiles.

    EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - MOMENTS LATER

Brad and Troy walk along the campus.

    BRAD
    What’s wrong?

    TROY
    Nothing.

    BRAD
    You seem a little... you should be pumped! You should be happy!
TROY
I am. I dunno. He just wasn’t what I expected. But he was fine.

BRAD
How was he not what you expected?

TROY
It was just weird – it’s like he’s one of my heroes, but he was trying kinda hard to impress me. He was sorta bragging a lot. He was more into the business side of things, too, than I would have thought. He kept telling me ways I should monetize my music - weird stuff like that.

(shrugs)
I thought he’d be cooler.

BRAD
Uh-hunh.

They continue walking in silence. Then Brad stops.

BRAD
You know, don’t be so judgmental, Troy.

TROY
Hunh?

BRAD
You’ve been living in a bubble. Remember that. Do me a favor and don’t judge people who live in the real world until you’ve been out there yourself. Okay?

TROY
You asked me a question. I just said he wasn’t what I expected.

BRAD
You said he wasn’t cool. But what’s cool to a seventeen year old hipster who doesn’t pay his own bills isn’t necessarily cool to the rest of the world.

TROY
Okay! Jesus!

(continued)
BRAD
Let’s talk in thirty years – and
then you can tell me who’s cool!

TROY
You’re fucking nuts, you know that?
I’m about to have my interview – do
you really need to jump all over
me?

BRAD
(back pedels)
Troy. You’re right. I’m sorry. I
love you.
(beat)
You’re the best. You’re the best
son in the world – you know I think
that. And you’re gonna kill it in
there.

Troy lets out a little laugh, shakes his head.

TROY
Dad, can you just leave me alone?
I’m gonna go clear my head. I’ll
meet you after. All right?

BRAD
Okay. Good idea. Yeah.

As Troy walks toward the ADMISSIONS OFFICE.

BRAD
* Proud of you, Troy!

Troy just keeps walking and enters the building.

Brad stands on the lawn, unsure of what to do.

INT. ADMISSIONS OFFICE – DAY

Brad sits with another FATHER in the waiting room.

BRAD
Was that your daughter?
(off FATHER’s nod)
She have an interview now?

FATHER
Yes.

(CONTINUED)
I hope it goes well.

(beat)
My son is meeting with the Dean so he’s been a little on edge.

FATHER
Good luck.

Brad’s PHONE RINGS. He answers it.

BRAD
Hello?

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY
Jason Hatfield is on the other end of the line. He paces the hall, wearing a suit.

JASON
Hey, Brad. It’s Jason Hatfield.

Intercut phone call:

BRAD
Jason! Hey! What’s up?

Brad rises and quickly exits the ADMISSIONS OFFICE.

INT. ADMISSIONS OFFICE - DAY
Brad has moved to the corner of the waiting room.

JASON
Uh, my office said you called me.

BRAD
Oh, yeah. Oh, right. I was actually just calling for Craig’s number, but I got it from Billy.

JASON
Okay, good. All right, well...

BRAD
I heard you guys all got together in LA. How was that?

JASON
Listen, man, I can’t really talk - I got a lot going on right now.

(Continued)
BRAD
(little laugh)
Oh, okay. Well...

JASON
Look, I don’t mean to be rude, but I got all these clients looking for me. And I’m in Minnesota – at the Mayo Clinic to get these test results – but if I don’t get on a flight to New York by noon, I’m gonna miss this deposition I’ve been preparing for for months...

BRAD
Okay. I hear ya. At least you know the plane will wait for you.

JASON
I don’t understand.

BRAD
Don’t you have your own jet? Must make it a little easier...

JASON
Jet? Are you being an asshole right now or...?

BRAD
(thrown)
What? No. I’m serious.

JASON
I don’t have a jet. What are you talking about?

BRAD
I thought... I swear you told me once you had a private plane.

JASON
No.

BRAD
In San Francisco, when I saw you – you said you were just on your...

JASON
My company leased a plane to get everyone out there, but...

(Continued)
BRAD
Oh, I misunderstood...

JASON
Look, I just found out my daughter has a tethered spine, okay? She’s fucking three years old.

BRAD
(attitude shifting)
What? Oh, no. Man, Jason! What does that mean?

JASON
I don’t know what it means - except she has to have major surgery tomorrow morning. She’s so little.

Jason sounds like he’s about to start crying.

BRAD
Oh my god.

JASON
It’s killing me...

BRAD
Shit. Is she okay?

JASON
I think so. It’s... I don’t know.

BRAD
Is there anything I can do? I’ve worked with a lot of children’s hospitals with my...

JASON
We’re sitting down with the doctors now. I gotta go, Brad.

BRAD
(genuine)
Okay, Jason - keep me posted. And please give my love to your family. I’m really sorry...

The phone goes dead. Brad looks stricken.

INT. ADMISSIONS OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Troy returns from his interview to find...
...a contemplative Brad, sitting in the corner.

Seeing Troy, Brad rises and gives him a heartfelt embrace. He clutches Troy tight—smelling his hair.

The other PARENTS and STUDENTS turn. Troy is thrown.

EXT. HARVARD CAMPUS - LATER

Troy and Brad exit the campus toward Harvard Square.

TROY
Well, aren’t you gonna even ask me how it went?

Brad stops and turns.

BRAD
Right, right. Yeah! How’d it go?

TROY
(grins)
Really good. He said Jerome Backaly already called him—and told him I was talented and to pay attention to my application. Isn’t that awesome?

BRAD
That’s great, Troy! Awesome! I knew you would!

Brad gives Troy a big high-five. Troy grins.

Brad then hails down a passing TAXI.

INT. TAXI - TRAVELING - DAY

Brad and Troy sit in silence in the back of the cab. Troy is smiling to himself.

He looks over and notices Brad’s uneasy expression.

TROY
Dad?

BRAD
Troy, I don’t want to like lay a trip on you but...

(MORE)
just so you know - if anything bad ever happened - to you - whatever capacity I have left to feel joy...

Brad is about to choke up. He then shakes his head.

BRAD

Only good things are gonna happen to you. Only good things.

Brad musters a sweet smile.

Troy looks at his dad, slightly concerned, then turns to the window - his smile soon returns.

EXT. TUFTS UNIVERSITY ADMISSIONS OFFICE - DAY

Brad and Troy walk up the stairs of the Admissions Building.

INT. TUFTS ADMISSIONS OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Brad and Troy approach the RECEPTIONIST.

BRAD

Hey - I’m Brad Sloan and this is my son, Troy. He had an interview this morning - but we, uh, had to miss it, unfortunately. Is there any way he could still sit with somebody?

RECEPTIONIST

(looks at computer)

I’m not sure...

BRAD

I’m an alumni, actually. Class of ’90.

RECEPTIONIST

Oh?

BRAD

And a donor.

Troy covers his face, embarrassed.

RECEPTIONIST

I’ll have to check the schedule. I’ll do my best.

(CONTINUED)
BRAD
Thank you. Go Jumbos.

RECEPTIONIST
Meanwhile our next tour is about to leave, if you’d like to join...

TROY
Okay, cool.

They step away from the desk. Brad turns to Troy.

BRAD
Hey, Troy – while you’re on the tour – I might go visit one of my old professors.

TROY
Oh, yeah? Okay.

BRAD
He was like my mentor – I told you about him.

TROY
Yeah, yeah. Do it. Go.

BRAD
It seems like you’re eager to get rid of me.

TROY
What?

BRAD
(smiles amused)
Are you embarrassed of me? You embarrassed of your dad?

TROY
(smiles, sheepishly)

BRAD
Well, it seems like it. You think I’m gonna make a scene or something?

(off TROY’S head shake)
I would never intentionally embarrass you.

TROY
Good. Thanks.
Brad smiles and gives Troy a kiss on the forehead, then heads out.

As he goes, he calls out to the ADMISSIONS STAFF.

BRAD

(points to TROY)
You have a legacy here, people!
And a genius! F.Y.I.!

Brad gives Troy a mischievous wink, then exits the building.

Troy flushes red, shaking his head.
INT. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA STUDIES - DAY

Brad scans the DIRECTORY OF OFFICES by the entrance.

He finds - “Professor Connor - Room 107”.

Brad heads off, down the hall.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA STUDIES HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Brad approaches Room 107 and peers inside. The office seems to be in transition. There are moving boxes on the shelves and on the floor.

A FEMALE PROFESSOR - around Brad’s age - is at the desk. She looks up from her laptop.

**BRAD**

Uh, hi. I’m an old student of Professor Connor’s. I was hoping to see him. Is he...?

**FEMALE PROFESSOR**

Oh, you just missed him.

**BRAD**

He just left?

**FEMALE PROFESSOR**

No. I’m sorry to say, he died. Just a few weeks ago.

**BRAD**

He did? His name’s still on the... directory.

**FEMALE PROFESSOR**

I know - we need to change that. I just got in here.

**BRAD**

How did he... die?

**FEMALE PROFESSOR**

He had a stroke. And he never recovered.

**BRAD**

Oh. That’s sad.

**FEMALE PROFESSOR**

Yes.

(Continued)
BRAD
He was a great teacher.

FEMALE PROFESSOR
He was a sweet man.

BRAD
(after a beat)
Well, have a nice day.

FEMALE PROFESSOR
Thanks. You, too.

Brad heads out. The Professor returns to her work.

EXT. TUFTS CAMPUS - DAY

Brad wanders the campus, lost in thought.

After a moment, we HEAR:

NARRATOR
Brad thought about the events of the morning and felt a sudden clarity. How ridiculous it was for him to be jealous - or insecure about his place.

Brad watches TWO STUDENTS - a young, attractive couple - walk past, holding hands. They are in love.

NARRATOR
What a waste of energy to resent other people’s few pleasures.

Brad watches them go.

A MIDDLE-AGED WOMAN, looking harried and stressed, is next to approach.

NARRATOR
How stingy and mean - when everyone struggles.

Brad gives her a consoling smile, as she passes.

INT. HOSPITAL HALLWAY - DAY

A distressed Jason Hatfield sits in a hallway, waiting for news. His Wife can be seen, talking to a DOCTOR in the b.g.
NARRATOR
He pictured his friends in their private, anxious moments. No one is immune to pain.

Jason nervously cracks his knuckles.

EXT. TUFTS CAMPUS - DAY
Brad walks, then stops to look at...
...a MEMORIAL PLAQUE, commemorating a departed University President.

NARRATOR
Brad’s thoughts then turned to death. The great equalizer.

Brad studies the memorial, closely.

INT. COMMUNICATIONS AND MEDIA STUDIES OFFICE - DAY
DIPLOMAS and DEGREES for “ROBERT CONNOR” have been placed into various boxes on the shelves to be taken away.

In one box, we SEE a PHOTO of the distinguished, old PROFESSOR shaking some important person’s hand.

NARRATOR
His professor gone - without a trace - a brilliant man with a unique mind - and at the institution he had given his whole life to - already replaced.

We SEE now the Female Professor - she types blithely away at her computer.

INT. BRAD’S PARENTS’ HOUSE - OFFICE - DAY
A HOSPICE NURSE tends to Brad’s dying dad.

NARRATOR
He imagined the moment his father would die - and what his legacy would vanish.

On a nearby couch, Melanie holds Brad’s hand in hers, comforting him.
NARRATOR
No money can keep you alive forever
- no status.

CLOSE on Brad’s dad - his last breath is expired.

128
EXT. TUFTS CAMPUS - DAY

Brad, deep in thought, sits on the stairs outside the Admission Office.

NARRATOR
Brad wondered which friend of his would die first.

129
EXT. NICK PASCALE’S HOUSE - DAY

The after-party for Nick’s wedding. A gorgeous sunset.

We SEE Billy Werstler, drinking with his TWO GIRLFRIENDS.*

130
INT. NICK PASCALE’S HOUSE - DAY

Craig and Diane have a spirited debate in the kitchen.

Nearby, Jason and his Wife corral their Kids, preparing to leave.

131
EXT. NICK PASCALE’S HOUSE - DAY

Nick and his Husband share a sweet kiss by the wedding cake.

132
EXT. TUFTS CAMPUS - DAY

Brad, looking wistful, still sits on the stairs.

NARRATOR
Life itself is the pleasure, Brad thought. The only real pleasure.

Brad looks out...

A GROUP OF MALE TUFTS STUDENTS are congregated under a tree, teasing each other and laughing.

(CONTINUED)
NARRATOR
In an important time in their lives, Brad and his friends had shared this pleasure together - and what a beautiful, profound thing.

Brad smiles at the sight. He continues to watch them.

NARRATOR
Something felt changed in Brad - he felt he would never see things the same again.

Brad looks over...

...the COLLEGE TOUR is returning. Troy is among the group. He gives Brad a half-wave.

Brad rises and waves back, smiling. Then his CELL PHONE BUZZES. He takes out his phone.

INT. CONFERENCE CENTER - DAY

Melanie, on her cell phone, has stepped away from some CO-WORKERS.

MELANIE
Brad - hey. I saw you called. Everything okay?

INTERCUT PHONE CALL

BRAD
(into phone)
Everything’s great. Yeah. It’s great. Mel?

MELANIE
Yeah?

BRAD
I just... isn’t it crazy? You and me - we made this kid and now he’s this brilliant, amazing person and...
(chokes up)
I wish you were here.

MELANIE
Awww. So do I. Well, honey, we’re about to go into the conference.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
MELANIE (cont’d)

I should probably go. I love you.
I’ll call you tonight.

BRAD
Yeah, great. I love you, too.

Brad hangs up and looks back over at...

...Troy, shaking hands with the TOUR GUIDE.

INT. HOTEL ROOM – NIGHT

Brad and Troy are getting dressed to go out.

TROY
I liked Tufts. It’s a good school.
I’d be happy there. You went there.

(turns to BRAD)
Thanks for bringing me here, Dad.
And, you know, going all out and everything.

BRAD
Ah, I didn’t do anything.

TROY
You made all those calls. And now you have to go to dinner with a guy you hate.

BRAD
I don’t hate him. I like him.

TROY
You said he was a jerk and you hated his guts.

BRAD
Nah, he’s a good guy. He’s an old friend. I’m looking forward to seeing him, actually. Old friends are important.

Brad pats a confused Troy on the back as he passes.

BRAD
K. I’m heading out. See you after your concert!

TROY
Bye! Have fun!

(CONTINUED)
Brad exits, leaving Troy alone.

EXT. AZALIA’S - NIGHT
Brad enters the crowded, fancy restaurant.

INT. AZALIA’S - CONTINUOUS
Brad approaches the HOSTESS.

BRAD
Hi. I believe I have a reservation. It’s for two at seven. The name’s Sloan.

HOSTESS
Okay, yeah. You’re the first to arrive. Would you like to wait at the bar or go ahead to the table?

BRAD
I think – just go to the table.

The Hostess leads him toward a small table – right by the bar. PATRONS mill around. It’s loud.

BRAD
I’m sorry, but is there another table? It’s just really loud right here...

HOSTESS
We’re fully booked tonight.

BRAD
Well, what about that table?

Brad points to a bigger, empty table in the corner.

HOSTESS
I’m sorry but it’s not available.

BRAD
It looks available.

HOSTESS
Yeah – it’s not.

Brad nods, giving up. He sits at the little table.
INT. AZALIA’S - MOMENTS LATER

Brad is getting jostled by BAR PATRONS. He looks annoyed.

He spots Craig... who enters the restaurant and approaches the Hostess. She greets him, warmly.

The Hostess leads Craig over to Brad’s table.

CRAIG
Hey, buddy!

BRAD
(rising)
Hey, man!

Craig and Brad share a bear hug.

BRAD
Look at you. You look good!

CRAIG
Ah, I’m going gray!

BRAD
Not as bad as me!

CRAIG
I know - we failed in life!

BRAD
What?

CRAIG
We failed to stay young! Hey, grab your beer - we’re moving tables!

BRAD
We are?! Oh, cool!

MOMENTS LATER

Brad and Craig have been seated at the quiet table in the corner. The Hostess hands Brad a menu.

BRAD
So I guess this table was available.

HOSTESS
(perfunctory smile)
Yes. Enjoy your dinner.
The Hostess locks eyes with Craig, as she hands him a menu.

HOSTESS
Thank you for coming tonight. We love having you!
CRAIG
Can I get a Jack and Coke?

HOSTESS
Absolutely! I’ll get that for you!

The Hostess departs.

BRAD
You must be a regular.

CRAIG
(shakes his head)
Never been here before. I hear it’s good though.

BRAD
Really? She was acting like you guys were best friends.

Craig shrugs, faux-modestly.

BRAD
Oh, so she just recognizes you.
(off CRAIG’s look)
Must be nice.
(beat; smiles)
Dude! How long’s it been?!

CRAIG
Must be over ten years!

BRAD
Yeah! I’m so glad to see you, man!
(meaningful)
I’m really glad to see you.

CRAIG
I’m glad to see you, pal. Welcome to Boston. Where you staying?

BRAD
We’re at the Oak Tree Execustay.

CRAIG
(makes a face)
I don’t think I’ve ever heard of anyone staying there. Is it nice?
BRAD
It’s not bad. Listen, thank you so much for getting Troy in to see that music professor and the Dean of Admissions. That’s huge. He had great meetings.

CRAIG
Oh, I’m glad. Can’t believe he’s already looking at colleges.

BRAD
Me either!

CRAIG
Well, I guess my girls are, too. They’re only twelve and they’re all over it. Already filling out applications. They’re so much more on it than we were.

BRAD
Troy’s got a great attitude about it all.

CRAIG
Is he medicated?

BRAD
No.

The HOSTESS brings Craig’s drink and sets it down.

CRAIG
So how’s Melanie?

BRAD
She’s great. She likes her job. She’s always been pretty happy.

CRAIG
Diane just sold an article to HBO. They’re gonna make a series out of it.

BRAD
Oh. Cool.
   (beat)
So we went to Tufts today. Bob Connor died.

CRAIG
I know, I know.
BRAD
You knew?

CRAIG
Oh, yeah, I spoke at his memorial.

BRAD
You did?

CRAIG
Yeah, we’d been in touch. He’d asked me to come speak at his class a few times about journalism and government...

BRAD
(slightly stung)
He did, hunh? That’s flattering.

CRAIG
I try to get out of stuff like that - but for him. Such a great person.

BRAD
Yeah. He was the closest thing I had to a mentor.

CRAIG
I remember. You were his favorite. At the time.

BRAD
I wish I’d been there at his memorial. I wish I’d known.

CRAIG
If I’d seen you at Nick’s wedding, I would have told you about it - it happened right after...

BRAD
Yeah, I didn’t know about Nick’s thing either.

CRAIG
You didn’t miss much. Nick’s gotten so... I mean, I love the guy. But the more successful he gets, the gayer he gets.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)
He’s now like a full-on flamer – with hairless dudes in banana hammocks running around his house, humping each other.

I saw his house in an Architectural Digest.

Yeah, it’s like a set for a sci-fi gay porno or something.

I talked to Jason today.

Yeah? How’s he?

Well, he sounded stressed. His kid is sick. I think she has something wrong with her spine.

That sucks. Which one? He has like four.

I think I might have offended him. I thought he had his own jet for some reason – and I brought it up – maybe I sounded glib – I don’t know. But he seemed annoyed that I accused him of having his own plane. I felt bad.

He does have a plane.

No, he doesn’t.

Yes, he does.

No. His company maybe leases one.

Yeah, his company. That’s his company. That’s his plane.
BRAD
Are you sure?

CRAIG
Didn’t you read the piece in the Times?

(off BRAD’s blank look)
He’s getting sued. He lost a lot of money for a lot of powerful people. He’s running scared. And there was this brutal take-down piece in the Times – actually written by a friend of mine – which put me in a really awkward position. It talked about his lavish lifestyles – the houses in the Hamptons – the private planes.

BRAD
Oh my god.

CRAIG
Might be why he was a little sensitive.

BRAD
Oh. I thought... I got it all wrong, I guess.

CRAIG
Jason’s a pillar of society. He’s a family man. He’s a good dude. And he’s a total crook.

Craig laughs.

BRAD
Really?

CRAIG
He’s a thief. And there’s a chance – albeit slight – he goes to jail.

BRAD
Jesus. Wow.

CRAIG
In his business – you don’t want to stay at the tables too long. Get your money. And then get the fuck out. ‘Cause somewhere along the line, you probably did something shady.

(MORE)
You don’t get rich like that by being an Eagle Scout. He should do what Billy did. Flee.

BRAD
Right. Billy really seems to be living the dream. Two girlfriends.

CRAIG
Just don’t call him after 5pm.

BRAD
Why not?

CRAIG
What do you mean? He’s a drunk.

BRAD
He is?

CRAIG
Yeah - and a... (pantomimes snorting coke) And a...

Craig pantomimes injecting his arm with heroin.

BRAD
Shut up.

CRAIG
Don’t be naive. You knew that.

BRAD
When we talked on the phone, he sounded okay. He was like walking his dog early in the morning...

CRAIG
He’d probably been up all night on a bender. In his defense, he’s got a lot of time on his hands. You pick up vices.

BRAD
I’m so in the dark.

CRAIG
That’s what happens when you drop out and move to Sacramento.

(CONTINUED)
BRAD

I moved to Sacramento. I didn’t drop out.

CRAIG

Why did you move to Sacramento?

BRAD

Melanie got a job there. And I can work anywhere right now.

CRAIG

Oh, right – with your little... thing. That’s a cool thing you’re doing.

BRAD

(stung)

Yeah. Thanks.

CRAIG

Good stuff. I’m sorry I never got back to you about that.

BRAD

It’s all right.

CRAIG

It just came at a moment when I was getting bombarded. It’s like every day I get hit up with requests. Speaking engagements, writing introductions to someone’s book...

(points to BRAD)

...asking to be put on boards, executive boards, non-profit boards. There’s just not enough time in the day - sometimes you’ve gotta just draw the line. As hard as it is - you just have to learn how to say no. Yesterday, I got asked to speak at the Aspen Ideas Festival in June. Well, that I’m going to do. That’s cool, you know? Interesting people, well curated...

BRAD

Yeah. Listen – Craig – I just want to say – I’m proud of you. I really am.

(MORE)
I mean, I know it must be pretty stressful to have so many balls in the air and have so much going on, but from the outside...

CRAIG

Not that stressful. It’s fun.

BRAD

Well, I’m just happy for you. To be honest, at first, I’d see you on TV – and it kind of... bothered me – just because we always had a little competitive thing going. But I’m happy with my life – and you’re doing what you want to do – things work out the way they should.

Craig nods – then furrows his brow.

CRAIG

I was never competitive with you.

Brad takes a beat, his eyes narrow.

BRAD

Oh, come on. Really?

CRAIG

Maybe in school for like a second. But I haven’t thought of you in that way for years.

BRAD

What is that supposed to mean?

CRAIG

It means... I dunno. Why would I compete with you?

BRAD

Oh, shut the fuck up.

Craig looks at Brad with a perplexed grin.

CRAIG

What?

Brad is suddenly defensive.

(continued)
BRAD
I just... I’m trying to be real
with you. I mean, it’s like...
what is your deal?

CRAIG
What do you mean?

Suddenly, they are approached by a YOUNG MALE STUDENT.

MALE STUDENT
Excuse me, Mr. Fisher. My name’s
Mark - and I’m a big fan of yours.
I love your books and everything
you do...

BRAD
(interrupting)
Like do you know what I do? I
actually help people. And like - I
dunno - like why would you treat me
like this?

CRAIG
Treat you like what?

BRAD
What am I to you? Hunh?

MALE STUDENT
I’m sorry. Am I interrupting?

CRAIG
No, no, no.

MALE STUDENT
Is it possible to get a picture?

BRAD
My mother died - you never said
anything, man. Like - you follow
me on Facebook. I... I dunno. I
just don’t know.
CRAIG
I’m confused. What’s going on?

BRAD
Are you my friend? You know? Are
we even... what are we? All the
shit-talking. Like right now I’m
feeling like... I just know what
I’m feeling and it’s not...

Brad rises from the table.

CRAIG
What the fuck? Are you okay?

BRAD
Thanks for helping my son. But
it’s like... I’m just done – with
this. Whatever this is.

Brad takes a TWENTY from his pocket and sets it on the table.

Brad turns and walks to the exit, in a hurry.

Craig and the Male Student, mouths agape, watch him go.

EXT. AZALIA’S – NIGHT

Brad exits the restaurant and lets out a long EXHALE.

He rubs his fingers through his hair, shakes his head. Worst
case scenario. Then walks off, into the night.

EXT. HARVARD BRIDGE – NIGHT

CLOSE on Brad – as he heads toward the CONCERT HALL.

NARRATOR
The entire walk, Brad could only
think about what Craig’s take-away
would be – and what he would tell
everyone.
Craig regales his wife, Diane and a few other GUESTS.

CRAIG
It was embarrassing. He’s out of his mind. He’s completely lost it.

Craig talks to Nick and Nick’s Husband.

CRAIG
He was the golden boy in college - and now I’m the one who’s winning prizes and getting recognized. He’s overcome with jealousy.

Craig chats with Jason and his Wife.

CRAIG
He’s insane. He’s a pedophile. He looks old.

Jason and his Wife, nod, solemnly.

Brad crosses the quad to the concert hall.

NARRATOR
Why did he let Craig get to him? After all these years, why didn’t Brad have a stronger sense of self? Why couldn’t he sustain a feeling about himself? Or even a point of view?

Brad stands at the BOX OFFICE, lost in thought.

NARRATOR
Why was he always elsewhere, in his head, puffing himself up or tearing himself down? Enough.
Brad snaps out of it. He takes his ticket and goes.

**INT. CONCERT HALL - NIGHT**

A small concert hall, mostly filled. Brad stands at the back, looking for Troy.

He spots him, sitting alone, near the front.

**MOMENTS LATER**

Brad appears by Troy’s side.

**TROY**

(surprised)

Dad?

Brad gives Troy a smile and takes the seat next to him.

**TROY**

What about your dinner?

**BRAD**

I’d rather be with you.

Troy nods — as the AUDITORIUM LIGHTS GO DOWN.

The LIGHTS GO UP on the stage — a group of about THIRTY STUDENT MUSICIANS are seated.

Then, Ananya, with her flute, and Maya, with her violin, walk onto the stage.

**BRAD**

Those are the girls from last night.

**TROY**

I know.

The musicians begin to play DVORAK’S “HUMORESQUE”.

The music is beautiful, soothing, smooth.

ON BRAD — as he listens, lost in thought.

Brad looks over at...

Troy, sitting still beside him, enjoying the music.
Brad takes Troy in with a proud, melancholy smile.

He then turns his attention to the stage.

ON STAGE – Ananya, on her flute, and Maya, on her violin, are playing their duet.

ON BRAD – as he listens, he looks increasingly stunned.

    BRAD
    (loud whisper)
    They’re so good.

    TROY
    Shh.  Dad.

Brad sits back in his seat, taking it in, really listening.

    NARRATOR
    The music is beautiful, Brad thought.

The concert continues.

Ananya and Maya are extraordinarily talented.

    NARRATOR
    These girls are beautiful.

ON BRAD – he is visibly moved.

    NARRATOR
    He could love them and never possess them.

The entire orchestra joins in – the music is gorgeous.

    NARRATOR
    Just like he could love the world and never possess it.

A dam of emotion bursts.  Brad is now crying in his seat.

    NARRATOR
    He still did love the world.

Deep, cathartic tears.

Troy looks over and sees that his father is crying.

    TROY
    Dad?

(CONTINUED)
Brad tries to get a handle on his emotions.
He wipes his eyes and smiles reassuringly to Troy.

BRAD
I’m okay.

Brad looks back toward the orchestra.
He begins to become emotional again.

LATER

The very last moments of the performance.

The musicians finish. It’s over.
The audience begins to politely CLAP.

Brad just sits there, spent. He starts to CLAP, too. In deep appreciation.

We HOLD on Brad and Troy clapping for a moment.

EXT. HARVARD BRIDGE - NIGHT

Brad and Troy walk in silence back to their hotel. We HEAR the noise of the passing CARS.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Brad is emotionally spent. He sits on the bed, still in his dinner clothes, exhausted.

Troy is checking out the MINI-BAR.
TROY
You want some chips?

Brad shakes his head.

Troy watches him for a second.

TROY
Ananya said you met up with her last night.

Brad looks up, sharply.

BRAD
Yeah, I couldn’t sleep. It was just a drink.

TROY
(nods)
Dad. Are you having some kind of nervous breakdown or something?

Brad looks at Troy and lets out an amused exhale.

BRAD
No.
(beat)
It’s just... sometimes I have doubts. I worry that people look at me - and think of me as a failure.
(shrugs)
But the feeling passes.

Brad gives Troy a strained smile.

Troy opens a bag of chips and sits down beside Brad on the bed.

TROY
When we were walking around today and you were embarrassing me - I kept thinking - if I go to this school, everyone here is gonna remember this. I’ll never be able to live this down.
(little laugh)
But they won’t remember. They’re just thinking about themselves, you know? Nobody cares. The only person thinking about you is me. So the only opinion that should matter to you is mine.

(CONTINUED)
Brad turns to Troy.

BRAD
Yeah. And what’s your opinion?

TROY
(matter-of-fact)
I love you.

Brad’s eyes instantly fill with emotion.

Brad nods, accepting this.

BRAD
(softly)
Thank you.

Brad looks at his son with gratitude.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

The lights in the room are out. MOONLIGHT illuminates the room.

Brad, in bed, looks over at Troy, sound asleep.

Brad then looks up at the ceiling.

NARRATOR
That night, a memory popped into Brad’s head.

EXT. TUFTS LAWN - DUSK

Magic hour. We SEE a group of YOUNG MALE STUDENTS, from a short distance away, gathering on the quad lawn. They are CHATTING and LAUGHING.

NARRATOR
He and his friends were back in college. They were on the quad, laughing about something. They were still young - all potential - unformed and undefined.

We STAY on this image for a while.

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

CLOSE ON BRAD - lost in his memory.

(CONTINUED)
Brad stares at the balcony doors. A draft of wind blows the curtains slightly. We HEAR a faint whistling noise.

NARRATOR
A sudden rush of feeling flooded Brad. He lay there a while, letting himself really feel the life inside him. He kept saying in his mind - I’m alive. I’m alive. I’m still alive.

Brad smiles to himself rolling over on his side, turning away from us - we HEAR the beginning of Dvorak’s “Humoresque” and we...

FADE TO BLACK.