

**FIVE FEET AND RISING**

by

Peter Sollett

FADE IN:

EXT. 8TH STREET BETWEEN AVENUES C AND D - DAY

A group of dark-skinned girls wearing cheerleading outfits align themselves in formation on the sidewalk. They begin to dance. No music can be heard. The sound of the girls' bodies is our soundtrack. We hear their strained breathing, palms and sneaker bottoms pounding while they hum and count softly to themselves in an effort to keep the rhythm.

SLO-MO: We explore the bodies of the dancers; their bright eyes and sweaty brows, their stomping feet and colliding hands (dark side and light side). The younger girls perform provocative dance movements, the older girls repeat them.

Their bodies silhouette in the bright sunlight.

CUT TO: TITLES

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - DAY

AMANDA, a tall 14-year-old exits the front door of her apartment budding with her headphones in one hand and a magazine in the other. She sits down on her stoop, puts her headphones on and presses "play". We can hear the sound of Salsa leaking out of the sides of her headphones. JENETTE, ten years old with big black hair in rubber-band restraints, sits on the sidewalk below Amanda drawing with a piece of chalk. Jenette looks over her shoulder and sees Amanda reading her magazine. Jenette climbs the stairs and sits down beside her.

The camera pans to reveal AARON, an 18-year-old boy on the other side of the street, unloading some fireworks from the

trunk of a car. He's filling a paper bag with them, carefully making sure not to reveal what he's doing to onlookers.

At the ear end of the block, DONNA, 14, and MICHELLE, 12, sit and watch Aaron at work.

MICHELLE

How does he look up close?

DONNA

(Amorously)

Umm, he got dark brownish eyes, he got a nice nose I love his nose. I love his skin. I love his lips, he got a great smile and he got-

MICHELLE

A bad attitude.

DONNA

Yeah, he got a bad attitude.

MICHELLE

You said before, that he got boxes?

SLO-MO: The camera is very close to Aaron. Details of his body in a shallow depth of field.

DONNA

Yeah, he got boxes in his stomach. He's taller than me.

MICHELLE

How old is he?

DONNA

I think he's 18 or 17.

MICHELLE

You gonna talk to him?

DONNA

Um, yeah I think so.

Back on Amanda's stoop.

JENETTE

You still like him.

AMANDA

(With a sigh of negative attitude)

No.

HECTOR, a mature-looking 13-year old is crossing the street. He enters frame with Amanda and Jenette.

HECTOR

Yo, wuzzup.

Amanda ignores him.

JENETTE

Hi Hector

HECTOR

(To Amanda)

Oh, you're not gonna say  
hello.

AMANDA'S POV: Donna approaches Aaron as he locks up the trunk of the car. She hesitantly calls over to him. He acknowledges her with a lift of the chin. Making sure he keeps his distance from her, he looks around to see if anyone is watching him. He tosses his head for her to follow. He begins to walk away down the block. She follows.

Hector is looking at Amanda. He appears to have run out of things to say. Amanda removes her headphones. Her music becomes clearer, more audible.

HECTOR

Yo, you gonna keep me  
hangin' like dat?

AMANDA

Hector, Yo try to rap to me every day, why don't you take your three-quarters retarded ass outta here?

HECTOR

Yo, you betta give me my  
respects or I'll tell your  
little girl ova here what  
I heard about you and my  
boy.

Amanda puts her headphones back on.

HECTOR looks like he got a new girl anyway.

EXT. 8TH STREET BETWEEN AVENUES C AND D - AFTERNOON

VICTOR, a skinny 12-year-old with sloppy hair, is asleep in the sun on his fire escape. There is sweat beaded up on his body. His shirt is rolled up behind his head like a pillow. His breath is heavy, his chest rises and falls. The camera tilts to reveal CARLOS, ten, rounding the corner on the street below. The camera tracks backwards as Carlos approaches. He is talking to himself.

CARLOS  
(To himself)  
Whatcha gonna do when ya  
bitch is untrue?

Carlos lifts his head up to look at the fire escapes.

CARLOS  
Yo Victor!

The camera pans and tilts up to the fire escapes. The buildings float by. He arrives in front of Victor's building and cups his hand around his mouth.

CARLOS  
Yo Victor!

On the fire escape, Victor's eyes pop open and the sun shines into them.

VICTOR  
(Dazed)  
What, wuzzup?

Victor sits up and looks over the side of the fire escape.

CARLOS  
Come down!

VICTOR  
I can't!

CARLOS  
Why?

VICTOR  
I got punished, man.

CARLOS  
Fa what?

VICTOR  
I won't let my motha cut  
my hair.

CARLOS  
Wha'?

VICTOR  
She fucks it all up!

CARLOS  
Forget it! C'mon Let's go  
to the pool.

VICTOR

I can't man, I'm punished!

CARLOS

Who gives!

VICTOR

I can't, I'm gonna get  
punished more!

CARLOS

Trust me, I always get  
into trouble, c'mon!

Victor sits down on the fire escape. Carlos pauses for a  
minute and turns his back on Victor.

CARLOS

C'mon! The girls are  
waiting for you!

Victor hops back up.

VICTOR

(interested)

They are?

CARLOS

Yeah! Tell me which one you would like. To be doin'  
nothin on a fire escape or beat the pool with a bunch of  
girls? Be straight up!

VICTOR

I'll be right down.

Victor climbs down the fire escape and hops down to the  
street. he immediately grabs Carlos and starts pushing him  
down the block to avoid being seen from above.

EXT. THE CORNER OF 8TH STREET AND AVENUE D - CONTINUOUS

The boys safely round the corner onto Avenue D. Victor  
perks up and starts nudging Carlos.

VICTOR

So what girls are over  
there?

CARLOS

Natasha, Maria, Tina-

VICTOR

These are the pretty girls  
you told me to come down  
for?

Victor sighs and runs his fingers through his hair.

CARLOS

What's the difference, you  
never do anything anyway

Victor makes a disagreeing gesture. Carlos drags Victor  
Downtown.

VICTOR

What are you going that  
way for?

CARLOS

I'm not goin' to 10th  
Street, people piss and  
shit in that pool,

VICTOR

Where you goin'?

CARLOS

Pitt.

VICTOR

Oh man, what we gotta  
leave ar' own neighborhood  
for?

CARLOS

C'mon.

VICTOR

Man, if I go down you're  
goin' down with me.

EXT. AVENUE D - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE: Victor and Carlos hang on each other as they walk down  
Avenue D towards the Pitt Street Pool. They pass by Victor brother,  
giving him an impromptu smack and then bang on a store window to wave  
hello to a friend.

From Victor's POV we work our way through a crowd of people  
an cross 3rd Street. Victor looks back at the crowd with a  
watchful eye. The camera tracks along in the street as the  
boys walk along the sidewalk. Victor looks up at a street  
sign. It reads, "Houston St." As the boys make their way  
across the wide intersection, the heat is slightly visible  
as car exhaust fills the gridlocked lanes. Victor and  
Carlos walk calmly, with space between them, making their  
way towards the camera in a shallow depth of field as we  
follow focus on them.

EXT. PITT STREET POOL - CONTINUOUS

Victor and Carlos stand on line outside the pool gates. Police  
examine the boys as they slowly inch their way into the park.

From Victor's POV we see the expanse of the pool as he enters the park. We watch as he surveys the area.

From a high angle we see Carlos nudge Victor to make his way onto the pool deck. They enter the crowd, proceeding carefully, making sure not to bump anyone.

As they continue to walk, Victor's POV reveals the bodies of older boys and girls, rough water and mischievous kids.

EXT. PITT STREET POOL - CONTINUOUS

Amanda is sitting poolside with Jenette.

AMANDA

And that girl, over there?  
Hoochie.

Jenette looks out across the pool trying to see who Amanda is talking about.

AMANDA

And him. Stay away from  
him, he's only interested  
in that.

Amanda points between Jenette's legs.

AMANDA

That right there.

Carlos steps in front of them, Amanda smacks his leg.

CARLOS

Yo Amanda, wassup?

They kiss on the cheek.

CARLOS

(To Victor)  
Amanda is Eddie's cousin.

VICTOR

Eddie from Compost?

CARLOS

No, Baruch.

A girl swimming in the pool calls over to Carlos.

GIRL 1

Carlos! Carlos, get your  
skinny ass over here!

CARLOS

(To Victor)  
Stay right here, I'll be

right back.

Carlos walks off leaving Victor standing next to Amanda and Jenette. Victor looks uncomfortable.

AMANDA  
Who are you?

VICTOR  
I'm wit' Carlos.

Amanda points out across the pool.

AMANDA  
(To Jenette)  
Him right there, That's  
who I'm talkin' about.  
(to Victor)  
Excuse me, can you move, I  
can't see.

Amanda spots Aaron and Donna in the distance.

AMANDA  
Do you have a name?

VICTOR  
Victor.

AMANDA  
What?

VICTOR  
Victor.

Amanda turns to Jenette and continues talking to her.

VICTOR  
Umm, I'm gonna go find  
Carlos.

As Victor turns to walk, the camera pans to follow him, revealing Hector who is approaching Amanda. The camera then pans back to Amanda. She sighs and turns her head away from him.

EXT. PITT STREET POOL - CONTINUOUS

In the playground area at the Pitt Street Pool, Aaron is doing a impression of Al Pacino. Darrell and Boy 1 look on.

AARON  
(to Boy 1)  
You wanna meet my little  
friend?

Boy 1 is laughing at Aaron. Donna and Michelle stand nearby

watching.

AARON

Don't fuck wit' me! Don't  
fuck wit' me.

(pointing his finger)

My lawyer's so good he'll  
have you workin in Alaska,  
so dress warn.

DONNA

Aaron, how you doin'?

AARON

Fine.

DONNA

Look at me.

AARON

What?

DONNA

Why you have an attitude  
for?

AARON

Not now, I'm busy

DONNA

God, I just wanna speak to  
you. I just wanna speak  
to you the way I feel  
about you.

AARON

Hurry up, you're wastin'  
my time, what the fuck.

Aaron turns back to his friends.

DONNA

Please don't scream at me.  
I like you, but I don't  
like the way your attitude  
is.

AARON

So get the fuck outta  
here.

Darrell and Boy 1 approve. They wait for Donna's reply.

DONNA

I wanna go out with you, I  
want to be part of your  
life. I want you to treat

me the way a girlfriend  
should be treated.

AARON

Then don't go out with me.

DONNA

For once in your life have  
some respect for me,  
don't even curse at me or  
nothin'.

AARON

(to Darrell)

Now she's tellin' me what  
the fuck to do.

DONNA

God, you drive me crazy. I  
just want you to know how  
I feel and you don't  
understand.

AARON

Just get the fuck outta  
here.

Donna stares at Aaron as he turns back to his friends.  
Michelle walks up to Donna and gently leads her away.

AARON

That girl be trippin'.

(Back into his Pacino impression)

One time I let her kiss my  
rings and forever  
she tries to repay me!

EXT. PITT STREET POOL - LATER

Victor and Carlos are playing, trying to force each others' heads  
underwater.

Carlos squirts water through his lips.

VICTOR

I gotta go take a piss.

CARLOS

If we were at 10th Street  
Pool you woulda done it  
right in the water, right?

The camera pans as Victor climbs out of the pool and onto a  
long line. As he stands and waits, Amanda can be seen in  
the background arguing with Hector.

In the water, Carlos makes a face at Victor. Victor makes  
one back.

VICTOR  
(Under his breath to Carlos)  
I'm gonna beat you.

EXT. PITT STREET POOL - CONTINUOUS

Hector and Amanda have been arguing. Jenette is sitting on the ground beneath them.

HECTOR  
I know you likes me.

AMANDA  
I eave me alone!

HECTOR  
Why don't you share the  
wealth a little bit?

Hector grabs her wrist.

AMANDA  
Excuse me! I gotta go to  
the ladies' room!

EXT. PITT STREET POOL - MOMENTS LATER

Amanda gets on line behind Victor as he continues to antagonize Carlos in the distance. Amanda recognizes Victor from behind, peeking over his shoulder at the side of his face.

AMANDA  
Shorty!

Victor turns around to Amanda.

AMANDA  
Wussup?

VICTOR  
Wussup.

He turns back around.

AMANDA  
Yo shorty!

Victor turns back around.

VICTOR  
What?

Amanda hears something over her shoulder and spins her head around.

AMANDA

(to Hector)

Leave me alone!

(To Victor)

Yo, I know another  
bathroom over there, c'mon  
this line's too long.

Amanda takes Victor by the hand and walks towards Hector.  
She bumps into him with Victor.

AMANDA

Excuse us.

Amanda gives Hector a snotty grin.

She drags Victor away.

EXT. PITT STREET POOL - CONTINUOUS

In a small corner, out of sight to the rest of the kids at the pool.  
Amanda  
complains to Victor. Victor looks confused.

AMANDA

This fucking guy be  
followin' me around, and  
touchin' me. Asshole!

She sighs and pulls on the bathroom door. It's locked. She  
gives it another try. It won't budge.

AMANDA

Look, just do me a favor.  
Stand right here, okay?

Amanda takes Victor's hand for balance and squats down,  
pulling her bathing suit bottoms to the side. She urinates.  
Victor watches her, trying to play it cool. The camera  
tilts up from Amanda's face peeking up at Victor, to their  
hands straining for balance, to Victor's wandering eyes.

EXT. 8TH STREET BETWEEN AVENUES C AND D - DAY

Close-up of ERICA looking into the camera.

ERICA

We're "Fantasy" and This  
is Shai, Diamond-

FRANCESCA

And I'm Melody.

We see the three girls standing in line on the sidewalk.

ERICA

And we're gonna sing a  
song called 'Tell me  
What.' It was written by  
myself, Diamond and Shai  
and the vocals were  
arranged by us two.

Francesca rolls her eyes.

ERICA  
Also, it was written May  
24th 1998 at 10:20 p.m.  
Check it out.

The girls begin to sing.

Carlos stands in front of the singers mocking them. The  
camera pans to see Victor approaching Carlos.

VICTOR  
Wussup?

CARLOS  
Wussup, Victor.

VICTOR  
Yo, can I talk to you for  
a minute?

Carlos nods his head. Victor leans into Carlos, resting his  
arm on Carlos' shoulder.

VICTOR  
Yo, remember from the  
pool, that girl?

CARLOS  
Which one?

VICTOR  
You know, Eddie's cousin.

CARLOS  
Eddie from Compost?

VICTOR  
Eddie from Baruch, the one  
who was sittin' wit' dat  
little girl;

CARLOS  
The one with the phat ass?

VICTOR  
No, c'mon, stop playin'.  
The girl that you kissed  
when we got there. Where s

he live at?

CARLOS  
Why don't you ask Eddie?

VICTOR  
Yo, Carlos-I'm gonna punch  
you.

CARLOS  
(Mockingly)  
I'm gonna punch you. What  
you want with her anyway?  
You in love with her?

VICTOR  
She lives near Eddie?

CARLOS  
I think she lives down by  
Pitt.

VICTOR  
Near Natasha's? Or over by  
Boy's Club?

CARLOS  
I think by Twenty-two.

VICTOR  
For real?

CARLOS  
What you want with her  
anyway'

Victor starts walking off down the block.

CARLOS  
Yo! What you goin' for

VICTOR  
'Cause you know what,  
you're not supposed to  
know but yesterday she  
lent me her pills for her  
Moms and if I don't give  
'em to her she's gonna  
die. You want her to die?

Carlos shrugs Victor off as he walks away down the block.

A moment passes.

CARLOS  
(to himself)  
What do you do when your

bitch is untrue?  
You cut the hooker off and  
find someone new. I need  
another bitch another  
bitch in my life.

EXT. LOWER EAST SIDE - CONTINUOUS

MONTAGE: Victor's trip through the streets in search of Amanda's block.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - LATER

Donna and Michelle are standing in front of their building.

MICHELLE

Okay, merengue, you do  
like this-

Michelle places one hand on her side, the other in the air  
and begins to step.

DONNA

Like this?

MICHELLE

Yeah, that's right, you  
got it girl.

Michelle grabs Donna, they embrace and dance.

MICHELLE

Now salsa, you know how to  
dance salsa?

DONNA

Yeah.

MICHELLE

Okay, then dance. Show.

Donna dances. Michelle looks over her shoulder. Aaron is  
drinking a bottle of soda across the street.

MICHELLE

I don't think he's  
watching.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Aaron sits on a stoop across the street from Michelle and Donna He's  
shaking up  
a bottle of soda, then opening the cap to let the bubbles  
out. He's got a large brown paper bag with him. Victor the rounds the  
corner,  
his eyes are scanning across the buildings on the block.

AARON

Yo Shorty, you wanna buy  
some M-80s?

VICTOR

Nah.

AARON

Twenty-four for two  
dollars, son, and ain't  
talkin' no little pussy  
boxes, I'm talkin' big  
ones.

VICTOR

Nah.

AARON

Alright, I'll be here, if  
anything.

Victor continues down the block.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Victor finds Jenette sitting on Amanda's stoop. She appears to have just come outside as she unties a jump rope that is knotted around her waist. Victor stands next to her for a moment waiting awkwardly to speak.

Jenette is ignoring him.

Aaron watches from down the block.

Victor steps towards Jenette. As he turns to face her, she rolls her sock down to her ankle and prepares to jump her rope.

VICTOR

Hey, little girl, you know  
a girl named Amanda who  
lives around here?

JENETTE

No.

Jenette stands sloppily in front of him on the street. She says nothing and begins to jump. Smic-smac, smic-smac, smic-smack.

VICTOR

You sure? She's got kind  
of like brown hair.

JENETTE

Positive.

VICTOR

You sure?

JENETTE

Positive.

VICTOR

My friend told me she  
lived around here.

JENETTE

Your friend must be  
misinformed.

VICTOR

Didn't I see you at Pitt  
yesterday?

A pause.

JENETTE

So what do you want with  
her anyway?

VICTOR

I'm a good friend of hers.

JENETTE

How do I know you're not  
lying.

VICTOR

Yo, I know what you're  
thinking, that I'm one of  
those guys that keep  
coming up to her.

JENETTE

Probably.  
(Under her breath)  
One of the many.

VICTOR

What?

JENETTE

Nothing.

Hector approaches Victor from down the block.

HECTOR

Excuse me, can I help you?

Victor doesn't answer.

HECTOR  
You looking for somebody?

VICTOR  
Wha'?

HECTOR  
You here to see somebody?

VICTOR  
Yeah.

HECTOR  
Who?

VICTOR  
A girl named Amanda.

HECTOR  
What she look like?

VICTOR  
She's like this high, dark  
hair, skinny

HECTOR  
Yo, that's my girl.

VICTOR  
She didn't say she had no  
man.

HECTOR  
I suggest you turn around  
and go back to where you  
came from.

Victor looks over to Jenette. No response.

HECTOR  
What are you waiting for?

A pause.

HECTOR  
You betta bounce, yo.

Hector shoves Victor away from the stoop. Victor steps up to Hector. Jenette watches them. interested.

HECTOR  
You betta leave the block,  
yo, or me and my boys,  
we're gonna fuck you up.

Victor looks at Hector then walks away down the block.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Victor rounds the corner and sits down on the sidewalk.

VICTOR  
(to himself)  
Fuck man. I'm gonna get a  
fuckin' M-80 and shove it  
up his retarded ass.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

CHRISTOPHER, an energetic ten-year-old, exits the front door of his building holding a bat, sits down on the curb and looks out at the block. As the camera pans, we see Aaron on the corner talking to Mari. Michelle and Donna are walking down the block. Hector is making his way back over to Amanda's building and Jenette is jumping rope.

Chris rubs his eyes, turns around and looks up at one of the windows in his building.

CHRIS  
(Up to the window)  
Ma!

No answer.

CHRIS  
Ma!

Mom's head sticks out the window.

CHRIS  
Cross me!

Mom waves her hand, signaling to him that it's safe to cross the street. Chris, picking up a half-deflated football, runs into the street.

Chris makes his way down the block, stomping along in big High-tops. He spots Aaron a few feet away.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Aaron is sitting on the sidewalk crushing a soda bottle under his foot.

Chris approaches and tosses the ball to him.

Aaron stands up and tosses the ball back to Chris, then lights a cigarette. Chris waits until Aaron is ready and throws again.

AARON

It's too hot, get outta  
here.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK- CONTINUOUS

Michelle and Donna are sitting on their stoop.

DONNA

I want him to change. I  
want to get to know the  
real him and I want him to  
get to know the real me.

Michelle looks at Donna. A pause.

DONNA

It's so frustrating. I ask  
him if he's mad and he  
says no.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - MOMENTS LATER

Victor is still sitting on the sidewalk around the corner.

Chris walks by him.

VICTOR

Yo! You live here?

Chris nods.

VICTOR

You know Amanda?

Chris nods again, smiles and throws the ball at Victor.  
Victor catches it and throws it back. Chris catches it and  
then starts to run away.

VICTOR

Hey, where you goin'?

Victor starts to follow him.

VICTOR

Hold up, yo!

EXT. ALLEYWAY - CONTINUOUS

Chris slips through a fence to enter the alleyway and Victor enters  
behind him.

A "No Trespassing" sign hangs on the gate. Victor looks around a  
little as they continue their game of catch.

As the boys play, the gate creaks and swings open. The boys  
quickly scurry into an out-of-the-way corner.

Aaron and Donna enter the alleyway. The boys watch them.

AARON

Alright, tell me, what'd  
you hear?

DONNA

There's a rumor that you  
were tryin' to get  
somebody to beat me up.

AARON

What chu listening to  
rumors for? I'm not like  
dat.

DONNA

Is it true?

Aaron puts his bag of fireworks down on the floor.

AARON

I told you, no. I'm not  
that type.

DONNA

Then I want you to go to  
whoever's sayin' that and  
tell them to stop.

AARON

Alright.

Aaron clears a piece of hair away from Donna's face and  
puts it behind her ear. A pause He gently pushes her up against the  
wall.

He kisses her forehead. The camera follows as Aaron's lips  
make their way to Donna's. They kiss. Slowly at first, then  
deeply.

Victor and Chris watch silently from the corner.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK- MOMENTS LATER

Jenette is siding on the ground, drawing with chalk on the  
side walk. Victor approaches her and sits down on the  
stoop.

JENETTE

Amanda's not back yet

Victor runs his fingers through his hair. Jenette details  
her artwork. She focuses intently on her drawing

JENETTE

(With her eyes lowered)  
How's Hector?

Victor doesn't respond.

JENETTE  
(to Victor)  
So, do you like her?

Jenette stares at the sidewalk.

VICTOR  
No.

JENETTE  
So, then whadda ya want?

Victor stands up to leave.

JENETTE  
You wanna do somethin'  
with me?

VICTOR  
Not really.

JENETTE  
Hey!

VICTOR  
Wha'?

Jenette makes eye contact. Victor makes his way back over to Jenette.  
He sits  
down beside her. Jenette's eyes focus back on her drawing.

JENETTE  
Where you know Amanda  
from?

VICTOR  
Jus' from around the way.

JENETTE  
You live around here?

VICTOR  
Yeah.

JENETTE  
You gotta girLfrLend?

Victor sees Chris kicking his football across the street.

JENETTE  
You wanna be my boyfriend?

Victor doesn't respond. A moment passes.

JENETTE  
Hector's an asshole, huh?

Jenette looks at Victor. She catches him looking across the street.

JENETTE  
(to Victor)  
I know how ta get him back  
if you want.

VICTOR  
(turning back)  
Nah.

Jenette's eyes drop down to the ground.

She quietly begins to sob. She holds her face in her hands.  
Fake tears.

VICTOR  
What's the matter? You  
alright?

Aaron rounds the corner of the block with Donna. Jenette catches a glimpse of him and starts sobbing loudly. Aaron sees Jenette crying on the ground. He leaves Donna behind and starts walking towards Jenette.

VICTOR  
Wha'? I'll do whatever you  
want.

Aaron reaches them. Victor looks up at him.

AARON  
(to Victor)  
What happened!

Jenette cries. Aaron grabs Victor's arm tightly.

AARON  
(Angrily)  
'Wha' happened?

Jenette raises her head.

JENETTE  
Hector-

AARON  
What? He hit you?

She sobs and nods "yes."

Aaron scoops her up onto his shoulder and grabs Victor by the arm.

AARON

C'mon.

Jenette's chalk is left behind on the sidewalk.

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - CONTINUOUS

Aaron marches them all up the block. Hector's silhouette is visible in the distance as he cranks the pedal of an upside-down bicycle.

Jenette bounces and sobs over Aaron's shoulder as they trot up the block. Victor struggles to keep up as his sneakers begin to skid on the cement.

Hector sees the three of them approaching.

He raises his arm and points a finger at Victor.

HECTOR

(to Victor)

I thought I told you to go home!

Aaron speeds up as he approaches Hector.

AARON

You hit my sista?

Jenette sobs in Aaron's arms as he puts her down. Aaron releases Victor's sleeve.

Smack! Aaron hits Hector in the face. Hector falls. Aaron turns and finds Victor turning away.

AARON

(to Victor)

Yo! Get over here!

Victor turns back towards the action. Holding Hector against a wall, he pulls Victor near.

AARON

(to Hector)

Who told you to touch my sister?

HECTOR

I didn't touch shit!

Smack! Hector is pinned against the wall. He tries to free himself of Aaron but he is no match. Chris watches from the curb, amused.

HECTOR

I didn't do anything!

Hector struggles. Aaron looks to Victor.

AARON

Did you see him?

Jenette turns her head to Victor. She wipes the tears from her eyes.

Victor looks at Hector. A moment passes. Chris plays with his bat as he watches.

VICTOR

Yeah.

Aaron punches Hector in the stomach. Hector doubles over.

Chris throws punches into the air.

DISSOLVE TO

EXT. AMANDA'S BLOCK - LATE AFTERNOON

The sun has dropped low in the sky. Long shadows rest on the pavement after a steamy afternoon.

Amanda's block is quiet and empty.

Chris strolls by Amanda's stoop.

He notices Jenette's drawing, bends down on his knees and reads her sloppy writing.

"For entrance to secret passage press here."

Chris presses his finger into the circle she's drawn. A moment passes. Nothing happens.

A sound is heard atop Amanda's stoop. Chris quickly walks away. Amanda appears through her front door.

She sits down on her stoop.

Victor is sitting on the curb across the street tapping an empty bottle against the pavement. He sees Amanda.

Victor approaches Amanda's stoop.

VICTOR

Yo.

AMANDA

Hi.

VICTOR

Remember me, from the  
pool?

AMANDA

Um. Yeah! Shorty!

A pause.

AMANDA

So watcha doin'?

VICTOR

Nothin'.

AMANDA

What are you doin' here?

VICTOR

I, umm, came to see you.

AMANDA

You know somebody around  
here?

VICTOR

No.

(He sighs)

What you do today?

AMANDA

Oh you know, cleaned the  
house, cooked. Took care  
of my little sisters. Sit  
down. So where's Carlos?

VICTOR

I guess he's outside  
someplace I don't like  
takin' him down to certain  
places.

Victor sits down.

AMANDA

Whadja wanna see me about?

VICTOR

I just wanted to see you.

A pause.

AMANDA

So you got a girl?

VICTOR

Of course.

AMANDA

So what's her name?

VICTOR

You know. I got a lot,  
more than one.

AMANDA

A play-ya.

VICTOR

You got a boyfriend?

AMANDA

Me? No. Don't want none  
either. Such bastards, man.

A pause.

AMANDA

(Quickly)

They play a girl, then you  
complain, then they play  
dumb, blah, blah, blah.  
All that bullshit,  
whatever I don't want  
none. I'm gonna stay  
single awhile, you know?

A pause.

AMANDA

So wadda you do with your  
girls?

VICTOR

Just chill.

AMANDA

That's it?

VICTOR

Nah, we make out and  
stuff.

Amanda doesn't believe him.

AMANDA

So what you think of me?

VICTOR

You look good.

AMANDA

I look good, that's it. So  
what else do you do for  
these girls?

VICTOR  
I buy them flowers.

AMANDA  
How you treat them?

VICTOR  
Good. I'm faithful to  
them.

Amanda gets up and walks away. Victor quickly follows.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Amanda walks through the half-open fence and leans flat  
against the wall. Victor stands close by, nervously.

He keeps his distance from her.

AMANDA  
See, I got you, you are so  
scared. I don't believe  
that you kissed no girls.  
That you got three girls  
and that you faithful and  
this and that.

VICTOR  
I did.

AMANDA  
Well, you know I'm  
standin' here and you say  
I look good?

VICTOR  
I kissed those girls.

AMANDA  
No you didn't, you ain't  
provin'it.

VICTOR  
I aint gotta prove nothin'  
to no girl, 'cause I got  
it like dat.

AMANDA  
Oh, 'cause you got it like  
dat?

Victor approaches Amanda. He touches her arm. Amanda  
smiles.

She takes Victor's hand and places it on her breast. Victor  
moves forward. Amanda moves his hand over her breasts. She

wraps her arms around his waist. Victor bends his arms around her back.

Amanda hisses him on the lips, slowly. A long, deep kiss. As she kisses him she runs her hand through his hair. She pulls back. Victor looks around. Chris is at the entrance of the alleyway, watching them. He is holding his deflated football.

Chris looks at him for a second and walks away.

Chris walks down the block, his bat against the pavement.

FADE OUT