

Generation Y

Drama Pilot
4th Network Draft
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ACT ONE

FADE IN:

ON NEWS FOOTAGE

from the year 2000. The ball drops in Times Square. Y2K fails to end the world. President Bill Clinton says "I did not have sexual relations with that woman." Tom Hanks talks to a volleyball in *Castaway*. Britney and Christina battle for the title of "pop diva." Smoke pours from the broken hull of the USS Cole. Mad Cow Disease ravages England. Time Warner buys AOL. Al Gore and George Bush battle for the U.S. presidency. *

Over this we hear *The Real Slim Shady*, by Eminem. *

CUT TO:

EXT./INT. GREENBELT HIGH SCHOOL, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (MAY 2000) *

Greenbelt High School is in Hyde Park, a suburban neighborhood fifteen minutes outside downtown Austin. The city itself is a collection of residential neighborhoods surrounding a small urban hub. *

We hear a WOMAN's voice. *

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

In the year 2000, a documentary film crew followed a number of High School Students through their senior year at Greenbelt High. *

We see a MONTAGE of moments from a typical high school day. *

Note: All the footage we see in this series (unless otherwise noted) has been shot by our documentary crew. What we are watching, in other words, is not a scripted show, but a documentary called "Generation Y." *

CUT TO:

PORTRAITS OF OUR SUBJECTS

On the left side of the screen we see a video portrait of each subject in succession. The other half of the screen is SPLIT in the middle. The Top Right side has a talking head sound-bite from each person. The Bottom Right has a TITLE.

1. STEVEN FOSTER - "THE OVERACHIEVER"

-- Steven, 18, is a handsome kid in a suit, confident.

STEVEN FOSTER
That's *President* Foster to you.

2. JACQUELINE FOX - "THE BEAUTY QUEEN"

-- Jackie, 18, is the girl every high school boy dreams about in their sticky sleep. She mimes holding up an Oscar.

JACKIE FOX
I'd like to thank the academy.

3. KENNETH FINLEY - "THE NERD"

-- Kenneth, 18, is a shy kid who never makes eye contact.

KENNETH FINLEY
It's Kenneth. What? Oh, Finley.
Kenneth Finley. Do you think I
could get a glass of water?

4. DAWN BARBUSO -- "THE PUNK."

-- Dawn, 18, is voluptuous, precocious, with dyed hair. She's wearing a tight t-shirt.

DAWN BARBUSO
Hello? My eyes are up here.

5. ROLLY MARKS - "THE JOCK"

-- Rolly, 18, is Mr. Football, Mr. Baseball, Mr. Basketball.

ROLLY MARKS
My name is Rolly Marks and I think
George W. Bush is going to be the
best president this country has
ever seen. Booyah!

6. BRENDA SERRANO - "THE BRAIN" *

-- Brenda, 18, is a pretty, intense, Mexican-American girl. *

BRENDA SERRANO
Where do I want to be in ten years? *
Do you mean personally or *
professionally? *

7. ANDERS HOLT - "THE RICH KID" *

-- Anders, 18, is good-looking, preppy, "THE RICH KID."

ANDERS HOLT
Money doesn't matter. It's about *
being happy. *

8. THE FALCON - "THE REBEL" *

-- 18, Shirtless, buff, cooler than everybody else combined.
He's wearing mirrored sunglasses. *

THE FALCON
All your Base are Belong to Us.

CUT TO:

INT. STUDENT GOVERNMENT MTNG, GREENBELT HIGH - DAY (2000)

Steven Foster sits with FACULTY to discuss student issues. *

FILMMAKER (V.O.)
It was a time of prosperity, of
budget surpluses and relative
peace.

CUT TO:

INT. PEP RALLY, GREENBELT HIGH - DAY (2000)

Rolly Marks leads the football team as they charge into the
gym. Jackie Fox drops jaws as a cheerleader. We see our
other kids scattered around the gym.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)
But for these students and the
country alike, change was just
around the corner.

CUT TO:

INT. PROM, GREENBELT HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (2000)

Our kids in tuxedos and evening gowns. Anders Holt and
Brenda Serrano dance together to *The Thong Song*, by Sisqo. *
Kenneth Finley dances with Dawn Barbuso. CAROLINE CHUNG, 18, *
stands by the punch watching Steven Foster. *

CUT TO:

GROUP INTERVIEW, HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (2000)

Our eight subjects are gathered together, talking to THE
FILMMAKER, who is a woman in her late twenties.

FILMMAKER
So tomorrow is graduation.

The kids whoop it up.

FILMMAKER (CONT'D)
And by now you all know where
you're going from here.

DAWN BARBUSO
To get drunk.

They laugh.

FILMMAKER
So, if you had to describe your
future in one word, what would it
be?

ANDERS HOLT
I'd say *prosperity*.

BRENDA SERRANO
Discovery.

JACKIE FOX
Glamour.

ROLLY MARKS
Victory.

FILMMAKER
Okay. Falcon?

THE FALCON
MP3.

FILMMAKER
Which means what?

THE FALCON
You'll see.

FILMMAKER
Kenneth? One word that describes
your future?

Kenneth looks startled to be noticed.

KENNETH FINLEY
Oh, uh, family? I think.

FILMMAKER
That's a good one. Steven?

Steven straightens his tie, looking every bit like the Next
Big Thing.

STEVEN FOSTER

Success.

CUT TO:

EXT. GRADUATION CEREMONY, GREENBELT HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (2000)

Our subjects and 150 other STUDENTS in caps and gowns. *
Steven Foster is at the podium, giving the graduation speech. *

STEVEN FOSTER

And so Class of 2000, I say to you,
this is our moment! Nothing can
stop us now!

The students all THROW their CAPS into the air. *

FREEZE

on the hats in mid-air.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

They were the class of 2000,
Greenbelt High School, Austin,
Texas.

We hear the opening bars of *Beautiful Day*, by U2. *

CUT TO:

NEWS MONTAGE

As ten years of stories race by. George W. Bush is elected
president, *Spongebob Squarepants* premieres, the twin towers
collapse ...

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

Jump ahead ten years. It's
September 2010. The world is a
very different place.

... American troops go off to war, Johnny Depp plays *Captain
Jack Sparrow*, Hurricane Katrina ravages New Orleans, Megan
Fox becomes a star. Workers suffer and bankers profit as the *
Global Economy collapses. Under these images we see; 2001, *
2002, 2003, 2004, 2005, 2006, 2007, 2008, 2009.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

So we decided to go back and see
what these children, now adults,
had made of their lives.

CUT TO:

INT. GOVERNMENT OFFICE - DAY (PRESENT)

Brenda Serrano, 28, is in a meeting. She is wearing a designer suit. There is an American Flag on the wall.

*

CUT TO:

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY (PRESENT)

A commercial building is going up. Anders Holt, 28, wearing a hard hat, tours the site with SEVERAL CONTRACTORS.

*

CUT TO:

INT. SUPERMARKET - DAY (PRESENT)

Dawn Barbuso, 28, pushes a grocery cart. She is six months PREGNANT. The dyed hair is gone.

*

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY (PRESENT)

Kenneth Finley, 28, stands in front of a class full of ten-year-olds. He is writing his name on the blackboard.

*

KENNETH FINLEY
That's Mr. Finley, F-I-N-L-E-Y.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH, HAWAII - DAY (PRESENT)

Steven Foster, 28, comes out of the water carrying a surfboard. He is muscular and tan now.

TITLE CARD: STEVEN FOSTER, "THE OVER-ACHIEVER"

CUT TO:

INT. BEACH HUT, HAWAII - NIGHT (PRESENT)

A small cabana just off the beach. It's not fancy, but it's private. The house is full of books, piled in stacks. There is no TV. Steven comes in, leans the surfboard against the wall.

We JUMP AHEAD a few minutes. Steven sits for an interview.

STEVEN FOSTER
So this is me. Steven Foster.
Twenty eight. I live in Hawaii
now.

(MORE)

STEVEN FOSTER (CONT'D)
Went to college, but never
graduated. Never became a lawyer
or a doctor or a banker.

CUT TO:

INT. FAT STAN'S BAR, HAWAII - NIGHT(PRESENT)

Steven is BEHIND the BAR. It's a busy night. He pours
drinks for regulars and tourists. TWO HOT GIRLS chat him up.
Steven smiles and chats back. We HEAR more of his interview.

STEVEN FOSTER (O.S.)
I surf, mostly -- read. At night
I'm a bartender at a place called
Fat Stan's.

One of the HOT GIRL'S passes Steven a piece of paper. We are
watching from a distance and zoom in. Steven looks at it. *

STEVEN FOSTER (CONT'D)
(shouting over bar noise)
What's this?

HOT GIRL
(shouts back)
What do you think?

She smiles wickedly. Steven thinks about it. *

STEVEN FOSTER
Okay -- I'll tell you how this is
gonna go, and you tell me if you're
still interested. *
(laying it out) *
You give me your number. I call *
you when my shift ends. We meet up *
at an after-hours place I know. We *
have a few drinks, dance, make out *
a little. We go back to your *
place. I show you what I look like *
with no pants. *
(the hot girl smiles) *
Tomorrow you wake up. I'm gone. *
You can't reach me on the phone so *
you come by the bar. I tell you it *
was fun, but I don't date, and I *
definitely don't do relationships. *
You get upset. You say I used you, *
I took advantage. I remind you *
that we had this conversation. You *
get pissed and walk out. And we *
both end up feeling crappy. Does *
that sound good to you? *

HOT GIRL

(shrugs)

Whatever. I'm leaving in the morning.

Fair enough. Steven takes the phone number.

STEVEN FOSTER

Okay. I'll call you later.

CUT TO:

INT. FAT STAN'S BAR, HAWAII - DAY (PRESENT)

Mostly empty. Steven is shelving glasses, mid-interview

STEVEN FOSTER

Success? Did I really say that? I don't even know what that means. I think I'm a success. I mean, I make my own rules.

FOOTAGE of Steven sitting on his surfboard. It's dawn and the water is calm, beautiful.

STEVEN FOSTER (O.S.) (CONT'D)

I lead a quiet life.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

You have friends?

FOOTAGE of Steven on his deck, reading.

STEVEN FOSTER (O.S.)

I have -- everything I need.

BACK TO THE BAR

Steven finishes putting up glasses.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

Steven, come on. You didn't just go from being Class President to -- this. What happened?

Off Steven, considering the question.

CUT TO:

EXT. WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY (PRESENT)

We see the nation's capitol in all its majesty.

CUT TO:

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING, WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY (PRESENT)

Brenda Serrano, 28, in a power suit, climbs the stairs of the CAPITOL BUILDING.

TITLE CARD: BRENDA SERRANO, "THE BRAIN"

CUT TO:

BRENDA'S HIGH SCHOOL MONTAGE

-- FOOTAGE of Brenda, 18, at the Westinghouse Science Fair. She smiles, holding up her 1st PRIZE TROPHY. Anders Holt beams at her with pride and love.

PHOTOGRAPHER
Okay. Say "science."

BRENDA AND ANDERS
Science.

The shot FREEZES, becomes a ...

-- STILL PHOTO on a Greenbelt High yearbook page. The page is covered with photos of Brenda and Anders, under the banner, "BEST COUPLE."

CUT TO:

INT. CONGRESSMAN TAUB'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY (PRESENT)

Brenda Serrano is one of SEVERAL STAFFERS sitting around a conference table, talking to CONGRESSMAN HARRY TAUB.

An INTERN hands Brenda a binder. She hands it back. *

BRENDA SERRANO
(off-handed) *
I said the briefing binder. It's *
black with, like, a white label. *

The Intern heads off to search. *

CONGRESSMAN TAUB *
My point is, we're neck deep in a *
recession with no end in sight, and *
these bankers are collecting ten *
million dollar bonuses. *

BRENDA SERRANO *
Which is why we have to pass a bill *
restricting corporate salaries. *

BEN WATTS, 35, Taub's Chief of Staff speaks up. *

BEN WATTS
Brenda's right, Congressman. *

The Intern hands Brenda a black binder.

BRENDA SERRANO
Okay, this is the menu book. We're here to reform the banking system, not, you know, order poppers from the Cheesecake Factory.

CUT TO:

INT. BRENDA'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY (PRESENT)

We are in Brenda's office in the Capitol Building. Brenda faces the camera.

BRENDA SERRANO
So it's 2010. I'm living in D.C. I'm a lawyer. And I work for Congressman Taub from Massachusetts. He's the leader of the House Finance Committee, and right now we're trying to pass a banking regulation bill that I helped write.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)
You're a long way from the Science Fair.

BRENDA SERRANO
Wow. That's right, I was going to be a scientist. But then, of course, you know, the world changed so dramatically after high school.

FILMMAKER
And Anders? Are you guys still together?

Brenda's face sours. Clearly the subject is still a sore one for her. Off her face we ... *

REWIND *

Racing back through the decade to the Year 2000. We hear *Yellow*, by Coldplay. FOOTAGE of the Global Economic Crisis gives way to news footage of the 2008 election, then to the troop surge in Iraq, all the way back to the horror of 9-11, and beyond, landing finally in September 2000. *

NYPD Blue is still on TV, as is *The Drew Carey Show*, and *Ally McBeal*. *Charlie's Angels* is in the movie theaters, *Coyote Ugly*, *Erin Brockovich*, *Gone in Sixty Seconds*. *

CUT TO:

A STILL PHOTOGRAPH

Of BRENDA Serrano on her first day of college. She is standing on the lawn in front of her dorm with all her possessions, ready to move in.

Note: This begins the "investigative" part of our documentary, in which we also use home movies, still photos, audio files, archival footage, etc to uncover hidden truths about our subjects' lives. *

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

After graduating from Greenbelt High, Brenda Serrano went to George Washington University. It was September 2000.

We see another STILL PHOTO of Brenda in her dorm room. It's a party scene. Freshman fill the room, beer in hand. We PUSH IN on Brenda at her desk, trying to study, while the fun happens around her.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

Brenda registered as a life science major. But that November, something happened that changed her life forever. *

NEWS FOOTAGE (NOVEMBER 2000)

Of the ABC election coverage.

NEWSCASTER

We're now ready to announce that the state of Florida goes to George W. Bush.

CUT TO:

NEWS FOOTAGE (NOVEMBER 2000)

Archival film of the Florida recount. Scenes of chaos. We watch as ELECTION OFFICIALS from both parties oversee the review of hand-punched ballot. Pundits foam at the mouth. *

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

The country was split in two. Red states and blue states.

News Footage of thousands of protestors marching in D.C.

CUT TO:

A HOME MOVIE

of the march from street level. Brenda Serrano is holding a SIGN -- *Count Every Vote!* The footage ties Brenda to a powerful historical event, and places the events of her life in context to the world around her. (This technique will be used in series for all our characters.)

*
*
*
*

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

Then, after an epic battle, on December 12th, 2000, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of George W. Bush. And just like that, the country had a new president.

We see NEWS FOOTAGE of a victorious George W. Bush throwing the V for Victory sign as the news is announced.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

The next day Brenda Serrano changed her major to pre-law.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT, WASHINGTON D.C. - DAY (PRESENT)

Brenda Serrano is at a window table. The Falcon, 28, "The Rebel" approaches. Still the coolest guy in the room.

*

BRENDA SERRANO

Oh my God.

She gets up, hugs The Falcon. The Falcon glances at the camera. They sit.

BRENDA SERRANO (CONT'D)

I can't believe this. You. Us. Has it really been ten years?

THE FALCON

Fifty, I think.

BRENDA SERRANO

I'm so out of touch. I don't talk to anyone from high school anymore. How are you?

*
*

THE FALCON

How I am is I need a drink. Are we drinking?

BRENDA SERRANO

Well, it's lunch.

THE FALCON

Good point.

(to waiter)

I'll have a Marguerita on the rocks, no salt.

BRENDA SERRANO

It's funny, I was just thinking about band class the other day -- the time we filled all the wind instruments with flour and Mr. Crotch --

THE FALCON

Right. He got that eye twitch. Had it for the next three years.

Brenda's Blackberry beeps. She looks at it, quickly replies to a text, puts the phone down.

BRENDA SERRANO

So, you live in New York now, right?

THE FALCON

Williamsburg. It's in Brooklyn.

Another beep. Brenda types a quick reply.

BRENDA SERRANO

(as she's typing)

And you're in D.C. -- remind me.

THE FALCON

For a gig.

(off her look)

I'm a music producer and I still DJ.

BRENDA SERRANO

(puts down her phone)

Right, I watched that video you sent me on YouTube.

We CUT TO a MUSIC VIDEO -- A hip techno/rap number. GOY M.C., an Orthodox Jewish rapper, is laying down rhymes, surrounded by Sarah Silverman-esque FLY GIRLS. The Falcon is the DJ in the background.

BACK to the Restaurant.

THE FALCON

Right. Goy M.C. He's one of the acts I produce.

BRENDA SERRANO

I always knew you'd make it as a musician.

Her Blackberry beeps again. She looks at it, scowls, types.

BRENDA SERRANO (CONT'D)

Sorry. We're trying to finalize the language on this bill.

She finishes, puts her phone down.

BRENDA SERRANO (CONT'D)

Okay. I'm all yours.

THE FALCON

Well, I haven't "made it" yet. I live in a studio apartment over a hammer factory. But I tour a lot. Vegas, L.A. I was in Hawaii last month, saw Steven.

BRENDA SERRANO

Steven lives in Hawaii?

THE FALCON

Yeah. He's a beach bum.

BRENDA SERRANO

That's, wow, not what I thought at all.

THE FALCON

Well, that thing with his dad.

BRENDA SERRANO

Oh, right.

THE FALCON

What about you? You work for, what? A congressman?

BRENDA SERRANO
 Congressman Taub, from the
 Massachusetts second. He heads
 Finance. I'm his Deputy Chief of
 Staff.

THE FALCON
 Wow.

Brenda's phone beeps. She checks it, types.

BRENDA SERRANO
 (distracted)
 It's cool, but -- a lot of work.

THE FALCON
 So are you dating? Married?

BRENDA SERRANO
 Honestly? Who has time?

THE FALCON
 You're not still pining for Anders?

BRENDA SERRANO
 Please. That was ten years ago.

THE FALCON
 Right. But you guys were pretty
 serious. You dated for what? Four
 years? Voted "Best Couple."

BRENDA SERRANO
 We were eighteen.

THE FALCON
 You know he's married, right?

The news HITS BRENDA HARD. She tries to cover.

BRENDA SERRANO
 No. I -- no.
 (beat, forced upbeat)
 Who's the lucky girl?

CUT TO:

EXT. ANDERS HOLT' HOUSE - DAY (PRESENT)

A beautiful modern home. A Range Rover and a BMW M5 sit in
 the driveway.

CUT TO:

INT. LIVING ROOM, ANDERS' HOUSE - DAY (PRESENT)

Anders Holt, 28, the other half of Greenbelt High's "Best Couple," stands at a glass table, opening a bottle of wine. JACKIE FOX, 27, "The Beauty Queen" comes in carrying a charcutterie plate.

Jackie has grown into a true knockout. She holds out the platter, as if to a guest. There is a nervous energy to her, a sadness she hides under her Stepford veneer.

JACKIE FOX
Just a little snack.

ANDERS HOLT
(to the camera)
We took a wine tasting class recently.

JACKIE FOX
It was really interesting.

ANDERS HOLT
So now we try to match each bottle of wine with just the right food.

He hands Jackie a glass. She takes a sip.

JACKIE FOX
Mmm. Peppery.

ANDERS HOLT
(tasting his)
Yeah, with a little -- what is that, blackberry?

It's clear they're putting on a little show for the camera -- the perfect couple in their perfect home.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)
How long have you guys been married?

Jackie takes Anders' hand.

JACKIE FOX
What is it now, sweetie? Three years?

ANDERS HOLT
It'll be two years in May.

JACKIE FOX

Wow. Is that all? It feels longer.

ANDERS HOLT

I didn't really know Jackie in high school. I mean, of course I knew her. Everybody knew Jackie Fox.

CUT TO

DOCUMENTARY FOOTAGE of Jackie Fox, 18, in high school standing in a spotlight on STAGE. She has just starred in the senior play and is getting a standing ovation. Anders is in the audience, as are all our kids. We PUSH IN on Jackie's face. This is Jackie's defining moment.

CUT TO

Jackie exiting the stage moments later. Steven Foster is standing there, awestruck.

STEVEN FOSTER

That was -- you were great.

Jackie walks right past him. Steven isn't in her league.

CUT BACK TO ANDERS' HOUSE (PRESENT)

Anders and Jackie

JACKIE FOX

I knew Anders, sure. He was cute. But he was crazy about Brenda. Brenda, Brenda, Brenda.

From her tone this is clearly still a source of tension. Anders takes Jackie's hand, trying to smooth things over.

FILMMAKER

So, Jackie, what happened? Last time we talked to you, you were going to go to Hollywood to be an actress.

Jackie's smile freezes a little.

JACKIE FOX

Well ... I tried.

ANDERS HOLT

She's being modest. Look at this.

He points to a FRAMED PHOTO of Jackie in an evening gown standing with a handsome MAN in a TUXEDO.

ANDERS HOLT (CONT'D)

This is my honey-bunny when she was on season three of The Bachelor.

JACKIE FOX

Season Two.

(beat)

I didn't make it very far.

*
*

CUT TO:

FOOTAGE FROM THE BACHELOR

We see a ROSE CEREMONY from Season Two. BOB GUINEY hands out roses to the CONTESTANTS. Jackie doesn't get one. We hold on her humiliated smile.

BACK TO:

ANDER'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX

Anders rubs his wife's back.

ANDERS HOLT

Please. She was great. But you know all those shows are rigged. Who wins. It's very political.

JACKIE FOX

(embarrassed)

Can we talk about something else?

(exaggerated)

I'm excited to see how the salami goes with this wine.

We hold on Jackie, trying to hold her smile.

CUT TO:

INT. FAT STAN'S BAR, HAWAII - DAY(PRESENT)

We observe Steven as he sets up for Happy Hour.

*

WAITRESS (O.S.)

Hey, Steve-O -- phone call.

Steven picks up the phone.

STEVEN FOSTER

This is Steven.

CAROLINE CHUNG (O.S.)

(beat)

Hello? Steven?

STEVEN FOSTER

Who's this?

CAROLINE CHUNG

It's, uh, Caroline, Caroline Chung,
from high school.

STEVEN FOSTER

(has a hard time hearing)

Who?

CAROLINE CHUNG (O.S.)

(beat)

Caroline Chung. We slept together
on prom night.

STEVEN FOSTER

Wait -- Caroline? Wow. How are
you?

CAROLINE CHUNG (O.S.)

Well, I don't know how to -- I
probably should have called you
before, but -- well, we have a son,
Tom. He's nine.

(beat)

He's yours.

STEVEN FOSTER

My what?

CAROLINE CHUNG (O.S.)

Your son. We slept together on
prom night, and I got pregnant, and
you have a son named Tom.

Off Steven: Stunned.

END OF ACT ONE

*

ACT TWO

INT. CLASSROOM, BARTON SPRINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY
(PRESENT)

Kenneth Finley, 28, stands in front of a class full of ten-year-olds. There is a banner on the wall that reads "Recycling Day!" Kenneth helps his kids organize the trash they brought in from home.

We hear the start of *Honey*, by Moby. *

TITLE CARD: KENNETH FINLEY, "THE NERD"

CUT TO:

INT. GREENBELT HIGH SCHOOL, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (2000) *

Captured on a student's video camera, we see kids in the hall hanging banners for a dance. The camera accidentally captures Kenneth, 18, a wallflower, walking down the hall. *
Suddenly he is SURROUNDED by some JOCKS. They take his backpack, mock him.

Then Steven Foster, 18, steps in, grabs the backpack. Steven mad dogs one of the jocks, and they back off. Steven hands Kenneth's bag to him. *

CUT TO:

GROUP INTERVIEW, GREENBELT HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (2000)

Our ten subjects are sitting together. We focus on Kenneth Finley, sitting next to his friend, Steven Foster.

KENNETH FINLEY

I don't know. Everybody else seems to know exactly what they want to be. I just -- career-wise, who knows? But I'd like to have a family, to get married you know. And then -- have a bunch of kids, right, babe?

The camera finds DAWN BARBUSO, 18, "The Punk" sitting next to him. She is the opposite of Kenneth, the kind of girl who smokes Marlboro Reds and gets in fights. Dawn gives Kenneth a skeptical smile. Kenneth beams at her.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

A bunch of kids.

CUT TO:

INT. BARTON SPRINGS ELEMENTARY, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

-- Kenneth microwaves his lunch in the TEACHER'S LOUNGE.

-- Kenneth plays with the kids at RECESS.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM, ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY (PRESENT)

The classroom is empty. Kenneth is being interviewed.

KENNETH FINLEY

Well, I'm an elementary school
teacher now. Obviously.

-- FOOTAGE of Kenneth dressed in various COSTUMES as he
teaches the kids about famous moments from history.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

And it's great. I love my kids.
We have a blast.

BACK to the interview.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

And on the personal front? Did you
and Dawn ever start that family?

*

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - DAY(PRESENT)

Kenneth rides his bicycle down a residential street. He is
wearing an unflattering bicycle helmet. This is not a man
who understands "cool." He stops in front of a small house,
takes off his helmet.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

Kenneth comes in, puts his bicycle helmet on the counter.

KENNETH FINLEY

It's me.

Dawn Barbuso, now 28, comes in. She is six months pregnant.

DAWN BARBUSO

Hey. I was just cleaning up for
the baby shower tomorrow.

Kenneth holds up a grocery bag.

KENNETH FINLEY

Let me get dinner started, and then
I'll help.

She grabs a brownie off a cooling rack.

DAWN BARBUSO

(walking out)

Awesome.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM, KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Kenneth faces the camera.

KENNETH FINLEY

Yeah, so Dawn's due in November.

FILMMAKER

Congratulations.

KENNETH FINLEY

No. Wait. It's not -- I'm not the
father.

FILMMAKER

Oh. So you and Dawn ...

KENNETH FINLEY

No. God, no. She's -- No. Dawn
and I broke up pretty much right
after high school. Her husband,
Rolly, is in Afghanistan. He's a
soldier, and I'm --

*
*

We see FOOTAGE of various domestic moments in the house.
Kenneth helps Dawn with the laundry. He cooks dinner. He
changes a light bulb. From the way Kenneth looks at Dawn we
can tell he's still totally in love with her.

KENNETH FINLEY (O.S.) (CONT'D)

-- well, Dawn lost her job in
April, so I'm just letting her stay
here while --

BACK to Kenneth's INTERVIEW. Kenneth is self-conscious
talking about this.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

-- you know, until she gets back on
her feet.

*

FILMMAKER

That's nice of you.

KENNETH FINLEY

(self-conscious)

What can I say. I'm a "nice guy."

FILMMAKER

Well, I know how important family was to you -- Any marriage prospects for Kenneth Finley on the horizon?

Kenneth smiles nervously.

KENNETH FINLEY

Yeah, not really. I mean, I have my kids. My students, I mean. And they take most of my time. But I'm still - what can I say? I'm a happy bastard.

Kenneth smiles. He is making lemonade from lemons.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM, BARTON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL, AUSTIN, TX - DAY
(PRESENT)

CAROLINE CHUNG, 28, and her son TOM, 9, arrive for a parent/teacher conference. Kenneth Finley stands up from behind his desk to greet them.

Kenneth and Tom go through an elaborate high-five ritual. It's clear Tom loves his teacher.

We JUMP AHEAD. Kenneth sits across from Caroline and Tom. *

KENNETH FINLEY

So Tom's doing great, really great. But I've noticed his work has dropped off in the last few months.

Caroline glances at the camera, uncomfortable.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Tommy, do you want to go color?

Tom goes to the far end of the room. Caroline decides to be honest in front of the camera.

CAROLINE CHUNG (CONT'D)

It's this thing with his dad -- I mean, wanting to know who his dad is.

KENNETH FINLEY

Sure. Now on the phone you said you'd called the father, and he was coming to town.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Yeah, he said he'd be here on Monday, but he hasn't called. This whole "meeting his father" thing has been so stressful for Tom. For both of us.

KENNETH FINLEY

I bet.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Between you and me, if Tom hadn't started asking, I probably wouldn't have called. I mean, it's not really fair -- to drop this on the guy after all these years.

KENNETH FINLEY

Well, he'll do the right thing. Trust me. Any man who finds out he has a son is going to drop everything. I would.

CAROLINE CHUNG

I got news for you, Kenneth. Not every man is as sweet as you.

They share a moment. It's clear Caroline is crazy about Kenneth. But Kenneth is oblivious.

*

KENNETH FINLEY

So, don't you think it's time you tell me -- what's his name? The father.

Beat. Caroline is suddenly uncomfortable.

CAROLINE CHUNG

(squirrely)

I told you that, didn't I?

KENNETH FINLEY

No. Every time I ask you change the subject.

CAROLINE CHUNG
 (deep breath)
 It's Steven Foster, from high
 school.

Kenneth goes white.

CAROLINE CHUNG (CONT'D)
 Kenneth? Are you okay?

KENNETH FINLEY
 (no)
 Yeah. Absolutely.

CAROLINE CHUNG
 No. You're upset. That's why I
 never --

KENNETH FINLEY
 You know -- I've got -- another
 conference, so I have to -- but if
 you need anything -- or Tom needs
 anything, you know, call me.

CAROLINE CHUNG
 (standing)
 Oh -- okay.

KENNETH FINLEY
 Great to see you. Bye Tom.

He hurries out. Off Caroline: what just happened?

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, AUSTIN, TX - DAY(PRESENT)

Steven Foster gets out of a taxi in downtown Austin. He
 takes in the city around him. A lot has changed in 10 years.

CUT TO:

EXT. COFFEE SHOP PATIO, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

Steven sits with a cup of coffee.

STEVEN FOSTER
 Well, I'm back.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)
 How does it feel?

STEVEN FOSTER

Feels okay. Good. Staying with my mom. You know how that is.

We CUT AWAY to Steven at his MOM'S APARTMENT. JOYCE FOSTER, 50, sits in front of the TV, knitting. She's a handsome woman of good breeding, though her home is modest. Steven paces nearby, looking like a caged animal.

BACK to the COFFEE SHOP

FILMMAKER

Have you been to see your dad yet?

STEVEN FOSTER

I told you. I'm not gonna talk about my father.

FILMMAKER

What about Caroline?

STEVEN FOSTER

I'm -- you know, I haven't called yet. I mean, I'm working on it. Been busy, but -- getting excited, I guess. I mean, the kid's what? Ten? It's all dinosaurs and ninjas at that age, right? I can do that.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

So you're excited to be a father?

STEVEN FOSTER

Hold on. Just because I have a kid doesn't mean I'm a father.

We hold on Steven as he tries to sell the logic of this. His phone rings. Steven looks at the Caller ID, doesn't want to answer, but does because we're watching.

STEVEN FOSTER (CONT'D)

This is Steven.
(beat, listening)
Oh, hey, Caroline.

Steven gets up and walks away, indicating to the camera not to follow. What he doesn't realize is he's wearing a microphone, so we can hear every word.

STEVEN FOSTER (CONT'D)

No. I mean, yeah, I was supposed to get in on Monday, but ... my flight was canceled. I know. It sucks. I was excited to meet him.

(MORE)

STEVEN FOSTER (CONT'D)
But probably, I'll definitely be in
town by Friday. We should --

JACKIE FOX (O.S.)
Steven?

Steven turns. Jackie Fox is standing there. She doesn't see the camera because it's far away. Steven recognizes her.

STEVEN FOSTER
(into the phone)
Let me call you back.

He hangs up. Steven looks profoundly uncomfortable to have run into her. This is the downside to coming home, having to open himself up to people he knows.

JACKIE FOX
Oh my God. What are you doing
here. Are you back for Dawn's baby
shower?

STEVEN FOSTER
(off balance)
No, what's that?

JACKIE FOX
It's like a party you throw for
someone when they're going to have
a baby.

STEVEN FOSTER
No. I know what a -- wait, you
mean Dawn Barbuso from high school?

JACKIE FOX
Yeah, she married Rolly Marks.

STEVEN FOSTER
The jock?

JACKIE FOX
Actually, he joined the army like
eight years ago. Protect and
Serve.

STEVEN FOSTER
That's the L.A.P.D.

JACKIE FOX
Is it? Huh. So what are you up
to?

STEVEN FOSTER

Not much. I live in Hawaii now.
It's great. I surf.

JACKIE FOX

Really? Wow. I would have thought
you'd be a CEO by now or something.

STEVEN FOSTER

Nope. Uh, I read a lot.

JACKIE FOX

That's -- great.

(beat)

Listen, I heard about your dad.

Steven looks uncomfortable, knowing we're watching.

STEVEN FOSTER

Yeah, that's -- What are you up to
these days?

JACKIE FOX

Well, I got married.

STEVEN FOSTER

Let me guess. Donnie Chapman.

JACKIE FOX

No. God no. Ugh. Remember Anders
Holt from high school? Well, I'm
Mrs. Anders Holt now.

(shows him the ring)

He's great. A little square, you
know. But that's good. I needed
somebody grounded. After L.A. I
was getting a little -- crazy. Too
many Saturday nights, you know?

They share an awkward moment, a certain chemistry in the air.

JACKIE FOX (CONT'D)

It's good to see you. We should
get a drink sometime. Or is that
weird because I'm married?

*

STEVEN FOSTER

(on the spot)

No. I mean -- actually I'm not
gonna be in town that long. Maybe
next time.

JACKIE FOX

Don't be stupid. I'll give you my
number.

She digs through her purse finds a pen, but not paper.
Jackie takes Steven's hand and writes her number down.
Steven looks both thrilled and uncomfortable, knowing we're
watching from outside. Jackie finishes writing. Steven
looks at the number.

JACKIE FOX (CONT'D)

Promise you'll call?

This is exactly what Steven doesn't want; obligations,
responsibility, entanglement.

STEVEN FOSTER

I, uh -- yeah. I'll --

JACKIE FOX

Great.

(flirty)

See you later.

She walks away, leaving Steven stunned.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREE

EXT. CAPITOL BUILDING, WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT(PRESENT) *

A beautiful night in the nation's capitol. *

CUT TO: *

INT. BRENDA SERRANO'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON - NIGHT(PRESENT)

Brenda is on her computer. Ben Watts comes in.

BEN WATTS

Hey.

Brenda jumps a little bit.

BEN WATTS (CONT'D)

Sorry. Just thought you should know, the vote's starting soon.

Brenda stands, puts on her jacket.

BRENDA SERRANO

Great. Thanks.

BEN WATTS

Hey, do you wanna be set up -- on a date?

BRENDA SERRANO

(flustered)

What?

BEN WATTS

You know -- a date. You go out, have a few drinks, some dinner. I have a friend. Really nice guy. I think you'd like him.

BRENDA SERRANO

No. I'm, thanks though, but I'm -- we have the regulatory hearings coming up, and I just bought the whole Twilight series, so I'm --

As they're talking the camera moves behind Brenda's desk. There is a PHOTO of Anders, 28, on the screen. It's his WEDDING ANNOUNCEMENT. We see Anders and Jackie Fox, the smiling, happy couple. We realize Brenda has been Googling Anders. Clearly, Brenda isn't as over Anders as she claims.

Brenda notices where the camera is focused. She panics a little, comes over and hurriedly turns it off.

She stands there, self-conscious, aware that something private and secret about her hopes and dreams has been revealed.

BRENDA SERRANO (CONT'D)

(to Ben)

You know what? I'll go -- The date. Set it up.

BEN WATTS

Cool. Mickey's a great guy. You're gonna like him.

Off Brenda, flushed. This is a big step for her.

CUT TO:

EXT. SPERM BANK, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

The sperm bank is in a strip-mall next to a health food store. Kenneth rides up on his bicycle. Helmet on, he chains up his bike.

KENNETH FINLEY

I decided last night. It actually kind of hit me, you know? After we talked. I mean, what have I really done to make my dream come true? Starting a family. So what if I can't, you know, find a wife? There are people out there, women, who are desperate to have kids. But they don't have the, uh, what they need, visa vie sperm.

*
*
*
*
*
*
*

He takes off his bicycle helmet.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

And I can help with that. Help start families. Honestly, I get pretty excited thinking about all the women who'll use my sperm -- or, not excited, that sounds dirty - - but good. I feel good.

CUT TO:

INT. INTAKE ROOM, SPERM BANK, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

Kenneth sits at a desk across from JAY ROSCOE, 37, who holds a clipboard.

JAY ROSCOE
Okay, Mr. Finley. I'll need to
take a full medical history and get
a sperm sample.

KENNETH FINLEY
Of course.

JAY ROSCOE
Any sexually transmitted diseases?

KENNETH FINLEY
God -- no. I've never even -- I
mean, no.

JAY ROSCOE
We'll test for that. How about
your family? Any history of heart
disease or cancer?

KENNETH FINLEY
No.

JAY ROSCOE
Parents alive or dead?

Beat. This is painful for Kenneth.

KENNETH FINLEY
My mom's alive -- my dad, uh, died
when I was nineteen.

JAY ROSCOE
Sorry to hear it. How'd he die?

KENNETH FINLEY
Uh, I'd -- rather not say.

JAY ROSCOE
Was it an illness?

KENNETH FINLEY
No.

Beat. Jay hands Kenneth a plastic specimen cup.

JAY ROSCOE
Okay. The bathroom's down the
hall.

KENNETH FINLEY
Oh. Right. Okay. Thanks.

JAY ROSCOE

Do you need a video or a magazine?

KENNETH FINLEY

No, I, uh, I have an -- image --
(points to his head)
I'm good.

He takes the specimen cup, looking self-conscious.

CUT TO:

INT. DEN, KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

Dawn Barbuso sits in front of her computer. She's putting on makeup, getting ready for her video "date."

TITLE CARD: DAWN BARBUSO, "THE PUNK"

CUT TO:

EXT. COURTYARD, GREENBELT HIGH SCHOOL - DAY (2000)

Dawn hangs with the stoners and outcasts in the courtyard. The Falcon sits next to her. *Hello Operator*, by the White Stripes is playing on a boombox nearby.

*
*

THE FALCON

(pointing)
Dude, ten o'clock -- he's your
lover.

The camera turns, finds a FAT FRESHMAN BOY tugging at his wedgie, oblivious to the fact that he's in public.

DAWN BARBUSO

You got me. We screwed all day
yesterday. This morning I found
half a Pop Tart in my underwear.
(spots someone)
Oooh -- I think I see *your* lover.

She points to a pizza-faced GIRL with frizzy hair across the courtyard. The girl is picking lunch out her braces.

THE FALCON

Yeah, she likes it when I call her
Brillo in bed. I'm still too
scared to let her go down on me
though.

DAWN BARBUSO

(beat)
What class are we missing?

THE FALCON

Who remembers?

(beat)

Hold on. Dawn's ultimate lover at
nine o'clock.

We see that he's pointing at Kenneth Finley, who has stopped in the courtyard and is trying to get the PRICE TAG off the back of his new pants. He turns, trying to get a better look at it, ends up chasing his tail like a dog.

We FIND Dawn. She looks slightly sick.

THE FALCON (CONT'D)

What?

DAWN BARBUSO

We, uh, we've actually been dating
for about three weeks. His name is
Kenneth.

THE FALCON

Seriously?

DAWN BARBUSO

He's sweet. Not my usual alpha
loser, you know?

In the courtyard, Kenneth finally gets the tag off. He holds it up triumphantly.

THE FALCON

Your parents must be proud.

Off Dawn: rethinking her new boyfriend.

CUT TO:

ANGLE ON COMPUTER

We see Dawn, as captured by the computer's camera. The screen says *initiating video chat*. Dawn talks to us as she "puts on her face."

DAWN BARBUSO

Yeah, we got married last year. I
was as surprised as anybody else.
I never saw myself as the army wife
type, you know? Not to mention a
jock.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

So, what happened? You and Rolly traveled in pretty different circles in high school.

DAWN BARBUSO

Nothing happened, really. He was back here on leave, and he came into the diner where I worked. We just started talking. You know, people are just so stupid in high school. It's all about labels. Jock, punk, nerd. But now -- I just love him to death. And I worry, like, all the time.
(touches her belly)
It can't be good for the baby.

Dawn puts on lipstick, adjusts her cleavage. We hear the CHIME as the video chat begins.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

There's my girl.

ANGLE ON THE SCREEN

We see Rolly Marks, 28, with a crew cut, wearing desert fatigues. Our footage of this scene is all from Dawn's POV, with Rolly visible onscreen speaking directly into his web camera. *
*
*

ROLLY MARKS

Hey, babe. You look amazing.

DAWN BARBUSO

I look fat and tired. Tell me you're being careful.

ROLLY MARKS

I promise. How's the peanut?

Dawn touches her rounded belly.

DAWN BARBUSO

He likes Mexican food.

ROLLY MARKS

Well, I've been showing everybody the sonogram picture you sent.

DAWN BARBUSO

I know. Isn't she beautiful? Kenneth put it up on the fridge.

Rolly doesn't like the idea of Dawn living with Kenneth. *

ROLLY MARKS *

I really wish you'd move in with
Anders and Jackie. I hate that you
have to stay with a stranger. *

DAWN BARBUSO *

Kenneth's not a stranger. We used
to date. *

ROLLY MARKS *

And that's better how? *

DAWN BARBUSO *

Baby, Kenneth's harmless. Besides,
Anders and Jackie don't want me. *

ROLLY MARKS *

He's my best friend. *

DAWN BARBUSO *

Yeah, but she's a stuck-up bitch,
so they kind of cancel each other
out. Besides, I'm happy here. *

Rolly looks at his wife. We see how hard it is for him to be
so far away, to not be able to provide for her. *

ROLLY MARKS

I miss you.

DAWN BARBUSO

Oh, baby. I miss you too, so much.

ROLLY MARKS

(looks around)
Show me something.

DAWN BARBUSO

(coy)
What do you want to see?

ROLLY MARKS

You know. Come on, babe. It's
been ten months. I'm dying here.

Dawn checks to make sure Kenneth isn't nearby. She turns to
the camera.

DAWN BARBUSO

Don't look.

She pulls down her top, flashing her breasts. *

ROLLY MARKS

(stunned)

Wow. They really get big when
you're pregnant, huh?

*

In the background we see Kenneth appear in the doorway. He
sees Dawn's breasts and freezes like a deer in the
headlights. Then he sees us watching, turns and walks
straight into the doorjam. Oblivious, Dawn pulls her top up.

*

DAWN BARBUSO

You have no idea.

ROLLY MARKS

Three more months.

DAWN BARBUSO

I can't wait.

Off screen somebody says something to Rolly.

ROLLY MARKS

I gotta go, babe. Love you.

DAWN BARBUSO

I --

The chat ends, leaving Dawn talking to a blank screen.

DAWN BARBUSO (CONT'D)

--love you too.

Dawn sits for a moment staring at the screen. We see how
hard it is for her living with the knowledge that her husband
could be killed at any moment.

*

CUT TO:

*

EXT. STREET, HERAT, AFGHANISTAN - DAY (PRESENT)

EMBEDDED ABC NEWS FOOTAGE -- Rolly Marks and his unit are on
patrol. This is not footage our documentary crew shot.
Rather it is footage culled from a news report. Rolly has
the sonogram photo out. He's showing PRIVATE HARPER, 20.

*

*

*

ROLLY MARKS

A little girl.

PRIVATE HARPER

I don't know, dude. That looks
like a penis to me.

ROLLY MARKS

That's the umbilical cord.

TITLE CARD: ROLLY MARKS "THE JOCK" *

REWIND *

To the year 2000. We hear *Hate to Say I Told You So*, by the Hives. The war reverses itself; troops withdraw from Iraq, bombs return to their hangars. *

CUT TO: *

EXT. ANDERS' HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - DAY(2000) *

Anders Holt, 18, and Rolly Marks, 18, stand on the back lawn chipping golf balls into Anders' pool. *

JUMP AHEAD: Anders and Rolly, poolside, sit in lounge chairs, facing the camera. *

ROLLY MARKS
How long have we been friends? *

ANDERS HOLT
Second grade. *

ROLLY MARKS
Second grade. When this loser moved in next door. *

HOME MOVIES of the two as boys (9, 10, 11, 12), an inseparable duo. We see them in their costumes for Halloween, playing ball, fake wrestling, putting on plays. *

As we watch, Rolly and Anders get older, until the last footage is of the boys dressed in tuxedos for prom. Anders pins a corsage to Brenda Serrano's dress. The couple and Rolly pose with his DATE. *

BACK to the INTERVIEW. *

ROLLY MARKS (CONT'D)
We've got it all figured out though. *

ANDERS HOLT
We'll get homes next door to each other. *

ROLLY MARKS
This guy will marry Brenda -- who cares what his father thinks? - and I'll marry -- someone. And our wives will be friends. *

ANDERS HOLT
Our kids'll play together, just
like we did.

ROLLY MARKS
It's gonna be great.

ANDERS HOLT
Amazing.

They do a special handshake, ending with a "blow up."

CUT TO

EXT. NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY - DAY (2000)

Brick buildings, fall colors.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)
In his freshman year at
Northwestern University, Rolly
Marks played varsity football,
baseball and basketball.

We see FOOTAGE of a college football game, Northwestern in
purple and white. Rolly throws a touchdown pass.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)
By mid-season he was the starting
quarterback for the Wildcats, and
already being scouted by the NFL.

CUT TO:

AN AERIAL SHOT of the WORLD TRADE CENTER (2001)

On a beautiful fall morning. The towers sparkle in the sun.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)
Then on September 11, 2001 the
world changed.

STILL PHOTOS from 9-11, ending on HUNDREDS of FLYERS mounted
around downtown NYC, photos of missing loved ones who will
never come home.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)
(beat)
Three days later, Rolly quit
college and joined the army.

CUT TO:

ABC NEWS EMBEDDED FOOTAGE (2001)

Rolly Marks' army unit, rides in the back of a TROOP TRANSPORT. This is Rolly's first combat mission. The camera captures the look of fear and determination on Rolly's face. The REPORTER has to yell over the engine noise.

REPORTER
Are you ready?

ROLLY MARKS
What?

REPORTER
(yelling)
I said, are you ready for this?

ROLLY MARKS
(yelling)
Yes, sir. Locked and loaded.
We're here to win, sir. Hoo-ah.

RANGERS
Hoo-ah!

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, HERAT, AFGHANISTAN - DAY(PRESENT)

Rolly's unit approaches a ramshackle house. Rolly is a lieutenant now, older, wiser. He puts away the photo.

ROLLY MARKS
Okay, stay frosty. We've had reports of insurgents in the neighborhood. Intel wants us to check out this house.

He signals to his men to take positions. Two soldiers approach the front door.

Suddenly, the camera catches MOTION, as an AFGHANI MAN is seen running from the back of the house. Rolly catches it.

ROLLY MARKS (CONT'D)
(to his men)
Fall back!

But it's too late. A BOMB GOES OFF. Rolly and his men scramble for cover, as automatic weapons fire rains down on them.

END OF ACT THREE

ACT FOUR

EXT. STREET, HERAT, AFGHANISTAN - DAY (PRESENT)

Rolly's unit is pinned down. Automatic weapon's fire flies. *
Rolly is on the radio.

ROLLY MARKS

Enemy fire. Repeat, we are under
enemy fire. Have taken wounded.
Requesting reenforcements.
(to his men)
Suppressing fire!

The Rangers lay down suppressing fire. Rolly and another
SOLDIER grab their wounded BUDDY and make a run for it. The
camera chases them.

It is a long run, bullets whizzing past. Finally, Rolly and
his men reach a safe distance, set the wounded soldier down.
They drop behind some concrete rubble.

We HOLD ON ROLLY, breathing hard. He is clearly thinking
about how close he just came to death.

As we watch he takes the SONOGRAM PHOTO of his unborn
daughter out of his jacket, looks at it.

CUT TO:

INT. KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

It is Dawn's BABY SHOWER. Food and drinks have been laid
out. Dawn is there with SEVEN other WOMEN, all standing,
chatting. Dawn talks to FANNY COLE, 32.

FANNY COLE

Wow. Your boobs are huge.

DAWN BARBUSO

I know. I'm like an M cup now.

FANNY COLE

(serious)

How's Rolly?

DAWN BARBUSO

He's good.

FANNY COLE

Where is he now? Iraq?

DAWN BARBUSO

No. Afghanistan -- Herat? It's,
like, western Afghanistan, near
Iran.

FANNY COLE

Sounds really dangerous over there.
I don't know how you do it.

For a moment Dawn looks like she might cry. Then Caroline Chung knocks and enters. She is carrying a big box with a bow.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Hello?

There are hugs and kisses all around. Caroline hugs Dawn.

CAROLINE CHUNG (CONT'D)

(to Dawn)

Wow. You're getting close.

DAWN BARBUSO

Three more months. We definitely
need to go out sometime. I need
parenting tips.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Well, say goodbye to sleep, first
of all.

She looks around for somebody.

CAROLINE CHUNG (CONT'D)

(disappointed)

Where's Kenneth?

DAWN BARBUSO

I don't know. He was supposed to
be here.

The Falcon is standing over the dip. He's holding a beer and looking uncomfortable. Caroline sees him.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Falcon?

THE FALCON

She said I wouldn't be the only
guy.

CAROLINE CHUNG

What are you doing here? I thought
you moved to New York.

THE FALCON

I'm spinning tonight at the Ghost Room.

(beat)

I'm serious, other men were supposed to be here.

Caroline studies The Falcon, considering.

CAROLINE CHUNG

(beat, trying to be light)

So, have you talked to Steven lately?

THE FALCON

Steven?

CAROLINE CHUNG

Yeah, he said he was coming to town, but I haven't heard from him. You guys are still friends, right?

THE FALCON

Yeah, but --

(turns)

-- look, I don't want to get in the middle of you guys. Your thing.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Our -- thing?

THE FALCON

The whole -- baby thing.

*

Caroline looks around for the camera. We are watching from a distance. She leans in close to The Falcon, talking quietly, but we can still hear her.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Listen to me, little man. I have a nine-year-old boy who thinks he's meeting his daddy this week. So if you want to walk out of here with your balls, you will call Steven Foster on the phone right now and tell him to get his ass on an airplane tonight. Do you hear me?

The Falcon nods. Now he really wishes he hadn't come to the shower. Behind them, Dawn picks up her glass, taps a spoon against it to get everybody's attention.

DAWN BARBUSO

Hi. I just wanted to thank everybody for coming. Especially thank you Sandy, who set this whole thing up.

People clap.

DAWN BARBUSO (CONT'D)

It's -- you know, three more months. I can't sleep on my back and I have to pee every five minutes, but -- I'm excited. And Rolly's excited, and if he were here --

(tries to collect herself)

I know he would --

It's too much for her. She starts to cry. Caroline comes over and hugs her.

CAROLINE CHUNG

It's okay.

DAWN BARBUSO

(panicking)

No. How do you do this? Raise a kid by yourself? A baby. It's too hard.

Caroline has been in this place herself. She tells Dawn what she wishes someone had told her.

CAROLINE CHUNG

You do it cause it has to be done. But you hope you won't have to do it alone forever.

Beat. Dawn nods, calming down. But we see from Caroline's face that she's losing that hope.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, JOYCE FOSTER'S HOUSE - DAY (PRESENT)

Steven is drinking coffee at the kitchen table. His mother, JOYCE, is cooking eggs.

JOYCE FOSTER

So? Are you going to look for a job?

STEVEN FOSTER *
I told you, I don't know how long *
I'm staying. *

JOYCE FOSTER *
You should call your friend *
Kenneth. He teaches at the *
elementary school. Teacher. Now *
that's a respectable career. *

STEVEN FOSTER *
We're not really friends anymore. *

JOYCE FOSTER *
Why not? *

Beat. Steven doesn't want to get into it. *

JOYCE FOSTER (CONT'D) *
(beat, cooking) *
Well, your father would like it if *
you visited. *

Steven glances at the camera. *

STEVEN FOSTER *
Mom. *

JOYCE FOSTER *
What? It's only about a ninety *
minute drive. You could be there *
by lunch. *

STEVEN FOSTER *
I'm not -- that's not why I came. *

JOYCE FOSTER *
Well, what are you going to do? *
Hate him for the rest of your life? *

Steven doesn't respond. There is clearly something weighing *
heavily on his mind. *

STEVEN FOSTER *
Mom, do you think I'd be a good *
father? *

Joyce turns on him, instantly suspicious. *

JOYCE FOSTER *
What's going on? *

Steven glances at the camera. *

STEVEN FOSTER
Nothing. I'm just saying --
hypothetically?

JOYCE FOSTER
Hypothetically? There's no such
thing as a hypothetical child.

STEVEN FOSTER
Forget it.

Beat. His mother flips the eggs.

JOYCE FOSTER
You don't have a job.

STEVEN FOSTER
I have a job.

JOYCE FOSTER
A real job -- with a future. You
were such a smart kid. And now you
live in a hut. Promise me you
won't have children until *after* you
grow up.

Off Steven: we can see this resonate. She's right. He's in
no position to be a father to anyone.

JOYCE FOSTER (CONT'D)
And call Kenneth. You're too
isolated. Whatever happened, just -
- get over it.

Off Steven: it's not that easy.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

Kenneth is riding his bike. His phone rings. He answers.

KENNETH FINLEY
Hi, it's Kenneth.
(beat)
Oh, sure. How are you?

He listens. As he does, his face falls.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)
You're sure.
(beat, listening)
Okay. Uh, thanks.

He hangs up. We watch as he tries to process what just happened.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

Kenneth?

KENNETH FINLEY

Uh, that was the sperm bank. It turns out I'm, uh, infertile. I can't -- I can't have kids.

We watch as the true weight of this hits him.

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT, WASHINGTON, D.C. - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Brenda sits alone at a table. She is dressed for a date. She looks around nervously. From her face we can tell she's thinking this was a bad idea. She stands, grabs her coat, just as her BLIND DATE, MICKEY COOPER, 32, approaches.

Mickey is not a stud. He's the kind of guy your cousin sets you up with.

MICKEY COOPER

Brenda?

BRENDA SERRANO

(busted)

Mickey?

MICKEY COOPER

Yeah, are you -- were you leaving?

BRENDA SERRANO

(lying)

No, I just -- I was going outside for a cigarette.

MICKEY COOPER

Oh. You're a smoker?

Brenda realizes she doesn't have an endgame to this lie.

BRENDA SERRANO

No. You caught me. I was leaving.

She sees his face fall, feels bad.

BRENDA SERRANO (CONT'D)

But let's, let's sit down.

Mickey glances at the camera.

MICKEY COOPER
We don't, you know -- have to.

BRENDA SERRANO
No -- I just -- there was a work
thing, but it can wait.

They sit, off to a bad start. Beat. They look at each other
uncomfortably.

MICKEY COOPER
(re: camera crew)
So, what's with the --

BRENDA SERRANO
Oh, it's -- like a documentary
about my high school class -- a
where are they now kind of thing.

MICKEY COOPER
Cool. Cool. I don't watch a lot
of TV.

BRENDA SERRANO
Yeah. Me either. You know --
work.

MICKEY COOPER
Yeah, so -- you do a lot of these?
Blind dates?

BRENDA SERRANO
Me? No. I don't really -- date.

Mickey takes an olive from a bowl on the table, pops it in
his mouth.

MICKEY COOPER
I hear you. I had a coffee date
with a cackler last week.

As he's talking Mickey spits the olive pit into his hand,
puts it on the table. Brenda stares at the pit, as it
glistens black against the white table cloth.

MICKEY COOPER (CONT'D)
You know, like the Wicked Witch of
the West. *I'll get you my pretty
and your little dog, too.* I mean,
wow, you know? I tried not to make
her laugh, but -- I'm just
naturally funny.

BRENDA SERRANO
(trying to be supportive)
Yeah.

Mickey chews another olive, puts the pit next to the first.

MICKEY COOPER
So here's the deal with me. I'm a lawyer -- corporate. I like musicals and movies with Catherine Zeta Jones. I drive a Prius, recycle. I go to the gym, but I'm not, you know, a fanatic about it. I like to read -- but not books, magazines, sometimes a newspaper. And, honestly, I have a small penis, but I know how to use it.

*

BRENDA SERRANO
(stunned)
Wow, that's --

Mickey lays a third olive pit next to the other two.

MICKEY COOPER
What about you?

Beat. Brenda thinks about spending the next ninety minutes of her life with this guy. She can't do it.

BRENDA SERRANO
Actually, you know what? I'm gonna --

She stands and gets her coat.

MICKEY COOPER
(realizing)
Oh, well, uh --

He starts to stand awkwardly.

BRENDA SERRANO
No, don't get up. This work thing, sorry. It was really nice to meet you.

MICKEY COOPER
Yeah, uh --

Brenda flees.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Brenda walks away from the restaurant. She looks freaked out, a little pissed off at herself for venturing back into the dating world.

CUT TO:

EXT. ZILKER PARK, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (MAY 2000)

It's after the prom. Anders Holt, 18, in his tuxedo, lies on the hood of his car next to Brenda Serrano, 18, in her Prom Dress. *Smooth*, by Santana and Rob Thomas is playing in the car. *

ANDERS HOLT

I'm serious.
 (whispers, aware of the camera)
 Run away with me. We'll go to California, get married.
 (beat)
 I love you.

Their heads are together. The camera is a good distance away and they don't think we can hear them.

BRENDA SERRANO

(quietly)
 Why do we have to run away to be together?

ANDERS HOLT

We just -- you know my dad. But I promise, if we get married, you know, five or ten years from now, he'll come around.

BRENDA SERRANO

(tired of this)
 Five or ten years? Why don't you just say it -- your dad doesn't think I'm good enough for you because I'm Mexican.

ANDERS HOLT

(defensive)
 That's -- It's not like that. My dad just wants what's best for me.

Brenda nods, clear now about where she stands. Her heart breaks, but she's too proud to show Anders how much it hurts.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Steven is walking. He's on the phone.

THE FALCON (O.S.)

Dude, Caroline is pissed. You have to go see the kid.

Steven crosses the street, heading for a bar.

STEVEN FOSTER

No. I know. I'm gonna. But -- I don't know, I think I may go see my dad first. I think that's what's --

CAROLINE CHUNG (O.S.)

Steven?

Steven turns. Caroline Chung is standing there with her son, Tom. She's holding a pizza box.

STEVEN FOSTER

(busted, hanging up)
Oh, hey.

CAROLINE CHUNG

(pissed)
You're here?

STEVEN FOSTER

I just -- got in today. Wow, is this the --
(to Tom)
hey, slugger. I'm -- your dad, I guess.

CAROLINE CHUNG

I can't believe you're here and you didn't call.

STEVEN FOSTER

Yeah. It's actually kind of -- but we should totally -- I mean, let's do something -- not now I have a -- a thing.

(he's blowing it)

But -- tomorrow could be -- whadya say, champ? We could see a movie or I could teach you to be a ninja. It'll be fun.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Steven.

STEVEN FOSTER
What? Is that racist?

Caroline stares at him in disbelief.

CAROLINE CHUNG
You've really changed. You know
that? You used to be --

Caroline stops, aware of the camera. She doesn't want to do
this on film. She grabs Tom's hand.

CAROLINE CHUNG (CONT'D)
Come on, baby. We're leaving.

They walk away. Steven doesn't know what to do.

STEVEN FOSTER
Wait! Please.
(when they don't stop)
I'll call you tomorrow.

He stands for a moment, shaken by how badly that went. We
see the warring impulses on Steven's face. Part of him wants
to run back to Hawaii. Another part wants to grow up. It's
unclear which part will win.

END OF ACT FOUR

ACT FIVE

EXT. CEMETERY, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (PRESENT)

Kenneth approaches a grave site. He lays some flowers down. We see that it's his FATHER'S GRAVE. Kenneth stands there, lost in thought.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Kenneth sits at the bar. There is an empty glass in front of him. Kenneth is a little drunk, and clearly dejected. He stares past the camera, lost in thought. The BARTENDER puts another drink in front of Kenneth.

KENNETH FINLEY

Thank you. Thank you, sir. That's
-- you're very kind. It's a big
day for me. Big day.

*
*

BARTENDER

(reluctantly)
Why's that?

*
*
*

KENNETH FINLEY

Because today I learned I can't
have children.

*
*
*

The bartender doesn't know what to say. He pushes Kenneth's money back to him.

*
*

BARTENDER

That's rough. This one's on me.

*
*

KENNETH FINLEY

Thank you. You're -- very kind.

*
*

Kenneth studies his drink. There is a moment where it seems like Kenneth may finally succumb to all the disappointment he has had in the last ten years. But then, slowly, he starts nodding, working himself out of his funk.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

No. You know what? This is good.
It's good. Wow. What a downer I
am, huh? Whew. Sorry. I just got
a little --

(shakes it off)

No. This is great actually -- not
being able to have kids -- because
now I can really focus on my
students, really be there for them.

(MORE)

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

You know?
 (beat)
 Okay. Good.
 (raises his glass)
 Cheers.

Steven Foster walks in. He has just had his run-in with Caroline.

STEVEN FOSTER

(calling to bartender)
 I'm gonna need about six ounces of
 tequila. Stat.

Kenneth and Steven recognize each other. All Kenneth's positivity deflates, punctured by fear and, surprisingly, anger.

STEVEN FOSTER (CONT'D)

(fuck)
 Oh. Hey. I, uh ...

KENNETH FINLEY

You.

Kenneth stands.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

This is all your fault!

Kenneth PUNCHES Steven. Not hard, not expertly, but hits him nonetheless. Steven staggers back. Kenneth grabs his bicycle helmet and runs out.

Off Steven, stunned.

TITLE CARD: STEVEN FOSTER, "THE OVERACHIEVER"

CUT TO:

GROUP INTERVIEW, HIGH SCHOOL, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (2000)

Our teenage documentary subjects are gathered together. We focus on Steven, 18. He is wearing a suit.

STEVEN FOSTER

I just think life is what you make
 of it, you know? Your attitude.
 My dad always says there's nothing
 in life you can't achieve through
 hard work. And I agree. It's
 about setting a goal and going for
 it. You know?

We hold on his face.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

In Steven's freshman year at Brown University he was in the top of his class. He became an editor at the school paper and ran for student government. Then, on October 16th, 2001 ...

CUT TO:

ABC NEWS ANCHOR

There is a graphic next to him. It is the ENRON LOGO.

ABC NEWS ANCHOR

New allegations and new arrests today in the case against the Texas energy giant Enron.

We see News Footage of the PERP WALK, as Enron executives are led into the courthouse in handcuffs. Among them are KEN LAY, JEFFREY SKILLING and Steven's FATHER.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

Steven's father had been a top executive at Enron. He was arrested and charged with seventeen counts of fraud.

We see a STILL PHOTO from this period, of Steven on campus at Brown. He is sitting on the lawn as kids play and laugh around him. We PUSH IN on the photograph and see Steven on his phone, caught in mid-argument. There is a look of desperation on his face.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

As a result of his father's arrest, all of the family's assets were frozen. Steven was forced to drop out of school.

CUT TO:

NETWORK NEWS ANCHOR (2001)

Next to his head is the logo for Enron.

NEWS ANCHOR

More heartbreaking financial news today for employees of the Enron Company.

News Footage of Congressional Hearings. Angry pensioners tell their stories.

NEWS ANCHOR (CONT'D)

It appears that thousands of Americans have lost their retirement savings in the company's collapse.

CUT TO:

EXT. CEMETERY, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (2001)

We see a Home Movie of Kenneth standing with his mother at his father's funeral.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

But Steven was not the only student from Greenbelt High School devastated by the Enron scandal.

The coffin is lowered into the ground.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

Three days before Steven's father was convicted in a Federal Court, Kenneth's father's shot himself. Enron's collapse had wiped him out.

CUT TO:

STEVEN AND KENNETH MONTAGE

-- FOOTAGE of Steven, 18, and Kenneth, 18, in Steven's DEN playing video games. *

-- FOOTAGE of Kenneth and Steven studying together in the library. *

-- STILL PHOTO of Steven and Kenneth at graduation. They have their arms around each other, and are grinning.

FILMMAKER (V.O.)

Kenneth never spoke to Steven again.

CUT TO:

AN ARTIST RENDERING

Of a COURTROOM. Steven's Father stands next to his lawyer. Behind him we see a drawing of Steven and his mother.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

On October 3rd, 2004, Steven's father was sentenced to six years in prison. The next day Steven bought a plane ticket to Hawaii.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH, HAWAII - DAY (PRESENT)

Waves crash against the pristine beach. It's Paradise.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Steven sits in the booth, lost in thought. He looks spooked. We see that this "freedom" is a fantasy. Steven is a man on the run, a man who doesn't want to face the truth about himself, who won't let other people get close in case they see him for who he really is. Deep down, Steven Foster is afraid to be a father because he's afraid to be *his father*.

FILMMAKER (O.S.)

Steven. What happened to Kenneth's dad -- it wasn't your fault. You know that right?

Steven won't look at us. It's clear he's carried around this weight for years, the feeling that his whole privileged childhood came at the expense of thousands of innocent people. The feeling that Steven is somehow complicit in the suffering his dad caused. After all, who pays for the sins of fathers if not their children?

For a moment Steven looks like he'll open up, but then --

JACKIE FOX (O.S.)

Steven?

Steven looks up. Jackie is standing there, dressed to kill. She's with three GIRLFRIENDS.

JACKIE FOX (CONT'D)

Wow. Twice in one day. Must be fate.

STEVEN FOSTER

Uh.

JACKIE FOX

(to her friends)

I'll catch up.

The friends move on. Steven stands awkwardly, looking like a trapped animal.

JACKIE FOX (CONT'D)
So -- how are you?

STEVEN FOSTER
Good, you know.

Jackie glances at the camera, not happy that it's there.

JACKIE FOX
(to Steven)
Come on, let's get a drink.

She leads Steven toward the bar. We start to follow, but Jackie turns to the camera.

JACKIE FOX (CONT'D)
Get lost. I'm serious.

We stop, and watch as Steven and Jackie fade into the crowd.

CUT TO:

INT. KENNETH'S HOUSE - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Kenneth enters, carrying his bicycle helmet. He looks utterly dejected. Then he notices that the living room is full of wrapping paper and baby things. Dawn is cleaning up.

DAWN BARBUSO
There you are. You missed the baby shower.

KENNETH FINLEY
(still distracted)
Sorry, I --

DAWN BARBUSO
Where were you? I thought you were coming?

KENNETH FINLEY
I know. I'm sorry. It's -- you look great. Hold on. I got you something.

He goes to the cabinet, takes out a wrapped gift. Dawn opens it. It's a baby Bjorn.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)
 It's a Bjorn, so you can wear the
 baby around. It helps promote
 intimacy.

Dawn hands it to Kenneth.

DAWN BARBUSO
 Try it on.

KENNETH FINLEY
 No. I --

DAWN BARBUSO
 Come on. Try it on.

She helps him put on the Bjorn, then slips a life-like baby doll inside against Kenneth's chest.

DAWN BARBUSO (CONT'D)
 How does it feel?

This is all too much for Kenneth. Dawn sees it, touches his shoulder.

DAWN BARBUSO (CONT'D)
 Thanks for taking care of me. I'm
 sorry I couldn't give you what you
 wanted.

KENNETH FINLEY
 Sure. No problem.

She looks him in the eye, forcing a real connection.

DAWN BARBUSO
 No. I mean it.

Kenneth nods.

DAWN BARBUSO (CONT'D)
 Besides, you better get used to
 wearing that, Uncle Kenneth.

The word floors him.

KENNETH FINLEY
 Uncle?

DAWN BARBUSO
 You're part of this family now,
 mister. Don't try to weasel out of
 it.

KENNETH FINLEY

No. I mean, I won't.

For a second Kenneth looks like he might cry, but then a wave of happiness hits him. He will be Uncle Kenneth. For the first time since we've met Kenneth he looks truly thrilled.

There's a knock at the door. Kenneth is reluctant to end this moment. Another knock. Kenneth takes off the Bjorn, opens the door.

Caroline and Tom Chung are standing there. Caroline is clearly upset.

KENNETH FINLEY (CONT'D)

Caroline. I --

Caroline sees the camera. The last thing she wants is to be on film right now.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Sorry -- I didn't know where else to go.

KENNETH FINLEY

No. Please. Come in. Hey, Tommy. I've got some brownies. You want a brownie?

Caroline sees Dawn.

CAROLINE CHUNG

Sorry.

Dawn sees how upset Caroline is.

DAWN BARBUSO

No problem. We were just finishing up. Hey, buddy, I was gonna watch a movie. You wanna hang with me and eat your brownie?

CAROLINE CHUNG

You don't have to do that.

DAWN BARBUSO

Please. I'm gonna have one of these in three months. I need the practice.

She leads Tom into the other room. Caroline glances at the camera.

KENNETH FINLEY
What's wrong?

CAROLINE CHUNG
Could we --

Kenneth realizes she wants privacy.

KENNETH FINLEY
Sure.
(to camera crew)
Sorry, but -- give us a minute.

Kenneth grabs his coat. He and Caroline go outside.

CUT TO:

INT. BRENDA SERRANO'S OFFICE, WASHINGTON D.C. - NIGHT
(PRESENT)

Brenda is at her desk, working. Ben Watts comes in.

BEN WATTS
What happened? Mickey said you
walked out.

BRENDA SERRANO
I -- you know, he was -- sweet, but
I'm not really -- I'm not gonna
date right now. It's, you know,
with work, and -- Oh, but just FYI,
watching that man eat is not
pretty.

BEN WATTS
Yeah. You should see him with a
hot dog.

Brenda's phone rings. She answers.

BRENDA SERRANO
Hello.
(listening)
Dad, slow down. What happened?
(listening)
Oh my God. Okay, don't move. I'm
coming.

She hangs up, gets up, grabs her coat.

BEN WATTS
What is it?

She's frantic. The camera tries to keep her in frame.

BRENDA SERRANO

My mom had a stroke. I have to go.

The camera is in Brenda's way.

BRENDA SERRANO (CONT'D)

Get that thing out of my face.

She pushes her way past, exits. We watch her leave.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

We are spying on Steven and Jackie through the front window. They are sitting close together, talking.

JACKIE HOLT

He's a nice guy. He is. I guess --
I don't know -- maybe we got
married too young, you know? You
were smart. You're out there
seeing the world -- alone, no ties,
nothing to hold you down.

We zoom in on Steven's face. Jackie's right. Steven has no ties, no bonds of any kind. It is the life he chose, but instead of being happy he feels empty. He can't stop thinking about his run-in with Caroline and Tom.

STEVEN FOSTER

You know what. I've gotta -- sorry
-- I need to make a phone call.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - SAME TIME

Caroline and Kenneth are deep in conversation. We watch from a distance. Caroline's phone rings. She looks at the caller ID, doesn't answer.

CUT TO:

INT. BAR - MOMENTS LATER (PRESENT)

Steven steps out, holding the phone to his ear. We spy on him from a distance, zooming in.

CAROLINE CHUNG (O.S.)

(voicemail)

This is Caroline. I'm not
available right now. Please leave
a message.

STEVEN FOSTER

(after the beep)

Uh, yeah, hey, Caroline, it's me.
Steven. Foster. I just -- I feel
bad about before -- what happened.
He's a cute kid. Really special.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - SAME TIME

Caroline and Kenneth are still talking. Suddenly, Caroline
hugs Kenneth. He doesn't know what to do.

STEVEN FOSTER (O.S.)

You know, I had a really -- crappy
dad and -- I'm not making excuses.
I'm just saying -- I've got my own --
- stuff to deal with -- but I wanna
make this work, you know --

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET, AUSTIN, TX - SAME TIME

Steven is becoming emotional.

STEVEN FOSTER

-- I wanna be some kind of father,
so I thought -- maybe tomorrow we
could do something -- go to the zoo
or the park or something. That'd
be -- awesome. Really. Okay.
Call me back.

He hangs up, stands for a moment, thinking. Jackie sticks
her head out.

JACKIE HOLT

Hey, you're coming back, right? I
didn't scare you away?

Steven looks at her. Jackie's vulnerability is obvious. Now
that she's opened herself up to him he can't abandon her.
And yet, Steven has worked so hard to separate himself from
other people, to build a wall, but now that he's back he
realizes how hard it will be to keep his distance.

STEVEN FOSTER

Not at all. I'll be right in.

She smiles, goes back inside. Steven takes a deep breath,
follows.

MUSIC UP: *People, Turn Around*, by Delta Spirit

*

CUT TO:

INT. AIRPORT, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

*

Brenda Serrano gets off the plane in Austin. She looks around, spooked to be back, not just because of her mother, but because of what else waits for her here.

*

*

*

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN, ANDER'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Anders cooks an elaborate meal. But then we see the clock and realize it's midnight. Where is Jackie?

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER

CUT TO:

INT. BAR, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

We spy on Jackie and Steven as they dance. REVEAL: The Falcon is on the stage working the turntables.

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER

CUT TO:

INT. KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

A very pregnant Dawn sits on the sofa, watching TV with 8-year-old Tom Chung. As Tom watches TV she watches him. She is three months from giving birth, and her man is 5,000 miles away in the middle of a war.

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER

CUT TO:

EXT. AFGHANISTAN - DAY (PRESENT)

Rolly sits on the back on a jeep, looking at a PHOTO of himself and Dawn. The sun is coming up, and he's counting the hours until he goes home.

CUT TO:

EXT. KENNETH'S HOUSE, AUSTIN, TX - NIGHT (PRESENT)

Kenneth and Caroline sit side by side under the stars. She puts her head on his shoulder.

MUSIC CONTINUES OVER

CUT TO:

GROUP INTERVIEW, HIGH SCHOOL, AUSTIN, TX - DAY (2000)

We see all of our subjects as they pose for the camera. They are 18 years old, with their whole lives ahead of them. The twelve teenagers have no idea what the future will bring, the victories and defeats. We end on their hopeful faces.

END OF PILOT

CHARACTERS

Steven Foster – “The Overachiever”

In high school STEVEN was destined for greatness. But something happened along the way, and when we find him as an adult, he has dropped out of society and is living in Hawaii.

High School

- Friends with KENNETH FINLEY
- Friends with THE FALCON
- Slept with CAROLINE CHUNG on prom night.

Today

- STEVEN learns he is the *father* of CAROLINE CHUNG’s 9-year-old son, Tom.
 - Hasn’t spoken to KENNETH FINLEY in 9 years. The reasons are shrouded in mystery.
 - Still friends with THE FALCON
 - Runs into JACKIE FOX when he returns to Austin. She pursues him
-

Kenneth Finley – “The Nerd”

KENNETH was an awkward teen. To his great delight, DAWN BARBUSO, “The Punk,” agreed to date him. But though it was true love for KENNETH, it was just a passing thing for Dawn.

More than anything, KENNETH wants to start a family.

High School

- Friends with STEVEN FOSTER
- Dated DAWN BARBUSO

Today

- No longer with Dawn, but she lives with him. DAWN is pregnant.
- No longer friends with STEVEN for reasons that are shrouded in mystery.
- Teaches CAROLINE CHUNG’s son in elementary school.
- CAROLINE CHUNG is in love with KENNETH FINLEY.

Dawn Barbuso – “The Punk”

In high school DAWN was an independent spirit (think Juno). She questioned everything, and never really bought into the idea of wanting to “be something” when she grew up.

High School

- Friends with THE FALCON
- Dated KENNETH FINLEY

Today

- Married to ROLLY MARKS, “The Jock”
 - Pregnant
 - Lives with KENNETH FINLEY, who is still in love with her.
 - Still friends with THE FALCON
 - Casual friends with CAROLINE CHUNG. DAWN looks to CAROLINE for mothering advice.
 - Connected to ANDERS HOLT and JACKIE FOX through her husband, ROLLY, but they’re not close friends.
-

Rolly Marks – “The Jock”

In high school ROLLY was the all American athlete. He was destined for sports greatness, but then 9-11 happened. ROLLY joined the army.

High School

- Best friends with ANDERS

Today

- Soldier in Afghanistan
 - Married to BRENDA
 - Still best friends with ANDERS.
-

Brenda Serrano – “The Brain”

In high school, BRENDA had dreams of being a scientist, but when we find her at 28 she works for a congressman in Washington D.C.

BRENDA and ANDERS HOLT were named “Best Couple” in high school. They dated for four years, but broke up because ANDERS’ parents didn’t like BRENDA.

High School

- BRENDA dated ANDERS HOLT. The two were soul mates.
- Friends with THE FALCON.

Today

- Lives in Washington D.C.
 - Single, but still pining for ANDERS
 - Still friends with THE FALCON
-

Anders Holt – “The Rich Kid”

ANDERS is the son of wealthy developers. To this day he is still very much a daddy’s boy. He works for his father.

High School

- Has been best friends with ROLLY MARKS, “The Jock,” since grade school.
- ANDERS dated BRENDA SERRANO in high school.

Today

- Married to JACKIE FOX. “The Beauty Queen.”
-

Jackie Fox – “The Beauty Queen”

JACKIE was the hottest girl in high school. She wanted to be an actress. After high school she went to Hollywood, but after some initial success she washed out and came home.

High School

- Friends with STEVEN FOSTER

Today

- Married to ANDERS HOLT, but unhappy.
- As a result, JACKIE is friends with ROLLY MARKS and DAWN BARBUSO
- Runs into STEVEN FOSTER on the street, pursues him.

Caroline Chung – “Most Likely to Succeed”

CAROLINE was going to be a doctor like her four brothers, but then STEVEN FOSTER knocked her up after prom. Ten years later she has a young son, and runs a boutique hotel.

High School

- Friends with STEVEN FOSTER
- Acquaintances with DAWN BARBUSO
- Acquaintances with KENNETH FINLEY

Today

- Single mother
- Casual friends with DAWN BARBUSO
- KENNETH is her son’s teacher.
- CAROLINE has a huge crush on KENNETH
- Has just called STEVEN FOSTER to tell him he is a father.

