

The Kid Detective

Transcribed By

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FADE IN:

An empty suburban street.

We pass by the houses on the street.

A pair of black heels walking on the sidewalk.

The camera pans up revealing GRACIE. Walking along with her cute outfit and pink backpack.

A car is creeping up alongside Gracie and stopping under the shady oak trees. The breaks squeak.

Gracie waves curiously at the driver as she looks in their direction.

She walks off the left side of the screen and towards the car.

Title Card: The Kid Detective

Cut to:

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

Abe is awoken by a phone call.

He picks it up.

ABE

Hello?

MOM

Are you still in bed?

ABE

(Lying)

No, I've been up for a while.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Abe pisses.

He takes a deep breath and realizes his pee stinks.

He sniffs it.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Abe opens the door while Corey waits outside to use the bathroom.

ABE

Hey man.

Corey acknowledges him and enters the bathroom closing the door behind him.

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

An Ibuprofen bottle.

Abe picks it up and flips it spilling the last 3 capsules into his hand.

He chucks the meds down his throat.

Knocking...

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Abe opens the door wearing a white T-shirt and sweats.

His parents enter.

MOM

We brought you groceries.

DAD

(Disgusted by the messy kitchen)

Jesus...

ABE

I know, it's not me.

The parents sit on the couch and look at Abe and around the room.

ABE

So what's new?

DAD

Your mom's biopsy came back benign.

ABE

Really, cool.

[CONT.]

DAD

You should go, get your moles
checked out too.

ABE

Ya. Ya for sure.

Beat.

DAD

How are your finances?

ABE

They're okay.

DAD

Credit Card?

ABE

Could be worse.

DAD

Cause you know were not bailing
you out again.

ABE

I had a big case last week.

MOM

Really? What was it?

ABE

I'm not supposed to talk about
that stuff.

Beat.

ABE

(Resigned to tell them)

This gay guy wanted me to find out
if this other guy was gay.

MOM

Was he?

ABE

Yea, a little bit.

MOM

Oh. That's nice.

Cut to:

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Abe sits alone at the bar. The bartender looks at him.

BARTENDER

What's on your mind dude?

ABE

Should I be worried if my pee
smells like fish?

BARTENDER

Yea, maybe.

A waitress walks up and talks in Abe's ear.

WAITRESS

You know Rory Beans is in the
back, right?

ABE

(Loudly)

So what?

BARTENDER

Just leave man. We're not gonna
judge you.

Abe sips his beer.

The bartender nods in disappointment and walks away.

Cut to:

EXT. BAR - NIGHT

RORY punches Abe in the face as his friends stand around and watch.

ABE (V.O.)

I used to be loved... I used to be a kid detective. When I was 13, I solved the case of the missing fundraiser money. It was Rory Beans, the neighborhood knucklehead.

Rory continues beating up Abe as he fights back ineffectively.

Cut to:

EXT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

ABE (VO)

In the beginning I ran my trade out of a tree house

BOY (OS)

Somebody stole the basketball magazines from my desk.

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

A young Abe sits behind a desk in his tree house, wearing a full suit and tie and taking notes.

YOUNG ABE

Can you remember what else was in the cubby?

BOY

My pencils, erasers, some peanut butter cups, a photo of my bird.

YOUNG ABE

But... nothing else was taken?

The boy shakes his head.

Abe looks up.

[CONT.]

YOUNG ABE

(Smugly)

It was Clive Cunningham

BOY

How do you know?

YOUNG ABE

He's the only one allergic to
peanuts.

BOY

Wow... Thanks Abe!

INT. THE APPLEBAUM HOUSE - NIGHT

Abe's parents sit on the couch as he sits on the floor all
watching a black and white movie.

ABE (VO)

Whenever we watched movies as a
family, I was always spotting the
bad guy.

YOUNG ABE

It was the bald man!

The TV shows the bald man committing a murder in the movie.
Abe's parents look at each other impressed.
Young Abe wears the same smug look.

INT. THE APPLEBAUM HOUSE - NIGHT

The family is watching another movie on another night.

ABE (VO)

And guess the ending in the second
act...

YOUNG ABE

She poisoned his drink!

Abe's parents take a deep breath a little annoyed now that Abe
guessed the ending again.

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

We scan the walls of young Abe's treehouse, maps and notes drawn with crayon are all over the wall.

GIRL

Seth Berry used to be nice, but
now he's mean! I need you to find
out what happened.

The girl drops 2 quarters into Abe's jar.

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

GIRL #2

Somebody keeps borrowing my
bicycle without asking permission!

She drops 2 quarters into Abe's jar.

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

BOY #2

I found this in the park.

He puts a metal spinning contraption on Abe's desk.

BOY #2

I NEED to know what it is.

He puts 2 quarters into Abe's jar.

INT. TREEHOUSE - DAY

BOY #3

I noticed some blood on my dad's
car. I want YOU to find out what
happened.

YOUNG ABE

Are you sure?

He puts 2 quarters in Abe's jar.

Cut to:

EXT. BOY #3'S HOUSE - DAY

Police are arresting his father, bringing him down the driveway in handcuffs.

Boy #3 looks out the window dejected.

INT. APPLEBAUM HOUSE - NIGHT

MOM

I saw that Constable Clearly was
in the yard again.

YOUNG ABE

He wanted to catch me up on some
of the latest cases.

MOM

Oh that's so cute.

DAD

Son, we want you to know how
impressed we are. I had never seen
a young person take such
initiative for the sake of their
community.

Cut to:

EXT. TREEHOUSE - NIGHT

A man is taking an axe to the tree.

ABE (VO)

I was 12 when someone finally
chopped down my treehouse.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

The town of Willowbrook Est. 1727

ABE (VO)

The town raised enough money to
set me up with a real office, in
the middle of the main street.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

A pair of twin's chat in the waiting room outside Abe's office,
we pan over to the secretary sipping Soda pop at the desk. Her
desk is covered with colored pens, hula girls, and paper
flowers.

ABE (VO) (CONT.)

The mayor's daughter, Gracie, was
my secretary. I used to pay her in
soda pop.

The phone rings.

GRACIE

Abe Applebaum's office. Oh hi
Daddy! He's in with Principal
Erwin, want me to take a message?

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

Somebody stole the cashbox from
the school fundraiser.

YOUNG ABE

What was it for?

ERWIN

Animal rescue

YOUNG ABE

Rory Beans was bitten by a dog
last summer.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

CONSTABLE CLEARLY

Someone has been sneaking up the
clock tower, changing the time.

YOUNG ABE

Sounds like the red shoe gang.

CLEARLY

Don't you have a boy on the
inside?

YOUNG ABE

Not anymore. He kept getting
grounded.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe hangs a framed photo of a headline from "The Willow Weekly" of him stopping the red shoe gang.

He admires the wall of framed headlines in his office.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Abe uses a paperclip to pick the lock on a small box.

ABE (VO)

I was often in one of the
situations where you are looking
for evidence in a house, and then
you hear the owner come home so
you have to hide.

Young Abe hears the noise and shuts the box and runs over to the closet.

ABE (VO)

And they keep seeming like they
are going to open the closet, but
then they don't...

And then you sneeze and give
yourself away

Young Abe sneezes.

The closet door open and an old woman looks at Young Abe.

OLD WOMAN

Oh my god that's adorable, Bill
come and look at this.

INT. HEPBURN'S CANDY SHOP - DAY

ABE (VO)

One day while taking a stroll it
suddenly occurred to me who had
robbed Mr. Hepburn's candy store.
I was awarded free ice cream for
life.

MR. HEPBURN

Here you go, Abe.

He hands him a cone.

YOUNG ABE

Thanks Mr. H!

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Young Abe walks down the street eating his Ice Cream

MAN

Morning Abe!

WOMAN

Hey Abe!

EXT. CONCERT - DAY

ABE (VO)

As a reward for all my hard work I
was invited to play drums for
Sharp Water at the annual fall BBQ

Young Abe plays the drums.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Young Abe stares up at the glowing star stickers on his ceiling.

ABE (VO)

Sometimes I would lay awake all
night and wonder if I was the
smartest person in the world.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Gracie and her friend walk. Her friend pushes a bicycle.

A car is slowly following them.

GRACIE

Oh my god I met this super cute
boy at the record store last
weekend.

GRACIE'S FRIEND

You're always meeting cute boys.
It's driving me up the wall.

An overcast and empty sky.

Tree leaves blow in the wind.

GRACIE'S FRIEND

See you later.

GRACIE

See you later.

Gracie walks alone.

Cut to:

INT. APPLEBAUM HOUSE - NIGHT

Gracie's picture is shown on a news bulletin on the TV.

NEWS ANCHOR

It's been nearly two weeks since
the abduction of 14 year old,
Gracie Gulliver and the local
anxiety continues to mount.

Abe and his parents watch the TV in nervous silence.

The news interviews Mr. Hepburn

MR. HEPBURN

I can't believe it, she comes in
my store all the time. Things like
this aren't supposed to happen
here.

NEWS ANCHOR

The mayor and his wife released
this emotional statement on
Tuesday.

Young Abe stares at the TV in horror.

The phone rings.

Cut to:

Abe answering.

YOUNG ABE

Hello?

MINDY

Hey, Abe. It's Mindy Martingrove.

YOUNG ABE

Oh, hi.

MINDY

I was just wondering, how much longer do you think it'll take you to find Gracie?

YOUNG ABE

Mmm... I'm not sure.

MINDY

My Mom told me not to tell you this, but we're all really counting on you. I know you can do it.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Gracie's desk sits empty.

A picture pinned to Abe's wall of a crude crayon drawing of an old man listed as "Dave Durrell."

Another one of "Pizza Bruno."

Young Abe pours over the papers on his desk.

A yellow piece of construction paper with triangle creases sits at the bottom of his stack.

Abe stares longingly.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S ROOM - NIGHT

Abe's mom tucks him into bed.

YOUNG ABE

Constable Cleary still hasn't called me back.

[CONT.]

MOM

Try and get some sleep sweetheart.
You have to stop torturing
yourself. She knows you're
thinking about her.

Mom shuts out the light.

The picture of Abe and Gracie opening his office with big
ceremonial scissors is consumed by the darkness.

Abe stares at the glow in the dark stars on his ceiling.

He can't sleep.

Fade to:

INT. ADULT ABE'S ROOM - DAY

Abe's phone buzzes

Abe groans.

He picks up.

ABE

Hello?

WOMEN

Where the hell are you?

ABE

It's Sunday.

WOMAN

No. It's not.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S BATHROOM - DAY

Abe pees and looks at his black eye in the mirror.

The seat falls while he's peeing.

ABE

Fuck!

Cut to:

The ibuprofen bottle, he opens it.

Empty.

Cut to:

EXT. STREET - DAY

Abe walks to work.

The once lively streets of Willowbrook are not the same.

A car alarm echoes in the distance, people yell, graffiti covers the windows on main street.

Abe passes a barbershop, the owner sweeping outside.

ABE

Morning, Mr. Ackerman

No reply.

Abe enters his building.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe enters.

ABE

Hey, sorry I'm late.

Abe's new secretary LUCY sits at the desk.

A goth girl wearing all black, including lipstick.

She sees his black eye.

LUCY

Who did that?

ABE

Some idiots I got suspended 20 years ago. He stole the fundraiser money from the principal's office.

LUCY

And he's still pissed?

ABE

His parents were about to buy him a hunting kit.

LUCY

The widow Gulliver was here but
she got tired of waiting.

ABE

She coming back?

Lucy shrugs.

Abe sighs enters his office.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe pours himself a drink.

His newspaper headlines still line the walls.

Cut to:

He looks at a picture of a black cat.

ABE

Didn't I just find him?

WIDOW GULLIVER

That was a year ago.

ABE

So, you're worried he's been hit
by a car or something?

WIDOW GULLIVER

If it was just a simple accident
someone would have called,
wouldn't they? He's wearing his
tags.

ABE

Well were coming up on Halloween.
It's possible he was used in some
kind of satanic ritual.

WIDOW GULLIVER

(meekly)

What?

ABE

This is Willowbrook. And you know
what kids are like these days.

Cut to:

Another kid sits in Abe's office.

KID

This guy in my homeroom, Henry
Hooper claims he was in New York
over the summer and practiced with
the Mets. I need to find out if
he's lying.

ABE

He's lying.

KID

I have a 50-dollar bill.

ABE

Let me see it.

Cut to:

INT. HEPBURN'S CANDY SHOP - DAY

Mr. Hepburn smiles as he serves a cone to a customer.

His smile vanishes.

Abe approaches the counter.

ABE

Butter pecan, please.

Mr. Hepburn reluctantly gives him the cone.

ABE

Thank you.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Abe eats his ice cream and walks home.

Thunder rumbles.

He comes across a couple of people on a pedestrian bridge overlooking a river.

Police sirens wail.

They are looking at the police searching through the river.

ABE

What's going on?

Abe finishes his ice cream.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Abe plays the drums.

He finishes playing, sips his beer.

His roommate enters, carrying toilet paper.

ABE

Oh good you got my text.

COREY

Nothing worse than walking home with just toilet paper. Everybody knows you need to take a shit.

ABE

I'll get it next time.

COREY

Yea, sure.

Cut to:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Abe sips his beer and makes a call.

ABE

Hi, is this Mrs. Hooper? This is going to sound strange but did your son play baseball with the Mets last summer? He didn't. Okay. Thank you very much.

EXT. WILLOWBROOK - DAY

Some establishing shots of the town of Willowbrook. An abandoned house. A seagull and a concrete divider. The Window Gulliver's cat walks the empty streets. An old lady pushes her shopping cart full of clothing. An out of business nail salon. An empty lot with a no parking sign.

Abe walks to work again.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe enters.

LUCY

There's a girl in your office.

ABE

What? Who is she?

LUCY

I don't know.

Abe sighs, he is about to enter his office but stops.

LUCY

What's the matter?

ABE

Forgot to brush my teeth today.

He enters and shuts the door.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe walks around the outside of the room, the girl peers back at him and then quickly fixes her gaze back at the desk.

ABE

Sorry to keep you waiting. I was out on a case.

CAROLINE

It's okay, I stole a magazine from reception.

She puts the "Boys Club" magazine down on the desk.

ABE

Some cool stories in there.

Abe sits down.

ABE

Lucy forgot to get your name.

CAROLINE

Caroline

ABE

Can I fix you a drink.

CAROLINE

Um, no thank you.

ABE

How about some water, it gets pretty hot in here.

CAROLINE

Sure.

Abe presses the intercom button.

LUCY

(Over intercom)

Yeah?

ABE

Can you get Caroline a bottle of water?

LUCY

From where?

ABE

The store.

LUCY

Are you serious?

CAROLINE

It's okay really.

ABE

No trouble at all.

Caroline looks around at the newspaper clippings.

Abe adjusts himself in his chair.

CAROLINE

So, when's the last time you
solved a case?

ABE

Solve em all the time. They just
stopped putting my picture in the
paper.

Caroline looks at a picture on the desk.

CAROLINE

Who's that?

ABE

That's me and Mayor Gulliver.

CAROLINE

Isn't he the one who hung himself.

ABE

He also founded the potato
festival.

Beat.

CAROLINE

I've actually been here before.

ABE

Oh yea.

[CONT.]

CAROLINE

About 5 years ago. Someone stole a silver broach at my 11th birthday party. You solved it in under an hour.

ABE

That's probably why I don't remember.

CAROLINE

You asked which of my friends had the most cake.

ABE

It's an old trick. When you answer a question like that, your memory becomes extremely selective. You are really telling me who you trust the least without even knowing it.

CAROLINE

Cool

ABE

It only fails if you have a really fat friend.

Lucy enters, her black hoodie up.

ABE

Jesus

She puts the bottle down on the counter and exits.

ABE

So what can I help you with today.

CAROLINE

I have another case I was hoping you might consider.

[CONT.]

ABE

Of course.

Beat.

CAROLINE

Somebody murdered my boyfriend.

ABE

Seriously?

CAROLINE

Pretty seriously. He was stabbed
17 times.

Abe looks around unsure what to say.

Cut to:

INT. APPLEBAUM HOUSE - NIGHT

Abe enters.

His mom and dad, another couple and their 2 kids sit at the
table eating dinner.

MOM

That's him.

ABE

Hi, sorry I'm late.

MOM

Oh your face looks better.

WOMAN

Why what happened?

Beat

DAD

He was in a bar fight.

ABE

It wasn't like that. Here.

Abe hands a bottle of wine to his dad.

MOM

An occupational hazard. When he was in high school, kids used to throw beer bottles at the house.

Abe sits.

WOMAN

Oh, that's awful.

MOM

(whispering to Abe)

You reek of alcohol.

The kids sit silently.

MAN

How's the sleuthing?

ABE

Not bad.

WOMAN

(Inadvertently patronizing)

You know, we really admire that you're still doing that, sticking it out. It takes a lot of courage. You always knew what you wanted to do and you're not giving up.

The man and Abe's dad exchange a glance.

WOMAN (CONT.)

You're living your truth.

ABE

Thanks.

He take a bite of food.

MAN

What are you working on?

DAD

He's not supposed to talk about his cases.

ABE

Actually, I got a pretty big one today.

WOMAN

Oh, yeah? What was it?

ABE

Did you hear about that kid? The one they found in the river a couple weeks ago.

MOM

(Slightly taken aback)

We were telling them earlier.

ABE

Seems like the police are getting nowhere with the local youth so his girlfriend hired me to find out what happened.

DAD

Seriously.

ABE

Yeah. Did some work for her a few years back.

MOM

What'd you tell her?

ABE

I told her I'd think about it.

DAD

You can't take that case.

ABE

Why not?

DAD

It wouldn't be fair. You don't have the experience.

ABE

I've solved over 200 mysteries.

DAD

How many of them have been murders? You're taking advantage of this young girl's naïveté.

ABE

She's not even paying me.

DAD

Then what are you doing it for? Isn't this your job? Or are you still working for quarters?

ABE

It's like you've forgotten who I am.

DAD

Who are you?

Abe slams the table.

ABE

Abe Applebaum! I solved the case of the missing time capsule when I was 12 year old! The mayor gave me the key to the fucking city!

Abe sighs.

The children smile at each other.

Beat.

ABE (CONT.)

Finally, after all this time,
someone trusts me with a real
case. A chance to prove myself.
You're telling me I shouldn't take
it?

WOMAN

Good for you Abe.

ABE

Stop, please. It is inadvertently
patronizing. I know you don't mean
it to be, but it is.

Mom sighs, the rest of the table sips their wine.

A babbling brook:

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Abe showers.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe stares out the window.

He looks at a picture of Caroline's boyfriend Patrick.

Caroline looks on nervously.

ABE

You heard of the red shoe gang?

CAROLINE

Of course. Everyone knows not to
go near the Boiler Room.

ABE

What's the Boiler Room?

CAROLINE

The biker bar where they all hang
out.

ABE (CONT.)

Oh right. Used to be called The Steamer.

CAROLINE

What does this have to do with Patrick?

ABE

Well he was stabbed 17 times. Usually when that happens it's because you pissed off the wrong people. Is it possible he was involved in something dangerous?

CAROLINE

Such as?

ABE

Drugs?

CAROLINE

No he would never do drugs.

ABE

Gambling?

CAROLINE

No he would never gamble.

ABE

Demon worship?

CAROLINE

No he would never worship a demon.

Abe crosses a line in his notepad.

ABE

Tell me about his home life.

CAROLINE

His parents were super strict. He had the highest grades in our year.

ABE

Is it possible the pressure was too much for him?

CAROLINE

He was a good person. He wanted to do well.

ABE

(Being pretentious)

In this line of work you learn one thing quickly: everyone has secrets. No matter how simple a case may seem, it's always shocking what you find. I just want you to be prepared.

Caroline nods.

Cut to:

EXT. WILLOWBROOK - DAY

Caroline drives Abe in her car.

ABE

Where do you wanna start?

CAROLINE

Shouldn't we talk to his parents?

ABE

I don't know that's a bit heavy, isn't it? Why don't we get warmed up first?

CAROLINE

His friend Billy works a few blocks away.

EXT. BUTCHER'S SHOP - DAY

ABE

His family runs the butcher's shop?

CAROLINE

Yea. Why?

ABE

I was working a case here last week.

CAROLINE

Really? What was it?

ABE

Nothing that serious. His dad might be a homosexual.

CAROLINE

Holy smokes.

ABE

Don't say anything.

Caroline nods.

Billy exits the butcher's shop and throws some trash in the dumpster.

CAROLINE

Hey Billy.

BILLY

Hi, Caroline. Who's this guy?

CAROLINE

Oh he's a really awesome detective. He's gonna help me find out who killed Patrick.

[CONT.]

BILLY

How many murders have you solved?

ABE

I have to ask you some questions.
I need you to be completely honest
with me. Now I know what it's like
at that school drugs are more
popular than milk. To the best of
your knowledge did Patrick have
any contact with the kids on the
stoop or the Wild Geese?

BILLY

This guys has no idea what he's
doing.

ABE

Yea well your dad is gay.

Billy sighs, walks away.

Abe sighs.

ABE

Who else lives around here?

Cut to:

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

CALVIN

Can I offer you something to
drink?

ABE

Are those cupcakes I smell?

CALVIN

Sorry, they're for my sister's
class. My mom counted them.

ABE

Is it her birthday or something?

CALVIN

No, she's just not very popular.

CALVIN'S MOM (O.S.)

Calvin, come upstairs please!

Calvin sighs.

CALVIN

Sorry, be right back.

Calvin walks away.

Caroline looks at a picture of his family. Mom, dad, son daughter.

Abe walks over to the window, opens it.

CAROLINE

What are you doing?

ABE

It's an old trick. Always open a window wherever you're invited.

CAROLINE

Why?

ABE

In case you need to sneak back in later.

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Calvin sits on the couch, Abe and Caroline sit across from him in chairs.

Calvin doesn't say anything.

ABE

What's the matter.

Calvin is still hesitant to talk.

ABE (CONT.)

Would it be easier if she left the room?

CALVIN

No, it's okay.

Calvin sighs

CALVIN (CONT.)

Caroline, I know you think Patrick was this perfect boyfriend, but he was a lot more complicated than he allowed you to believe.

CAROLINE

What do you mean?

ABE

Give us an example.

CALVIN

He used to collect bottle caps.

CAROLINE

So?

CALVIN

He had thousands. It was compulsive.

ABE

Anything else?

CALVIN

Yea. He lied... about movies he hadn't actually seen or books he hadn't actually read.

CAROLINE

Everyone does that.

CALVIN

He was very impatient with handicapped people.

Abe is fed up with this nonsense.

ABE

Was he cheating on her or something?

CALVIN

(Defensive)

Why?

ABE

You seem pretty determined to shit on his grave.

Calvin sighs again.

CALVIN

I'm sorry Caroline. You shouldn't have found out this way.

CAROLINE

What are you talking about?

CALVIN

He had a concubine.

CAROLINE

What's that?

CALVIN

Sort of like a second girlfriend.

CAROLINE

Who?

CALVIN

I don't know, but she sounded kind of wild.

ABE

What the hell does that mean?

[CONT.]

CALVIN

He would brag about the stuff she did.

ABE

Such as?

Calvin gestures to Abe to lean in so he can whisper it to him without Caroline hearing.

CALVIN

(whispering)

Uh, put her hands on his penis.

ABE

That's not so bad. What else?

CALVIN

(whispering)

Put his penis in her mouth.

Abe leans away.

ABE

You know there are euphemisms for these things.

CALVIN

Yea but I didn't wanna sound vulgar.

ABE

How do you know he wasn't making it up?

CALVIN

He had a picture hidden in his locker.

ABE

But you didn't recognize her?

CALVIN

She was wearing a tiger mask.
That's... all she was wearing.

CAROLINE

I don't believe you.

CALVIN

I'm sorry, Caroline. I wouldn't
say it if I wasn't sure.

Cut to:

INT. OAK'S DINER - NIGHT

Abe picks up his sandwich.

ABE

God, those cupcakes were killing
me.

He takes a bite.

Caroline looks off into space.

Abe notices.

ABE

So, how long were you together.

CAROLINE

Three months. But that's high
school time.

ABE

So like six?

CAROLINE

I don't know I-I thought he was
different from the others.

ABE

Because he was a geek?

[CONT.]

CAROLINE

He was cultured. I kept finding these origami roses in my locker. On days where I had a test or something.

ABE

How'd you know they were from him?

CAROLINE

He was the only Asian in our school.

Abe thinks about that for a second.

ABE

I remember when girls still went for the star quarterback.

CAROLINE

Nobody cares about football.

ABE

God, this town got cynical.

CAROLINE

Did it?

ABE

Look at this place.

The camera pans around the crowded but dead diner.

ABE

On Saturday night, this was the center of the universe. They used to serve breakfast for dinner and dinner for breakfast.

CAROLINE

Why?

[CONT.]

ABE

To be funny.

Beat, Caroline is tearing up.

ABE

Are you sure you want to continue?

She wipes a teardrop away.

CAROLINE

Yea. It won't feel real until I understand.

ABE

Then we gotta break into the school.

CAROLINE

Why?

ABE

I wanna look for that photograph.

Caroline nods.

Cut to:

EXT. SCHOOL ROOFTOP - NIGHT

Abe carries a flashlight and walks the flat rooftop with Caroline.

ABE

Shit!

CAROLINE

What?

ABE

They replaced the vent.

CAROLINE

I think there might be a window open on the other side.

ABE

Why's that?

CAROLINE

The art class has been oil painting.

ABE

So?

CAROLINE

Mrs. August is pregnant. She might be more sensitive to the fumes.

ABE

Are you making fun of me or something?

Caroline shakes her head.

Cut to:

INT. SCHOOL - NIGHT

Caroline and Abe walk the locker lined halls. Caroline smiles profusely.

An air horn goes off in the distance.

ABE

What's that noise?

CAROLINE

Must be the overnights.

ABE

Who?

CAROLINE

You know, the kids who hide out at the school over the weekend.

ABE

Good fucking God.

Caroline stops walking.

CAROLINE

This was his locker.

Abe opens it.

ABE

Shit.

CAROLINE

What?

ABE

Cops already cleared it. Just a
bunch of fucking bottle caps.

Abe swipes the caps all over the floor and slams the empty
locker in frustration.

Beat

CAROLINE

I still have his jacket.

Abe and Caroline continue walking the halls and stairways of the
school.

A kid runs past them on the stairs as they walk.

They walk past the gym and see kids skateboarding inside.

They reach Caroline's locker.

She unlocks it and hands Abe Patrick's jacket.

He reaches into the pocket and find used tissues.

ABE

Oh, gross.

He tries another pocket. More used tissues.

ABE

Jesus.

He looks at Caroline.

[CONT.]

ABE

Sorry.

He tries the last pocket and finds a bottle of ibuprofen.

ABE

Oh, thank God.

He opens it and looks inside.

ABE

Huh. What the hell.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Abe looks at the blue and white pill he got from Patrick's bottle.

He picks up his phone.

Lucy picks up.

LUCY

Yeah?

ABE

How did you know it was me?

LUCY

I didn't

ABE

I need you to put me in touch with your drug dealer.

LUCY

What? No.

ABE

I wanna ask him some questions about these pills I found.

[CONT.]

LUCY

Why don't you ask your drug dealer?

ABE

Because, we have a special relationship. I don't wanna ruin that.

LUCY

So go talk to the kids on the stoop.

ABE

No.

LUCY

Why? Are you afraid they'll make fun of you?

ABE

Yeah right.

Lucy laughs.

Abe hangs up.

He looks at the pill and then swallows it with a sip of water.

EXT. THE STOOP - DAY

A bunch of kids sit on a concrete divider.

CAROLINE

So, that's the stoop?

ABE

Technically, it's a concrete divider.

They exit the car and walk over the kids.

JACE

Check it out. What's up Apple Bum?

The rest of the kids laugh.

Abe pulls out the pill bottle.

ABE

You know what these are?

He shows them.

GIRL

Holy shit

ABE

Yeah? Answer my questions, I'll give you some.

JACE

They're called Ego Boosters.

ABE

What do they do?

JACE

Give you that extra nudge, if you want to ask out a girl or do some stand-up. They improve your self-esteem

ABE

Looks like you guys could use some.

GIRL

They also get you super jacked.

ABE

Why don't I feel anything.

JACE

They take a while to kick in, depending on how insecure you normally are.

The kids laugh.

[CONT.]

ABE

How much is this bottle worth.

KID #2

Like a grand.

JACE

Great, now he's not gonna give us any.

ABE

Tell me who the supplier is, I'll give you the whole bottle.

JACE

Candy store.

ABE

Is that code for something?

JACE

No. It's a candy store.

ABE

Hepburn's candy store?

JACE

Yeah. He's been selling for years.

GIRL

It's the truth.

JACE

Just go in there and tell him you have a headache. You'll see.

Abe sighs.

Cut to:

EXT. HEPBURN'S SWEET SHOP - DAY

Abe waits outside in the car.

He sighs again.

He sees an old missing poster for Gracie.

Caroline exits the store.

ABE

What happened.

She gets in the car with an ice cream.

CAROLINE

Nothing. I told him I had a headache.

ABE

Okay, what happened next?

CAROLINE

I bought this ice cream. It was too awkward. Here I got you this.

She hands him a peanut candy bar.

ABE

Thanks

CAROLINE

I think maybe those kids lied to you.

Cut to:

EXT. THE STOOP - DAY

Abe walks quickly up to the concrete divider.

JACE

Well, well, well, here comes the kid detective.

Abe winds up and slaps the kid across the face. He falls over backwards.

The other kids scatter.

Abe isn't finished, he pick the kid up.

[CONT.]

JACE

Let me go!

Abe throws him down a hill. Kicks him while he's down and chases after him.

CAROLINE

Abe stop!

Abe has pinned him against a chain link fence.

ABE

Who is the supplier?

Jace is scared stiff.

ABE

Who is the supplier?!?

JACE

The red shoe gang! How long have you lived in this fucking town.

Abe steals the pills back.

JACE (CONT.)

It makes you feel like a big man to beat up a kid?

ABE

YES! These pills are awesome.

JACE

Yea well be careful. They're super addictive.

Abe throws Jace into the river.

CAROLINE

What now?

ABE

Take me to the Steam Room, it's time to talk to some adults.

Cut to:

EXT. THE BOILER ROOM - DAY

Abe storms towards the door.

INT. THE BOILER ROOM - DAY

Abe enters, everyone looks at him.

He approaches a bouncer.

ABE

I'm here to see Clive Cunningham

The bouncer pats him down. He pulls out the peanut candy bar
Caroline just bought him.

BOUNCER

No peanut products.

ABE

Right, sorry.

BOUNCER

Go ahead.

Abe walks down a staircase and through a long dimly lit winding
hallway.

He enters a room.

Clive sits at a bar across the room surrounded by other bikers
drinking and playing poker.

ABE

We need to talk about Patrick
Chang.

Beat.

CLIVE

No.

Abe turns around and leaves as quickly as he entered.

He walks back down the hallway and out of the bar.

He returns to the car with Caroline.

ABE

He wasn't there.

CAROLINE

What does that mean.

ABE

We'll just have to play it from a different angle.

CAROLINE

Have those drugs worn off?

ABE

Yeah. I think so.

Cut to:

EXT. CHANG HOUSEHOLD - DAY

They pull up.

ABE

I don't know, maybe we should call it a day.

CAROLINE

What's the matter?

ABE

You realize if I go in there, we're really gonna have to solve this thing.

CAROLINE

Of course.

ABE

It's just I find that kind of pressure can be counterproductive.

Abe exits the car.

INT. CHANG HOUSEHOLD - DAY

Pictures of Patrick sit on the coffee table.

ABE

I'm very sorry to have disturbed you. I know how... devastating and- and- and- deeply confusing these past few weeks must have been. It's- it's beyond awful.

PATRICK'S MOTHER

Do you have kids?

ABE

What? No.

PATRICK'S FATHER

So, you don't really understand what we're dealing with.

ABE

You're right. I'm sorry.

FATHER

It's been two weeks and the police haven't offered any clarity.

ABE

They're so preoccupied with the physical evidence sometimes they sometimes can overlook the more complex, psychological integers.

FATHER

What does that mean?

ABE

Um, do you keep a lot of fruit in your kitchen?

MOTHER

We used to.

ABE

What did Patrick favor?

MOTHER

When he was a kid, he loved
peaches.

ABE

And in the weeks before his death?

MOTHER

He ate a lot of bananas.

ABE

They're dry, which means no mess.
No plate, no paper towels. You
don't have to cut them up or even
wash them. You see where I'm going
with this?

FATHER

No.

Abe sighs.

ABE

I think he may have been
depressed.

FATHER

Our son wasn't depressed.

Abe pulls out the pill bottle and hands it to the father.

ABE

I found these in his jacket. Open
them up. They're called Ego
Boosters. Basically a mixture of
coke and who knows what.

FATHER

Someone must have planted them.

[CONT.]

ABE

To make it look like a drug
killing after the fact?

FATHER

It hadn't occurred to you?

ABE

I'm open to all possibilities.

FATHER

I realize it's probably easier to
solve the murder of a drug dealer
than a mildly mannered honor
student. But these do not belong
to our boy!

Abe puts them away.

ABE

Patrick was cheating on his
girlfriend.

FATHER

With who?

ABE

I don't know I haven't found her
yet.

FATHER

So, how can you be sure?

ABE

His friend told me.

FATHER

His friend told you and you treat
it as fact?

ABE

No Patrick had a picture in his
locker.

FATHER

Which you saw?

ABE

No...

FATHER

Are you a detective? Or just some
idiot who'll believe whatever he's
told.

ABE

I've closed over 200 cases.

FATHER

How many of them murders?

Abe is forced to answer this question finally.

ABE

Three.

The father sighs.

FATHER

Then don't let me discourage you.

He walks upstairs.

The mother hands him a picture.

MOTHER

He was a very private boy. We
didn't even know about Caroline
until she called us after his
death. It's difficult to accept
that you didn't know everything
when you loved someone so
thoroughly.

ABE

I promise you, I will not rest
until this case is solved and your
family finds some source of peace.

MOTHER

Don't promise that. It's silly.

ABE

Can I hang onto this?

The mother nods.

Cut to:

EXT. CAROLINE'S CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Abe gets a call on his cellphone.

ABE

What?

LUCY

I think I found that tiger.

ABE

Really? How?

LUCY

Social media. I keep telling you
to get with the times.

ABE

Oh. Nice work.

Cut to:

EXT. MELODY MILLER'S HOUSE - DAY

Melody's mom opens the door, smoking a cigarette.

ABE

Hi, I'm looking for Melody Miller.

MOM

You're a little old, aren't you?

ABE

I'm a private detective. I need to
ask her some questions.

MOM

Spare me the theatrics, she's in
the basement, with her sister.

INT. BASEMENT - DAY

ABE

Your mom seems nice.

Melody is smoking too, while her sister does a puzzle on the
floor.

MELODY

She's getting to that age where
she thinks she's too cool for me.

Melody has the name "Paul" written in marker across her
forehead.

ABE

Who's Paul?

MELODY

Just some guy. Paid me 50 bucks to
write his name on my face.

ABE

Not bad.

MELODY

I can wash it off in a week.

ABE

How much was Patrick paying you?

MELODY

It wasn't like that. Patrick and I
had some very deep conversations.

ABE

Oh yeah? What was perplexing him?

[CONT.]

MELODY

He was very concerned about the environment and whether or not our distinct identities are just an illusion.

ABE

Impressive. Ever have any arguments.

MELODY

No.

ABE

So you weren't jealous of his real girlfriend.

MELODY

She's just a kid. Cute but uncomplicated.

ABE

Did Patrick know his life was in danger?

MELODY

The red shoe gang had no reason to hurt him as long as he kept his grades up.

ABE

I'm not sure I follow.

MELODY

Everyone had to submit their locker codes to the office as a result of all the drugs in the school. The principal could open them at any time. So, the suppliers had to recruit kids who were above suspicion.

[CONT.]

ABE

So the nerds become the new
dealers.

MELODY

Whoever had the highest marks in
each grade.

ABE

(sarcastic)

That's awesome.

MELODY

Everyone know smart kids have no
spine. Doesn't take much to
intimidate them.

ABE

Have the police found you yet?

MELODY

No.

ABE

Figures.

Abe stands.

Melody's sister looks up at him.

ABE (CONT.)

Thank you very much, ladies.

Cut to:

EXT. CAROLINE'S CONVERTIBLE - DAY

Abe gets back in the car.

Caroline is looking at the rearview mirror.

ABE

Thanks for waiting, I know this is
weird. What's the matter?

CAROLINE

That car. It was with us at
Patrick's house.

ABE

No way

CAROLINE

Do you think they're following us?

ABE

Let's find out.

Caroline starts driving.

The car follows.

ABE

What the hell.

ABE (CONT.)

Try going faster.

The car keeps following.

CAROLINE

Okay, this is stupid.

ABE

Okay, pull over here.

Abe and Caroline stare at the car.

CAROLINE

Are you gonna do something.

ABE

What?

CAROLINE

I mean, someone's obviously
following us. Isn't it safer to
know who?

ABE

Yeah I guess so.

Abe gets out of the car.

He walks towards the following car.

As he approaches

ABE

No way.

He pulls the door open.

ABE

What the hell are you doing?

MOM

We were worried about you.

ABE

Whose car is this?

MOM

Your uncle's

ABE

You guys are unbelievable.

DAD

Are you out of your mind? We saw you walk into the Boiler Room.

ABE

How long have you been following me?

MOM

Since this morning..

ABE

Get the fuck out of here. I am working!

Caroline overhears that last line from the car.

ABE

Do you not understand how
humiliating this is?

Abe slams the car door shut.

MOM

Wait-

Abe's parents start arguing.

MOM

I told you, you should have backed
up.

DAD

Why would I back up?

Abe walks back to the car, gets in.

CAROLINE

Well, who was it?

ABE

Reporters for the local paper.

CAROLINE

Really?

ABE

Yea.

CAROLINE

What'd they want?

ABE

To follow our crumbs and break the
case before we can. It happens all
the time.

[CONT.]

CAROLINE

That's so cool.

ABE

It's irresponsible journalism.

CAROLINE

Oh.

They drive back to Abe's apartment.

CAROLINE

Um, I won't be able to help much tomorrow.

ABE

Why not?

CAROLINE

It's a school day, the principal always calls if I miss class.

ABE

Your parents seem pretty cool, about letting you drive the car at least.

CAROLINE

It's cause they're dead. I live with my grandparents.

ABE

Sorry I didn't realize.

CAROLINE

I was really young.

ABE

How did they die?

CAROLINE

Downhill skiing.

ABE

Oh

He thinks about that fact for a second.

ABE

Both of them?

CAROLINE

Yeah. It was a very blustery day.

ABE

In some way, you're lucky. My
parents are always on my ass.
Sorry that was really insensitive.

CAROLINE

I love my grandparents. It's just
not the same. They're pretty old.

ABE

Must be lonely.

CAROLINE

I don't know. I've always felt
like there was this other presence
watching over me. Do you believe
in that sort of thing?

ABE

Yeah. Sure. Why not?

CAROLINE

Good luck tomorrow. Let me know
what you find.

ABE

Sure thing.

Cut to:

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe knocks and enters.

Principal Erwin sighs.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

What are you doing here Abe? You know you're not allowed on school property.

The intercom buzzes.

SECRETARY (O.S.)

A man just walked into your office.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

I know.

ABE

I have the same problem.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

What do you want?

ABE

To talk about Patrick Chang.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

You can't be serious.

ABE

His girlfriend hired me.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

Is she okay?

ABE

All things considered. I don't think it's really hit her yet.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

I'll help you with yours, you help me with mine. One of the custodians found some broken beakers in the science lab this

morning. Mrs. Hersoltd noticed some footprints on the floor of the gym.

Abe sighs, he already know the answer.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

What?

ABE

Overnighters.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

Excuse me?

ABE

Kids who stay at the school over the weekend.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

How long has this been going on?

ABE

I don't know. Seems like a pretty established sub-culture.

Principal Erwin puts his hand over his face.

ABE

So, what can you tell me about Patrick.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

He was a quiet kid. Used to mouth the national anthem, as if we couldn't tell.

ABE

Is that it?

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

No um, I was warned he might be mixed up in something about a week before his death.

ABE

By who?

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

One of his friends uh. I'm too old
to keep the names straight.

ABE

Was he tall and ugly, or portly
and pathetic.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

He was a bit heavy, yes.

ABE

Calvin?

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

Uh-huh. I uh.. checked Patrick's
locker. I couldn't find anything.

The intercom buzzes again.

SECRETARY

Another fight in the girl's
restroom.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

Who is it this time?

SECRETARY

Both Beckys.

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

What am I supposed to do, Abe.
This kids have no concept of
authority.

ABE

I don't know dude.

[CONT.]

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

Maybe there's more nobility in
just giving up.

ABE

Maybe.

Cut to:

INT. CALVIN'S HOUSE - DAY

Abe crawls in through the window he opened earlier. He walks
past the same picture Caroline picked up.

He eats a cupcake from the fridge.

INT. CALVIN'S ROOM - DAY

Abe enters.

Goes to his computer, locked.

He opens a drawer, find another peanut candy bar.

ABE

Oh, wicked.

He pockets it, keeps digging.

He finds a note and reads it.

ABE

"I only get one life, one body,
and I'm trapped in a teapot. A
harmless shell with no hard edges.
No one can see how much love and
violence I have inside my soul."
Jesus Christ

He keeps reading.

"How to make her understand I'm
the one who really sees her, who
knows what she's worth. Who would
never mock her innocence or take
advantage of her trust."

Abe enters Caroline as the password and the computer unlocks.

ABE

That's motive, motherfucker.

He clicks around for a second before he hears a door open. He runs to hide in the closet.

Calvin enters and sits down at his desk. Abe watches from the closet. Calvin starts playing music.

Abe waits for his moment to escape from the closet.

Calvin's Mom appears in the doorway.

CALVIN'S MOM

Hey, turn the music down please?
What are you doing home already?

CALVIN

Last period spare.

CALVIN'S MOM

Want me to fix you a snack?

CALVIN

No, thanks. I'm not hungry.

She leaves.

Calvin reaches into his drawer and grabs a candy bar.

Abe continues watching.

Calvin plays pong against a computer.

His sister appears in the doorway.

CALVIN'S SISTER

Mom wants you to set the table.

CALVIN

I'm doing homework.

CALVIN'S SISTER

No you're not.

CALVIN

I set it last night.

CALVIN'S SISTER

Okayyy.

She leaves.

Moments later.

CALVIN'S MOM

Calvin come down here please.

Calvin sighs

CALVIN

Little bitch.

Abe exits the closet quietly.

He starts walking down the stairs, almost at the exit when the sister runs by.

CALVIN'S MOM

Where are you going Jackie?

JACKIE

I need to pee!

Abe is forced to run back upstairs and hide in another closet.

Abe finds the closet in Jackie's room and hides.

She walks in and starts playing pong on her computer.

CALVIN'S MOM (O.S.)

Jackie! You haven't finished your potatoes.

JACKIE

I'm full!

Abe cringes at his missed opportunity to leave.

Jackie now sits on her bed on the phone.

JACKIE

What did she say? But I thought she liked Jake?

CALVIN'S MOM

Time for bed honey!

[CONT.]

JACKIE

Okay 5 minutes!

JACKIE

Benji is an idiot, he didn't even
know what a kayak was.

Abe is dying in this closet, hot and sweaty.

Jackie's mom now tucks her in and turns out the light.

JACKIE

Mom, I'm scared.

MOM

Of what?

JACKIE

I think I heard something in the
closet.

MOM

C'mon Jackie I thought we were
past this. Too old for all this
monster nonsense.

JACKIE

Sorry

MOM

Go to sleep.

She closes the door.

Abe waits even longer.

He sneezes.

He is paralyzed in the closet haven just given himself away.

EXTREMELY HARD CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Chief Cleary looks at Abe with a disappointed expression.

CLEARY

That kid is traumatized. The family is furious.

ABE

Did you explain?

CLEARY

What the hell was I supposed to say? That you're some wandering mental patient.

ABE

A private detective.

CLEARY

She's 9 years old.

ABE

I was investigating the older brother. I got trapped in the house.

CLEARY

In connection to what?

ABE

The Patrick Chang murder.

CLEARY

Who hired you from a homicide?

ABE

His girlfriend.

CLEARY

Well I hope you're not charging her.

ABE

What have you found so far?

CLEARLY

I can't talk about that. It's an active investigation.

Abe sighs, he's heard that before.

ABE

Why didn't you call me back, after Gracie got kidnapped?

CLEARLY

Because you were 12.

ABE

So? I'd helped you before.

CLEARLY

How would it have looked? The police chief consulting with a child in the middle of our town's greatest crisis.

ABE

You weren't the chief then.

CLEARLY

Lucky for you, I am now. I'll see what I can work out with the family. Convince them to drop criminal charges.

ABE

Thank you.

CLEARLY

This has to stop Abe. Gracie was not your responsibility... and neither is this. You can't run around calling yourself a detective and expect everyone else to play along. You know I've always liked you, but at a certain point we've all gotta grow up.

CLEARY (CONT.)

Maybe this is that opportunity.
Your parents posted your bail.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Abe stares out the window as his parents drive him home from the police station.

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Abe plays videogames on the couch.

His phone rings.

He answers.

ABE

Hello?

LUCY

You finally made the paper again.

ABE

What does it say?

LUCY

That you were found masturbating
in a little girl's bathroom.

ABE

I wasn't masturbating.

LUCY

I believe you.

Cut to:

Abe vomiting in his toilet.

Corey knocks on the door.

COREY

I'm really sorry, man. My friend
really need to get in there.

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Abe watches an old movie.

ABE

It was the maid.

Abe phone rings, its Caroline. He ignores it.

The maid is murdered in the next scene of the movie.

Abe turns it off.

EXT. ABE'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Abe greets his drug deal outside his apartment.

ABE

Thanks for coming man. I've just
been drinking too much, you know?

Abe hands him a 20 and he gives Abe a dime bag and leaves
without saying a word.

Abe smokes a joint and sits stoned on the couch.

He eats the peanut candy bar.

The doorbell buzzes.

EXT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

He opens the door, it's Caroline.

ABE

Hey, what are you doing here.

CAROLINE

I'm sorry but you weren't
answering my calls.

ABE

Uh yeah I've been busy and you're
not paying me so I had to
prioritize.

CAROLINE

I found another paper flower in my
locker.

ABE

Okay.

CAROLINE

What do you think it means?

ABE

That they were never coming from
Patrick.

CAROLINE

What?

ABE

Origami is Japanese. He probably
just took credit for it because
you started talking to him.

CAROLINE

Oh my god. I'm such a racist.

ABE

Relax it's not that bad.

CAROLINE

Well then who's making them?

ABE

Probably Calvin. He's in love with
you.

CAROLINE

What? How do you know that?

Abe reaches into his pocket and grabs the note he stole from
Calvin's desk and hands it to her.

ABE

I'm sorry I gotta go.

He closes the door.

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

He continues sitting on the couch.

COREY

Are you ever gonna get dressed?

ABE

Why?

COREY

I have people coming over.

ABE

In the middle of the week?

COREY

It's fucking Friday man.

ABE

For real?

Abe sits on the couch and does some Ego Boosters while Corey dances with his friends.

Flashback to Young Abe watching TV news broadcast of Gracie's disappearance.

He does another line.

Cut to black.

Phone buzzing. Abe groans.

INT. PILE OF GARBAGE - DAY

Abe wakes up naked in a pile of garbage.

ABE

What the hell.

He moves around.

ABE

What?

He finds his pants.

He groans as he crawls out from the trash heap.

EXT. ALLEYWAY - DAY

He exits to an alleyway.

His phone rings again.

He answers.

ABE

Caroline?

CAROLINE

Where are you I'm outside your place.

ABE

You are?

CAROLINE

You called me at midnight, remember?

ABE

I did? You might have to refresh my memory.

CAROLINE

You said you wouldn't rest until this case is solved and my family found some sort of peace. Remember?

Abe gasps for air.

Cut to:

INT. CAROLINE'S GRANDPARENTS HOUSE - DAY

Abe showers.

Caroline makes ginger tea.

Abe, out of the shower now, finds a picture of two skiers.

ABE

Are these your parents?

CAROLINE

Yea.

ABE

They're very photogenic.

CAROLINE

I know.

Abe picks up another picture.

ABE

And these are your grandparents.

CAROLINE

Mm-hm.

ABE

Where are they right now?

CAROLINE

Um.. Probably out feeding pigeons.

Caroline finishes making the tea.

ABE

Thanks.

Beat.

ABE

I need to apologize for the other day.

CAROLINE

It's okay.

ABE

Sorry you had to see me like that
I was in a really bad place. I got
arrested.

[CONT.]

CAROLINE

I know.

ABE

You saw the paper?

CAROLINE

I went to your office, your secretary showed me.

ABE

What a cunt.

Caroline sighs.

ABE

The people in this town used to look up to me, even the adults. I was so far ahead of the game and one day I just woke up behind.

CAROLINE

What do you mean?

ABE

A few years ago I heard my roommate talking about me when he thought I wasn't home. He called me a 'detective' in quotes. I could hear him doing this with his fingers.

Abe makes the air quotes hand gesture.

ABE

It's difficult to accept the difference between who you are in your head, and who you are in the world.

CAROLINE

I know what you mean.

[CONT.]

ABE

You do?

CAROLINE

People act like I've never seen a restricted move before or stayed up past midnight. Even my own boyfriend saw me as this little girl.

ABE

Don't blame yourself for what that kid did to you. Experience is overrated. The world has enough assholes. It's been a while since I've known anyone like you. Reminds me why I got into this business.

Caroline smiles.

The dryer buzzes.

CAROLINE

Your clothes are ready.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe enters.

The place is trashed.

Lucy is asleep at her desk.

Abe rings the bell.

Lucy wakes up.

ABE

What the hell happened?

LUCY

I had some friends over.

[CONT.]

ABE

The door's unlocked, what if a client came in?

LUCY

I wouldn't worry about that now that you're the town pedophile.

ABE

The phone's off the hook. I wanted to make sure you were okay.

LUCY

Wow...

Abe turns and enters his office.

Lucy puts the phone back on the hook.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe sits down at his desk; a yellow origami flower sits on his desk.

He presses the intercom.

ABE

What is this thing?

LUCY

That girl left it for you the other day from her dead boyfriend.

ABE

(to himself)

Poor Calvin.

He unfolds the paper. A distinct triangle pattern.

His mind races.

Cut to:

EXT. APPLEBAUM HOUSE - DAY

Abe knocks on the door, his dad answers.

ABE

I need the key to the garage.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

Abe grabs a box that says "Gracie" off the shelf. He starts rummaging through the evidence. He grabs another box, and another.

He finds the one that says, "Gracie's desk."

He takes everything out and find an identical yellow paper at the bottom.

ABE

Wow.

Abe calls Caroline.

CAROLINE

Hello?

ABE

I need you to stay home tomorrow.

CAROLINE

What? Why?

ABE

It isn't safe. They're not coming from Calvin.

Abe sleeps in his childhood bed, he looks up at a glow in the dark star still stuck to the ceiling.

He can't sleep.

EXT. WIDOW GULLIVER'S HOUSE - DAY

Abe knocks on the door.

Widow Gulliver answers.

WIDOW GULLIVER

Have you found my cat yet?

[CONT.]

ABE

No. I actually completely forgot about that. I'm here to talk about your daughter.

INT. GRACIE'S BEDROOM - DAY

Abe enters.

ABE

You preserved her bedroom.

WIDOW GULLIVER

House hasn't been touched since Burt died.

ABE

My parents just redid mine.

Abe looks through the drawers, he finds another paper flower.

ABE

Do you know where this came from.

The widow shakes her head.

ABE

She never said anything about a secret admirer?

WIDOW GULLIVER

Who could keep track? Is everything okay?

ABE

Yeah. Nothing to worry about.

WIDOW GULLIVER

Find my cat, Abe. I'm lonely.

Cut to:

INT. BAR - DAY

The bartender pours Abe a drink. He sips it.

BARTENDER

You alright Abe?

ABE

Yea, why?

BARTENDER

Nobody real comes in before 5.

ABE

My mind's running races, I uhh I
need to relax.

BARTENDER

What happened the other week with
Rory Beans?

ABE

He beat the shit out of me.

BARTENDER

Why don't you just apologize?

ABE

For what? No one forced him to
steal the fundraiser money.

BARTENDER

He didn't do it, man.

ABE

What?

BARTENDER

Why do you think he hates you so
much.

Abe sips his beer.

Guess the killer:

The voices replay in his head.

ABE

He stole the fundraiser money from
the principal's office.

YOUNG ABE

What was it for?

PRINCIPAL ERWIN

Animal Rescue

YOUNG ABE

Rory Beans was bit by a dog last
summer.

LUCY

Who did that?

ABE

Some idiot I got suspended 20
years ago.

LUCY

He's still pissed?

Abe sips his beer again, walks out of the bar.

EXT. WILLOWBROOK - DAY

He's walking somewhere now. The voices still playing in his
head.

MELODY

Everyone had to submit their
locker codes to the office.

CAROLINE

I found another paper flower in my
locker.

ABE

She never said anything about a
secret admirer.

CAROLINE

I've always felt like there was
this other presence watching over
me.

He calls Lucy.

LUCY

Yeah?

ABE

Hey I need you to check the date
on the first Rory Beans case.

LUCY

Are you serious?

ABE

There's a chance he was set up. I
might know who's really making
those flowers.

Cut to:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Abe walks around the back, checking all the windows to see if
any are unlocked.

He tries to door, no dice.

He kicks in the basement window.

INT. HOUSE - DAY

Abe comes up from the basement, begins searching the house.

Looking through drawers he comes across a lock box.

He pulls out a paper clip and starts picking the lock.

It opens, he pours through the papers before he find the
photograph of Melody in only the tiger mask.

ABE

What the fuck.

He hears the front door open.

He goes to hide in the closet but decides this time to hide under the bed.

Abe watches as the boots from a man walk around the bed.

The step pause, the man reaches down to grab the paperclip that Abe dropped.

ELLIS

Abe, I know you're in the closet.

ABE

I'm under the bed.

Cut to:

The ceiling fan spins above the kitchen table.

Abe sits across from Principal Erwin.

ABE

Why aren't you at school?

ELLIS

It's Sunday. What are you doing here Abe?

ABE

Do you remember the first case you ever brought me?

ELLIS

No.

ABE

Somebody stole the cashbox from the school fundraiser.

ELLIS

That was the last year we had one.

ABE

I think I might have made a mistake, implicated the wrong kid.

ELLIS

Who cares? Wasn't this year ago?

ABE

You found it in his desk the next day.

ELLIS

I don't understand.

ABE

You were just testing me weren't you. Trying to see how my head worked if I was really as smart as everyone said.

ELLIS

Why would I care to do that?

ABE

Gracie was kidnapped a week later.

ELLIS

What are you asking me?

ABE

Are you the bad guy?

ELLIS

I'm an educator Abe. I hope you understand how even the most outlandish claim could tarnish my career, stir doubts about my character.

ABE

I found the picture you stole from Patrick's locker. You thought it was Caroline, didn't you. In the tiger mask.

ELLIS

It wasn't?

Abe shakes his head.

ELLIS

Are you sure?

ABE

I know about the paper flowers.
You killed her boyfriend. You
wanted someone innocent, untouched
just like Gracie. You thought he'd
ruined her for you.

ELLIS

Gracie wasn't innocent. She used
to come by my office just to show
me her outfits.

ABE

She was 14.

ELLIS

Of all people, you should
appreciate the relativity of age.
That girl got what she always
wanted. She would have loved to
see this place. Her face on every
telephone pole. People marching
through the marshes arm in arm.
For a month, the whole country
knew her name.

ABE

I should have seen it. I could
have saved her.

ELLIS

You were just a kid. No one
expected you to find her.

ABE

She did.

ELLIS

Abe, I watched you grow up with the weight of the entire town on your conscience. I always felt a little sorry for you. No child could survive that.

ABE

What happened to her.

ELLIS

She didn't last long. Her spirit went soft. After I gave our daughter away.

ABE

What?

ELLIS

Everyone knows me here. I can't have a newborn suddenly appear out of nowhere. It wasn't easy leaving Caroline on the steps for those decrepit church mice. But I knew they wouldn't ask any questions. My only consolation was watching her mature with such grace and sensibility. I took something beautiful... but I gave something back. Something better. Balance was restored.

Abe pulls the picture of Patrick out of his pocket, he slides it across the table.

ELLIS

I was relieved when I first heard they were dating. He seemed sort of sexless and irrelevant. Congratulations, Abe. You've solved your first murder.

ABE

What now?

Ellis reaches into his pocket and pulls out a rusty knife.

ABE

I'm not afraid of you.

ELLIS

Nobody is. There's a reason I've
always obliged you, Abe. We both
know how it feels when nobody
takes you seriously. Now they'll
know what we were capable of.

Ellis stabs himself in the heart. Pulls it out and stabs the
heart again.

He groans gasping for air. He whimpers as he dies.

A beat goes by as Abe watches in horror

Erwin coughs up blood, startling Abe before finally dying.

The ceiling fan spins.

Abe gets up, walks over to the fridge. He grabs a beer and chugs
it. He gasps for air. He reopens the fridge, notices the Fizzy
Pop in the fridge.

He looks out the window and sees a woodshed in the backyard.

Cut to:

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Abe slowly approaches the shed.

He opens it and inside is Gracie, on the floor under blankets.

She looks up at him, folding a paper flower.

Cut to:

EXT. BACKYARD - DUSK

Abe calls the widow Gulliver.

WIDOW GULLIVER

Abe?

ABE

I found her.

[CONT.]

WIDOW GULLIVER

What are you talking about? My cat
is a boy.

ABE

I found her.

WIDOW GULLIVER

What?

ABE

She's too scared to talk to me.

Police sirens echo in the background.

ABE (V.O.)

When I was 32, I solved the case
of the Willowbrook kidnapper. It
was Ellis Erwin, the evil
principal.

Fade to:

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

Abe's alarm wakes him up.

He gets out of bed, brushes his teeth, washes his face.

ABE (V.O.)

Gracie's discovery remained a
national news story for weeks. I
was the kid deactivate who never
gave up. The governor presented me
with a medal, Rory Beans accepted
a handshake. The widow Gulliver
called me a hero, I think her cat
is probably dead though.

EXT. MAIN STREET - DAY

Abe walks to work.

ABE (V.O.)

It was like the whole town
returned to color overnight.
People came out for the potato

ABE (V.O.) (CONT.)

festival for the first time in 18
years.

Abe walks by Mr. Ackerman's barber shop again.

MR. ACKERMAN

Morning Abe.

INT. ABE'S OFFICE - DAY

Abe enters his office to multiple people waiting in the waiting
room.

ABE (V.O.)

Even Lucy started looking at me
differently.

Lucy sits at her desk reading a magazine where Gracie is the
cover story.

LUCY

Wait. She's in there.

Abe enters his office.

Caroline sits in the chair.

ABE

Caroline. How are you.

CAROLINE

I'm okay.

Abe sits.

CAROLINE

What happened to your office.

ABE

Had to take the old headlines
down. Looked too stupid.

CAROLINE

Feels pretty empty.

ABE

Are you back at school?

CAROLINE

Not yet.

ABE

That's good you should take your time.

CAROLINE

Nobody really knows what to say to me.

ABE

And your grandparents?

CAROLINE

They're still pretty confused. They thought I was a gift from Jesus not some pedophile rapist.

ABE

I'm sorry.

CAROLINE

It's not like you didn't warn me. "No matter how simple a case may seem, it's always shocking what you find."

ABE

I was just being pretentious.

CAROLINE

Still.. isn't it better to know the truth. Well at least you saved Gracie.

ABE

Yea sort of. Has she reached out to you yet.

CAROLINE

She's just a kid.

Abe hangs his head.

Cut to:

INT. ABE'S APARTMENT - DAY

A knock at the door.

His parents enter.

ABE

Hi. Can I get you tea or something.

MOM

Oh no thank you were okay.

They sit in the living room.

DAD

How are you enjoying the extra space?

ABE

It's great.

MOM

Not a little lonely without Corey?

ABE

He was kind of a deadbeat.

MOM

Oh. It's so tidy.

ABE

Yeah, I hired a cleaning lady.

MOM

Oh did you see you were in another magazine?

ABE

It's a story that touches people.

MOM

Hm.

DAD

Getting any money out of that?

ABE

It's good for business.

MOM

You uhm, you seem tired.

ABE

Yeah, I've been having a little trouble sleeping.

MOM

Why? What's wrong?

ABE

It's nothing, the floor creaks at night.

MOM

You know they called us for a quote. I hope you don't mind.

Abe shakes his head, looks around.

MOM

Are you alright?

Abe starts sobbing.

DAD

Abe?

MOM

What's the matter?

Cut to black.

THE END