

BOYS CAN FLY

Episode 2

"THE MOUTH PIECE"

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EPISODE 2

INT. HOME OF STEPHANIE CAMPBELL - DINING ROOM

Large, stylish, and art on the walls. Not a mansion by any means, but 'got money'. They live in an emerging upscale area on the lake, south of Sheboygan called Black River. Evening at dinner table, Stephanie's mom, dad, and two younger siblings. Stephanie is the oldest child.

ROGER CAMPBELL

How was school? Are you making good friends? Are you liking it here?

Roger is tall, fit, a brooks brothers and country club kind of guy; might sail too; blue oxford shirt, sleeves rolled up.

STEPHANIE

I like it here. Things move slower than Chicago, The Lutherans around here are more conservative and pro-Jesus.

ROGER CAMPBELL

Rural. Blue collar. Nice enough.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL

Seems like a fine school. Your teacher says your fitting right in - even though your a stranger from a strange land.

STEPHANIE

Lutherans' on one half of the block. Catholics on the other. Separated by a tall guard fence. We slip notes to each other at recess.

ROGER CAMPBELL

A little separation is a good thing at your age.

STEPHANIE

Feels like a prison.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL

Any inmates of interest?

STEPHANIE

Mom?!?! Weird.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL
I hear those catholic boys can be
trouble.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL GYM

CHUCK

GLOWERING HOMICIDALLY at the basketball hoop. He's practicing free throws. CLANG! He short-arms one. The ball hits the rim and ricochets off to...

MACE NEWTON, 13. Tall and imposing. A mild streak of sadism shows in his grin as he holds the ball and cracks facetiously to TOOHEY KARPOWITZ, another of Chuck's teammates.

MACE NEWTON
(re: Chuck's errant shot)
Another brick. Waddo you think it
is, Tooey?

TOOEY
(Snorts. Then..)
Chuck didn't eat his Wheaties this
morning.

Chuck's glare is a dagger aimed at Mace's sardonic face.

You see, these two, Mace and Tooey, survived the rosary session firmly ordained on them by Chuck's dad in EPISODE 1.

TOOEY (CONT'D)
Nerves. Chuckie's got the yips.

MACE NEWTON
Nah. It's not nerves.

Chuck does that gimmie thing with his hands. He wants the ball back. Mace fires an aggressive pass to Chuck.

MACE NEWTON
(to Tooey)
You know what it is?

Chuck dramatically ignores their talk. Tosses up another free throw. Misses badly to the left, but snatches the rebound before Mace can. Mace just laughs cruelly.

MACE NEWTON
I think Jesus is trying to tell
Chuckie something.

TOOEY

Yeah. Try another sport.

Tooey heartily laughs at his joke. But Mace and Chuck remain as overwhelming serious as a tsunami about to hit land. Just the mutual glares alone could foul another player.

CHUCK

(GLARES at Mace as he says
this:)

Shut up, Tooey.

MACE NEWTON

Yeah. Jesus isn't telling Chuckie
to quit basketball. Jesus is
telling Chuckie boy to take out his
rosary. Isn't he, Chuckie?

Chuck wants to rip Mace's balls off and stuff them in his mouth -- but he bridles his temper. Takes another free throw. This time, SWISH. He makes it.

MACE NEWTON

Nice.

(to Tooey)

He's got the rosary memorized.
Chuckie's said so many rosaries he
doesn't need one.

(to Chuck)

You saying your rosary, Chuck?

Chuck snatches the ball. Truculently spins it in his hands.

MACE NEWTON

Where are you, Chuck? On a Hail
Mary?

Chuck stares hard at the ball in his hands.

MACE NEWTON

Where are you, Chuck? Where are
you, Bead Thumber?

(turns to Tooey)

"Bead Thumber." That's a good
nickname for Chuckie. Oh, wait.
Even better: Roseryita --

WHAM! The basketball hits the side of Mace's head with such malignant force that Mace stumbles. When he regains his footing, IT'S ON.

Mace bull rushes Chuck and they both violently crash against the hardwood floor. Chuck ends up on top and WINDMILLS Mace with punches, many of them landing until--

Mace shoves the lighter chuck off his chest, then dives at him until --

BASKETBALL COACH (O.C.)
DIEDRICH, NEWTON! BREAK IT UP!

The BASKETBALL COACH (army flat top, a real generalisimo-type) and his two assistants separate the two boys, Mace's nose bleeding, a welt over his right eye growing fast.

STAY ON CHUCK, nearly hyperventilating, toxic with adrenaline, as we...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. HOME OF STEPHANIE CAMPBELL - DINING ROOM

As Stephanie's father rhapsodizes over Sheboygan.

ROGER CAMPBELL
Peaceful little town. Lots of businesses popping up; the bank is doing well.

STEPHANIE
Speaking of businesses, I have a class assignment to visit a local farm and write a paper on it.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL
Plenty of corn, cows and cheese around here.

STEPHANIE
That's why I want to visit a mink farm. Did you know that Sheboygan County is the largest mink producing county in the entire state?

ROGER CAMPBELL
(Smiling, loving his young daughter's pluck)
That so? Didn't know that.

STEPHANIE
Big industry...you know mink coats, fashion, glamour.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL
(smiling)
Might look a little overdressed wearing a mink coat in Sheboygan.

ROGER CAMPBELL

I met a few mink ranchers at the bank. I can ask about it.

STEPHANIE

I talked to Ray Diedrich, the plumber we used on our guest house. He said his brother has a mink farm. I could do a field trip. - see a mink ranch.

ROGER CAMPBELL

Fine with me. Catherine?

CATHERINE CAMPBELL

Only if they give you a mink coat for me.

ROGER CAMPBELL

What's wrong with the three you have?

CATHERINE CAMPBELL

A girl can never have enough mink.

STEPHANIE

Then it's settled. I'll let Ray know.

(then, ironic)

This is fab. I'll learn a lot.

She's thinking of Chuck, of course...

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CARL DIEDRICH'S CAR - DAY

Chuck, sweaty and mussed up and his Dad, Carl ride in tense silence, until Carl unloads on his son.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

I won't have you fighting. We have a business in this city, you understand?

(doesn't wait for an answer)

What the heck were you fighting about? What can be so important that you give a teammate -- a teammate -- a bloody nose?

Silence.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
I asked you a --

CHUCK
He called me names.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
(astonished)
You're lucky you weren't suspended!
And he called you names? What names
are worth getting expelled over?

CHUCK
(corrects Dad)
Suspended --

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
What names!?

CHUCK
Does it matter?

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
It mattered to you. What did he
call you? Why didn't you tell the
coach --

CHUCK
I'm not a squealer --

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
What did he do -- call you a mink
farmer? Well, I'm proud of what I
do, we produce the finest mink in
the United States, did you know
that, are you aware of how
respected we are *outside* of this
city? And you're brawling like a
sailor at school? You don't have to
fight my battles, Mister --

CHUCK
(CUTTING him off)
-- He called me a bead thumber.

Carl scrunches his face.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
A *what*?

CHUCK
Someone who says... someone who
says the rosary all the time.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Well that sure as hell isn't you.

No, it isn't. And now it sinks into Carl's steady mind. As he looks out at the road ahead the terrible epiphany hits him: His son was fighting his battles.

He peaks at Chuck, leaning disconsolately against the car door. Carl has an odd, oscillating expression caught on his face, as if he doesn't know whether to slap Chuck upside the head or to pull him close and hug him for his crucible.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. DRIVE WAY OF MINK DIEDRICH FARM - DAY

Early morning, cold and overcast day. Snow is in the air. A clean, new car pulls into the drive way. HELEN DIEDRICH comes out of the house.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM
Welcome. You must Catherine and this must be Stephanie. Ray said such nice things about you.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL
Hello Mrs. Diedrich, nice to meet you.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM
You can call me Helen.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL
My first time on a mink farm. Its all Stephanie talks about lately.

Her daughter eagerly surveys the mink yard as if she's looking for someone in particular.

STEPHANIE
Nice to meet you. A real mink ranch. I can't wait to see it.

Marvin exits the Feed House. He sees Helen and the strangers talking. He walks over.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM
This is Marvin, our hired hand. There is nothing he can't do. Marv, we will have a guest with us today. This is Stephanie Campbell. She's got a school project and she wants to learn all about the mink business.

MARVIN

Well, this is the place.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

This is her mom, Catherine.

MARVIN

Hello, mom. I have to say we're in the middle of things, it's our busy season but I got just the guy to show how things are run around here.

STEPHANIE

You mean, Chuck? We talk through the fence at school sometimes.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

So you attend the Lutheran School? Have we met before? You look a little familiar?

STEPHANIE

(a dazzling non-sequitir)

Thanks.

(to Marvin)

So where's my tour guide?

Marvin and Stephanie start walking away, leaving Helen and Catherine to themselves.

MARVIN

No exactly sure. In one of these sheds I'm guessing. He's getting set up.

STEPHANIE

Set up for what?

MARVIN

Chasmo is doing the pelting. He's been promoted. He's the Big Man now.

(checks her out)

Looks like you're dressed warm and you got your insulated rubber boots on; kind of cold and messy this time of year.

STEPHANIE

Chasmo! Chuck the Chasmo.

MARVIN

The sight of you will perk him up.

INT MINK SHED

Chuck stands in the aisle, next to the kill box.

MARVIN

Chasmo, we got a guest. She wants to learn about the mink business. She says he knows you from the school fence.

Chuck looks up. Confused, stunned, embarrassed, and sees a pink and blue vision.

CHUCK

Whaaat the....whooo? Why?

MARVIN

Here's your tour guide.

CHUCK

(excited)

Me?

(easy, tiger. Staid now)

Um.. me?

The mink have their own way of saying hello. The nearest ones snarl and rattle their cages as they run in tight little, imprisoned circles.

MARVIN

Stephanie, don't put your fingers in the pen.

STEPHANIE

They're so vicious.

MARVIN

Not so bad once you get to know how to handle them.

Marvin puts his hand on Chuck's shoulder.

MARVIN

Chuck, do us proud and give this beautiful girl a tour worthy of a queen.

Stephanie blushes while Chuck pleads --

CHUCK

Oh, please, not now. Not here. Please. Can you come back? I-I-I look like shit. I smell.

MARVIN
(facetiously)
He smells.
(to Chuck
This is a mink farm --

STEPHANIE
I want to smell.

MARVIN
She wants to smell. Get a move on
Chasmo, show her a real live mink
farm.
(then)
Bye. You kids have fun!

Marvin leaves Stephanie and Chuck alone.

CHUCK
Weird.

STEPHANIE
Not weird! I'm all eyes, ears, and
note pad. I guess your folks didn't
tell you I was coming. School
project... I want to learn all
about the mink business.

CHUCK
Follow me.

He leads Stephanie to the part of the shed where the kill box
is located.

CHUCK
Nobody told me. It's pelting season
for Christ's sake.

STEPHANIE
Your killing them? You?

CHUCK
Pelting, not killing. Yes. I found
out yesterday.

STEPHANIE
Congratulations!

CHUCK
Wasn't expecting an audience.

STEPHANIE
I wanted to see you.

CHUCK
(collects himself...takes
a deep breath)
Well, here I am. Hope you like it.
Take a wiff.

Chuck is annoyed, confused, pissed off, self conscious and deeply enamored.

CHUCK
Stand away from the kill box, it
has cyanide powder in it. It's
poisonous.

Stephanie stands back and watches Chuck who opens kennels and drops mink into the kill box. He works fast. After about 25 animals are in the box, he moves to where Stephanie is standing and watching.

CHUCK
We need to wait a few minutes.

STEPHANIE
Wait for what?

CHUCK
For them to die.

STEPHANIE
Oh.

CHUCK
Its like falling asleep. Its just
what we do. It's what I do.

STEPHANIE
Eternal sleep.

CHUCK
I guess so. Just stay here and hold
your breath. I am going to collect
them.

Chuck moves the wheelbarrow next to the kill box. He unfastens the two openers on the side of the box; he takes a deep breath; opens the door and 25 lifeless mink slide out and onto soft, dry hay that covers the bottom of the wheelbarrow. He closes the kill box door, locks it.

As he does this, Stephanie has crept up to behind his shoulder.

He locks it and exhales. Then Stephanie collapses to the ground.

CHUCK
Stephanie!!!! Oh my God, I killed
her.

Chuck gets down next to her. Takes off his leather gloves,
and pulls her a few feet from the box.

CHUCK,
Stephanie!

Chuck touches her face, he's about to do CPR; puts his mouth
on her month when she opens her eyes and laughs with
enthusiasm.

STEPHANIE
Got you!!!

CHUCK
You're alive?

STEPHANIE
Sweet of you to care.

CHUCK
You scared the shit out me. How
could you do that?

STEPHANIE
Loosen you up! It's not the end of
the world, Chuck.

He helps her up. Brushes her off.

CHUCK
I'm a little wound up I guess.

STEPHANIE
Think????

CHUCK
Okay, I'm stressed.

STEPHANIE
I can see that.

CHUCK
You're a crazy girl.

STEPHANIE
Can I touch them?

Stephanie looks down on the pile of warm, dead mink.

CHUCK

You sure don't waste any time.
Sure. Let me grab one.

Chuck reaches into the pile and pulls one out. He holds it like during grading. He lets her pet it, feel it, look at it. She is transfixed.

STEPHANIE

Like velvet... The softest velvet
ever.

CHUCK

Rub your hand slowly over its back.

Stephanie takes her time. After a long moment, he puts the mink back in the wheelbarrow.

CHUCK

What to you think?

STEPHANIE

I'm not thinking. Nothing I ever
experienced. This place is amazing!
Hell with dairy farms; I all about
mink and Chasmo!!!

CHUCK

Pelting season.

STEPHANIE

Yes, I can see that.

Marvin appears at the shed door. Takes a moment to take in the two of them. And then yells.

MARVIN

Chuck! Get your ass in gear!

CHUCK

Shit. Okay. Sorry.

Chuck picks up the wheelbarrow, and rolls it at a quick pace.

STEPHANIE

Get your ass in gear, Diedrich!!
Step it up....one and two, and one
and two. Get moving, Chasmo.

Stephanie trots beside Chuck and the wheelbarrow.

INT. CARPENTER SHOP

Marvin hears the two of them coming and opens the carpenter shop door. Chuck's dad is at the skinning table, sharpening knives and smoking his pipe. There is a stand up wood stove. It is warm and comfortable inside.

MARVIN
(winks at Chuck)
Chuck got hung up.

CHUCK
Sorry.

CHUCK
No rest for the wicked.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
I hear we have a special guest today.

CHUCK
This is Stephanie. She attends Evangelical Lutheran School. She's doing a class report on mink farming.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Welcome Stephanie. You picked quite a time of year for your visit.

STEPHANIE
Pelting season - I lucked out I guess. Thank you for letting me visit. Your brother Ray brought me to your summer picnic and I got to see a little of your ranch.

CARL RIES - DAD
What have you done so far?

STEPHANIE
Chuck just held a dead one for me. Very soft and beautiful!

MARVIN
That girl deserves a mink tail.

Marvin reaches under the skinning table, finds a black mink tail and gives it to Stephanie. When tails come off during skinning, they are not sown back on.

MARVIN

Congratulations' Stephanie, you are
now a junior minker.

STEPHANIE

Thanks, Marvin.

Chuck picks all the dead mink out of the Wheelbarrow and lays them on the end of the work table next to Marvin.

The skinning of the mink is a quick two part process. Marvin cuts from rear leg to rear leg and with his index finger slightly pulls the tail bone free and passes the animal to my dad.

Carl uses a ice pick to impale both hind feet of the mink; and with a pulley he extracts the tail bone; he then peels off the hide like a tight fitting sweater; when he gets to the head/nose, he uses a small sharp knife to cut and free the hide from the carcass; careful never to slice into the hide (or ripe the skin).

He constantly sharpens the knife. With one final slice he frees the nose from the body. The entire hide is now free from the body. He tosses the caucus into a 50 pound barrel that is now half full with caucuses. He turns to hang the hide on a rack behind him. The rack has 50 hides warm, skinned mink hanging on it.

Carl never stops working. Chuck never stops working. Stephanie is enthralled.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Take these hides to the freezer.

Chuck puts an old dish towel in the crook of his left arm so his jacket does not get mink fat oil all over it. He collects the skins hanging behind his dad; laying them over his arm. Once all 50 are collected, he leaves.

EXT. GRAVEL DRIVE WAY - LATER

Chuck exits the carpenter shop and walks to the freezer that is adjoined to the feed house. It has started to snow. Walking side by side with Stephanie.

STEPHANIE

Thank you.

CHUCK

For what?

STEPHANIE

For letting me be here. For showing
me your strange magical world.

The hides that Chuck is carrying are so freshly skinned that
steam rises off them and into the winter air.

CHUCK

It's weird having you see all this.
I'm glad your not freaked out.
(adding)
You're not, right?

STEPHANIE

Not even close. Nothing like you
exists in Chicago. You're the one
and only, Chasmo The Great!

CHUCK

Smelly?

STEPHANIE

(bursting with laughter)
Smells I never smelled before.

CHUCK

You can call me stinky if you like?

STEPHANIE

"Chuck" is just fine. I sort of
like Chasmo too. You have bunch of
cool names for yourself. Stinky but
interesting that's for sure.

Stephanie puts her hand on Chuck's shoulder and squeezes it
as they arrive at the feed house door.

INT. FREEZER ROOM

Stacked high with 100 pound blocks of frozen feed
ingredients. An area is cleared to the front where Chuck sets
down the mink hides and one by one inserts a thin, wooden
board about 5 inches wide into each hide. He then lines then
up the freezer.

Stephanie sits on frozen blocks of feed nearby and watches.

CHUCK

We let the hides freeze. It makes
it easier to scrape the fat off
them. We call it fleshing.

CHUCK

Marv, my brothers and few others
will start fleshing later. We
better get moving.

STEPHANIE

So nice and cold in here and quiet
too.

Stephanie stands up and faces Chuck. They look at each other
for a good long time. Chuck does not know what to do with the
quiet, the privacy. His head is spinning.

CHUCK

We need to get moving. I have work
to do.

EXT. MINK YARD - LATER

Chuck is pushing the wheelbarrow back to the shed. Snow is
falling. Stephanie walks along side him.

CHUCK

You like Sheboygan?

STEPHANIE

I guess so. Feels small sometimes.

CHUCK

I've never been to Chicago. I
haven't any place really except
around here.

STEPHANIE

But you want to, right?

CHUCK

Has to be more then just this.

They return to the kill box. Stephanie stands back and Chuck
again, drops 25 mink in quick succession. As he moves back to
wait for the mink to die.

STEPHANIE

Can I try?

CHUCK

Try?

STEPHANIE

Killing?

CHUCK
You're crazy, you know that?

STEPHANIE
I want to try.

Chuck reflects, and decides to show her how. He reaches into a kennel, grabs a mink by the head, holds its body with his other hand, and drops it into the kill box.

CHUCK
You got that? Here put these on.
Now grab my hand.

Chuck's hand becomes the mink; he pulls it away and she tries again. This time she does not let go.

CHUCK
Good.

Now Stephanie reaches into the kennel of a pastel female. Grabs it, and carries it to the kill box trap door and drops it in. They both walk a few steps away from the kill box.

CHUCK
You did it! Your a mink handler - a minker!

STEPHANIE
Well thank you very much!

CHUCK
You can't tell anyone I let you do this.

STEPHANIE
Secret stays with us.

She reaches out with the catching glove on and shakes Chucks hand. She holds a mink now, wriggling and squirming, but she holds on tight.

EXT MINK YARD

Stephanie pushes the wheelbarrow through the mink yard toward the carpenter shop. They are animated and talking.

STEPHANIE
Best day ever.

CHUCK
It was fun. You're fun. Different.

INT. CARPENTER SHOP

Marvin greets Stephanie.

MARVIN

Got your mink tail and now the
coveted honor of pushing the
wheelbarrow. We'll do a job
interview soon.

STEPHANIE

Its been a fascinating day. I
learned a lot. My dad is picking me
up pretty soon. Thank you for
having me.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

You're welcome to come visit
anytime. Maybe during weening
season. There's something new going
on all year round.

STEPHANIE

Your mink are beautiful.

Chuck reacts to the SOUND of tires crunching over gravel.

CHUCK

That car must be your dad.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD

Stephanie and Chuck walk towards Roger Campbell's car idling
in the drive way. Roger talks to Chuck's mom.

STEPHANIE

Best day ever day.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

Glad you enjoyed it. Lots going
this time of year.

ROGER CAMPBELL

You must be Chuck?

Chuck's odor is evident. Roger can be seen puzzling over the
smell.

CHUCK

Nice to meet you, Mr. Campbell.

STEPHANIE

Thank you for such a great experience. I guess the next time I see you will be through the fence.

ROGER CAMPBELL

We better be getting home, you're mom will have dinner ready soon.

EXT. GRAVEL ROAD NEAR THE SHEDS

As Helen watches the car disappear down the road.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

Lutherans.

CHUCK

So what. She's wonderful.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

Was that the girl who came with Ray to the picnic?

CHUCK

Yes.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

I thought she looked familiar. Ray says they're from Chicago. Money people. She's a little shifty.

CHUCK

No, she's honest. About everything.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

She's out of your league.

CHUCK

What league is that?

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

You just watch yourself or you'll get hurt. You stick to what you know and people who know you.

Helen turns and goes back into the house.

INT./EXT. ROGER CAMPBELL'S CAR

He sniffs and makes a sour face.

ROGER CAMPBELL

That's quite an odor. You'll need a soaking.

STEPHANIE

I loved it. Chuck's quite a mink handler. Look at this -- a mink tail! I'm now a junior minker!

She holds up the tail to show her dad. It, too smells of mink odor.

ROGER CAMPBELL

Seems like a nice enough farm boy.

STEPHANIE

I like him. Yeah. I like him.

STAY ON STEPHANIE, her eyes wide open as if to see the future more clearly...

INT. FLESHING ROOM - DAY

The converted garage now has 4 fleshing machines in it. Marvin, brother Jim and John are fleshing.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM

How are you boys doing?

MARVIN

Getting rich at 35 cents a hide.

JIM

Rich?

MARVIN

Well you gotta be fast, Jimmy. You might have too many feathers in your head.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM

Just don't tear any; makes more work for me.

Helen goes from work station to work station, counting the fleshed mink; keeping a written tally.

MARVIN

I think Chasmo is smitten like a lead mitten. He's been floating around more then usual since yesterday. She's cute.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
I told him to watch out for girls
like that.

JOHN
I must have missed something?

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
Yesterday.

MARVIN
School project on the mink business
but I think Chuck was the business
she was studying.

JOHN
She must be blind. Or have no sense
of smell. Did she get a whiff?

MARVIN
Most definitely not blind. All she
could smell was Chasmo.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
You think she set this all up to
see Chuck? She and her folks seemed
fancy. Not the kind of people who
come out the mink farms.

Chuck walks in from the feed house.

JOHN
Hey you little knucklehead, you
been holding out on us. You got a
girlfriend? Is she retarded or
what?

CHUCK
What? No.

John
I hear she's cute.

CHUCK
She's a friend.

JIM
Seems unlikely.

MARVIN
Nice girl. Sent her home smelling
like a mink rose.
(MORE)

MARVIN (CONT'D)

I gave a scented tail fresh off the wheelbarrow. The fragrance women die from.

DISSOLVE TO:

Screen Graphic: **THREE WEEKS LATER**

EXT. STEPHANIE'S HOME - DAY

As Stephanie, animated and jazzed about something uses two hands to open the difficult, large door.

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOME - HALLWAY

Stephanie breezes in, kick off her shoes...

STEPHANIE

(HOLLERS to the house)

I got an A! I got an A!

Stephanie clambers up the stairs to...

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM

Stephanie, delighted, plucks her "A DAY ON A MINK FARM" term paper from her backpack.

We can see the grade she got -- an encircled "A" -- as it stands out on the title page in RED.

DISSOLVE TO:

SCREEN GRAPHIC - **THE NEXT MORNING**

INT. STEPHANIE'S HOUSE KITCHEN - DAY

Breakfast. Stephanie's parents, CATHERINE and ROGER face each other in a way that tells us they have a secret they're sharing. Roger asks the table...

ROGER CAMPBELL

What day is it today?

STEPHANIE

Thursday. One more day to a weekend of relief from books.

ROGER CAMPBELL

I don't think so.

(to his wife)

Do you?

Tired of keeping the secret and probably not behind it any way, Catherine rapidly slathers her well-done toast with a knife and butter. Then chops it hard in half, leaning on her knife, her full bust jiggling with Catherine's strength.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL

Oh, for the love of Pete, just tell her, Rog.

STEPHANIE

Oh, boy. I'm grounded all weekend
FOR LETTING Hummer Whitfield kiss
me in the Cafeteria?

ROGER CAMPBELL

When did this happen?

STEPHANIE

Wait -- Principal Moore didn't call
you?

CATHERINE CAMPBELL

No. Looks like you got a free-be
there.

(then)

The Whitfield family owns 25 liquor
stores across the state.

STEPHANIE

Really.

CATHERINE CAMPBELL

(hopeful)

So you like Hummer Whitfield?

STEPHANIE

Not really.

ROGER CAMPBELL

All right all right, let's forget
about Strummer --

STEPHANIE

Hummer.

ROGER CAMPBELL

Whatever. Due to the A on your Term
Paper, we're going up to The Island
this weekend.

Stephanie bounds to her father, gives him a bear hug and a smooch on the cheek.

STEPHANIE
Oh, Daddy thank you! I can't get
enough of the Island!
(uses her affection to
squeeze this in:)
Can I bring a friend?

STAY ON Stephanie, anticipating the answer with a broad grin...

STEPHANIE
Thank you!

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DIEDRICH HOUSE - BASEMENT - EARLY EVENING

Helen comes to the basement carrying a arm full of fleshed skins. Carl is sitting at a small table slipping mink hides over drying boards and setting them into the racks.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
Marvin says Chuck is a little goofy
about that girl.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Just a girl.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
Not just a girl. She's trouble.

STAY ON CARL, feeling a mink hide as if he was massaging his ego, confident and dismissive to his wife.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
You have my ticket?

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
You're all booked.

Then, still scratching that itch called Stephanie, Helen goes on about Stephanie...

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
He can't keep up with a girl like
that. Lutheran too. Chicago people.
Nothing but trouble.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
It'll pass.

As we hear the distant RING of a telephone coming from upstairs...

CUT TO:

INT. DIEDRICH KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Eating a big chunk of forbidden-until-after-dinner chocolate cake, CHUCK is startled by the telephone ring. He answers with a mouthful of cake.

CHUCK (INTO THE PHONE)
(Hello with his mouth full
of cake)
Mmmllow?

CUT TO:

INT. STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM

Stephanie ON HER PHONE makes a scrunchy face, as in who is THIS?

STEPHANIE
Um, hello. May I speak with Chuck?

INT. CHUCK'S KITCHEN/STEPHANIE'S BEDROOM

As they talk over the phone. Chuck immediately recognizes her voice and swallows his cake.

CHUCK (PHONE)
Speaking.

STEPHANIE (PHONE)
Hi, Chuck.

Chuck's so excited he's ready to climb into the phone wires to find her.

CHUCK (PHONE)
Stephanie! I was just.. eating...
some... cake.

STEPHANIE (PHONE)
Sounds delicious.

CHUCK (PHONE)
(re: for talking with his
mouth full)
Sorry.

STEPHANIE (PHONE)

How would you like to go up to Washington Island with me and my parents this weekend? We have a house on the lake. They said I could take a friend and anybody who enjoys chocolate cake as much as that is a friend of mine.

Chuck goes into shock. And it's not from all the sugar in the cake either. It's her, the vision of his fantasies asking him, he who slaughters little furry animals and smelleth like a sewer pipe.

STEPHANIE (PHONE)

Hello? Are you still there?

CHUCK (PHONE)

YES. I mean yes, I'd like to go.

STEPHANIE (PHONE)

We have a seriously great boat. Do you sail?

CHUCK (PHONE)

Me? oh, oh sure.

STEPHANIE (PHONE)

Have you sailed a 40 footer before?

CHUCK (PHONE)

Woah. Um, well, no, nothing that big.

(then)

To tell the truth the only boat I've been on has a couple oars and a seat that gave me splinters.

Stephanie giggles. Then...

STEPHANIE (PHONE)

It's no sweat, really. You can be captain. You can handle the boom while I handle your rudder.

She has no idea of the double entendre. Chuck, still reeling by the call from heaven doesn't either.

CHUCK (PHONE)

Well, that sounds great. I do have to ask my folks --

STEPHANIE (PHONE)

-- Oh, they're so nice.

CHUCK (PHONE)

Yeah.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM (PRELAP)

NO.

INT. THE DIEDRICH LIVING ROOM

As Mom turns down Chuck's request with a little too much gusto. Dad Carl dispassionately reads the paper on the couch.

CHUCK

But why?

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM

Because your father is taking you
with him to New York.

This is news to Chuck's Dad who rattles his newspaper to get his wife's attention, but she ignores him.

CHUCK

What if I don't want to go?

That grabs Dad's attention. He eases his paper down to his lap. Looks a little sideways at his son.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Now why would you say that?

CHUCK

(amending)

It's not that I don't wanna go it's
just that Stephanie invited me up
to their house on Washington Island
this weekend.

HELEN DIEDRICH MOM

(with a touch of sarcasm)

Well, I hope you didn't answer in
the affirmative yet --

CHUCK

I told her I had to ask my parents.

(then)

So I'm asking.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM

Well, I for one --

Carl holds up his hand to summarily cut off Mom.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
(to Chuck)
You're a mink farmer. You work hard
and you've got the touch. It's
about time you saw the money side
of our business.

Carl regards Chuck, about as crestfallen as a dead leaf.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
You'll thank me later. New York is
a very special place.

CHUCK
But --

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
No, no buts. You'll have all summer
to go to Washington Island with
this girl.

CHUCK
(defiant to the last)
Her name is Stephanie.

Oh, Dad doesn't like being corrected, no not at all and he
stares, his eyes like two bullets, aimed at his son's
impudence. Chuck gets it. The talk is over.

CHUCK
(capitulating)
Yes, sir.

HELEN DIEDRICH - MOM
(cheerfully)
You need help packing?

Chuck slowly shakes his head, the look on his face
electrified with contempt -- for both of them, for his lot in
life, for the ten thousand minks waiting to have their fur
torn from their flesh -- and surrenders towards his room.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MINK FARM - JUST BEFORE DAWN

Chuck exits the house, being sure to gently close the kitchen
door. He high tails it to...

INT. MINK FARM - A TOOL SHED - JUST LATER

PITCH BLACK, until CLICK -- Chuck has turned on the lights.
We're in a shed nearly the size of a warehouse.

Filled with heavy tools, farm machinery, lumber, oil cans, gas cans and so on.

Chuck looks out a window: The pinkish glow says it's getting light out. He quickly seeks out what he's looking for:

A TWELVE-FOOT LONG ALUMINUM POLE, which he carefully extracts from a pile of plumbing pipes.

CUT TO:

EXT. MINK FARM - THE CAGES - JUST LATER

Rows and rows and rows of stacked cages each one harboring a small dark presence, like souls waiting in a wire-latticed purgatory, some sleeping, others leering out at freedom -- ten thousand minks in all their captured and kept wonder.

ANGLE ON A ROW OF CAGES

Each with a garden fence-like latch that lifts up to open each pen. Now we see Chuck's pole as it slides along a row of LATCHES. What? What? He's about to free a dozen minks at once, when --

MARVIN (O.C.)

How long you think it would
take --

MARVIN so thoroughly startles Chuck that he drops the pole.

MARVIN (CONT'D)

-- To free all of them?

CHUCK

(with an edge)
I dunno...

MARVIN

Even with your pole there, you
couldn't do it in a day let alone
by the time your father gets up.

CHUCK

I wasn't trying to free all of
them. Just...

MARVIN

Enough to make a statement, huh?

Chuck shrugs. Then...

CHUCK
They keep holding me down,
controlling me, I feel like I'm in
jail.

MARVIN
So if you can't be free a few dozen
mink can, is that it?

CHUCK
Sure, why not?

Marvin picks up the pole. Hands it to Chuck.

MARVIN
So go ahead then, I won't stop you.

Marvin's acquiescence temporarily derails Chuck's ardor. He turns away and into the direction of the rising sun.

CHUCK
Shit.

MARVIN
You're crazy about this girl aren't
you?

CHUCK
If you blindfolded me I could find
my way to her. She could be with
anyone. Any one. And she chose me.
She likes me for who I am.

MARVIN
And who's that?

Chuck glares at the pole as if it was an awful idea in aluminum. Pent up, angry, poisoned by a noxious mixture of self-pity and self-contempt, he throws the pole like a javelin down the row the mink pens.

CHUCK
I don't know...

MARVIN
Yeah, life takes on a lot of
different shapes, doesn't it?
(then)
Well, before you make any
statement, maybe you should work on
finding out.

The two of them stand in silence while the sherbet ball of the sun tears away from the horizon. Then...

CHUCK
What're you doing out so early?

MARVIN
Early works for me. I like the dark
surrender that happens before the
sun gets up there to do it's job.
(adding)
It's very peaceful -- usually.

Chuck kind of snorts a little laugh. Then, sobering up:

CHUCK
I don't know what to do.

MARVIN
I'll bet.

Marvin puts a comforting hand on Chuck's shoulder. Then:

MARVIN
You never been on a plane, have
you?

CHUCK
No.

As Marvin strides down the row to fetch the pole...

MARVIN
Well, for starters, enjoy the ride.

STAY ON CHUCK, as we...

CUT HARD TO:

INT./EXT. BOEING 747 - DAY

As it ROARS and rips away from the earth, CHUCK plastered
back in his seat, as if a giant palm were holding him back.

INT. JFK AIRPORT TERMINAL

Chuck and dad wait for bags at luggage return. QUICK SHOTS of
people and things Chuck has never seen in Sheboygan - black
people, Hasidic Jews, Hare Krishna hippies and other non-
white folks.

EXT. 5TH AVENUE - CENTRAL PARK

A hundred cabs stampede through an intersection going both
ways, CHUCK AND HIS DAD, as Carl hails one of the cabs.

EXT. TIMES SQUARE - DAY

Dad walks his son through the throng of tourists, workers, homeless hippies and hookers.

POV CHUCK: That wrap-around news report display cries out in teletype: ***The Boston Strangler Albert DeSalvo is captured... Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton to wed...Students storm the administration building and stage sit in at the University of California. 800 are arrested...***

INT. HOTEL LOBBY

Chuck and dad check into their hotel.

FRONT DESK CLERK
Welcome to New York! Is this your first visit to the big apple?

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
This is my son's first visit.
Stranger in a strange land.

FRONT DESK CLERK
You'll come to love it. But first you have to get used to it.

CHUCK
I never saw so many people. Where do they all live?

FRONT DESK CLERK
(Laughs)
Mostly on top of each other. I will make sure to get you a nice room since its your first visit.

INT. ELEVATOR

Bell hop has their bags.

BELLHOP
What you here for?

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Here for the fur auction.

BELLHOP
What kind of fur?

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Mink.

BELLHOP
Fancy. You buying or selling.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Most definitely selling.

INT. HOTEL SUITE

Chuck and Dad hurriedly unpack.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
You have a lot to see. Let's get to
auction house before it gets too
late.

INT. ELEVATOR

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
It's a lot to take in the first
time. We work hard all year but
this is where we learn what women
want.

Chuck looks up dubiously at his father, as...

INT./EXT. TAXI CAB - DAY

They take a Cab to garment district and NY Auction Company.

INT. FRONT LOBBY OF AUCTION HOUSE

Carl, at the front desk:

PERSON AT FRONT DESK
Welcome to the auction, Carl.
Bernie's been looking for you. I'll
let him know you arrived.

Chuck looks around, as they wait. A big busy place. Not
fancy. It is both a warehouse and a showroom. Mink hanging in
bundles, fur graders at tables, furriers and buyers looking
at stock.

BERNIE GREENBERG is in his early 40's tall, trim, handsome,
dark hair, dresses sharp. He is kind, thoughtful and smart.
Voice like velvet. A Jewish business man: Shrewd with great
insight about people. He's a good man but nobody's fool.

BERNIE GREENBERG

Carl, good to see you again. The graders tell me your hides look exceptional as always. This must be your son you said would join you this year?

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Chuck, this is Bernie Greenberg. He runs the auction house. Best judge of fur in the world.

CHUCK

Nice to meet you.

BERNIE

Your dad tells me this is your first time to the Big Apple.

CHUCK

Lots of people.

BERNIE

You're right. But we manage to all get along.

BERNIE

Your dad says you want to be a mink rancher.

CHUCK

I'm learning. He works us like men but he pays us like men.

BERNIE GREENBERG

You ranchers work a lot harder than me. He's lucky he's got a bunch of sons to help him out; pretty hard to teach people how to handle mink. Carl, I'll show Chuck what we do here? We'll catch up with you later.

INT AUCTION HOUSE MAIN ROOM

Bernie shows Chuck how mink are graded, and bundled for auction. He shows Chuck his dad's mink. Lots of visual and activity.

BERNIE

We're auctioning mink tomorrow, but we also auction fox, rabbit, raccoon and other wild and domestic fur. The buyers are from all over the world - Eastern Europe, China, Korea, Japan.

CHUCK

And turn them into garments.

BERNIE

That's right, coats, jackets, hats, stoles, capes...what ever the ladies want. The garments are sold to furriers or fashion salons.

Bernie guides Chuck to an area of the main Hall of The Auction House where mink from his dad's ranch are hanging or being graded and bundled.

BERNIE GREENBERG

These are the best ranch dark mink in the world. A remarkable blood line. Doesn't matter if the fur market are up or down, he always makes money.

CHUCK

I'm not sure what he sees in me.

BERNIE GREENBERG

He sees something special in you. He'd never brought your brothers to NYC. And here you are - that's special.

BERNIE GREENBERG

I told your dad, we'd meet him at the reception down the street.

INT. FUR FASHION BOUTIQUE NEAR THE AUCTION HOUSE

Late afternoon, a fur and leather fashion boutique near the Auction House. Hosting a wine and cheese reception for the ranchers who will sell mink the next day. A few skinny-as-a-tooth-pick-models wearing various fur garments wander around.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Well Chuck what do you think?

CHUCK

Feels miles from the shit piles.

BERNIE

Well, if I may be so crude; "no
shit, Charlie!" It must seem like
some parallel universe. You are not
in Sheboygan anymore.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Seeing all this will make sense of
long days we have back home.

Chuck sees one of eye catching models, who looks stunning,
almost artificial in her look. Chuck is not sure what to make
of it.

CHUCK

Wow. Look at her!!

Carl nods affirmatively.

BERNIE GREENBERG

Beautiful isn't she and the coat
isn't so bad either?

CHUCK

What's a coat like that cost?

BERNIE GREENBERG

About \$30,000.

CHUCK

Who can afford that? And why
bother?

BERNIE GREENBERG

Like diamonds, or race horses; no
one needs a fur coat. But humans
like to show off. Mink, diamonds,
horses, boats, high fashion are all
ways for people to let you know
they're special.

Bernie and Carl get into a side conversation and another
model strolls by, winks at young Chuck. There might be a
moment here where Chuck actually sees an alien - one of those
tall, thin, big eyes beings we often see in Science Fiction.

Carl has a beer. Bernie has red wine.

BERNIE

I had a nice time with your son. He
asks lots of questions. Curious
about everything.

CARL

He's a good boy; his mind is packed full. Maybe a little too much going on up there some days.

Bernie and Carl look over to see Chuck talking to the model. Chuck is a good bit shorter than the model; he is standing right up on her and he looks UP at her. Earnest and asking questions.

BERNIE

See that? He's **interviewing** her. Doesn't back away. I love that.

Then they pause to look around - silent; taking it in.

BERNIE

I know you put God and faith on the top shelf. I get it. I grew up in the synagogue, learned my prayers. My dad always made it clear, that God and education came before money. But with God and good education, you do things - you can make money.

CARL

Your dad got it right. It's not easy, but it is simple.

BERNIE

Chuck could take this beautiful thing you've created, and help you grow it. You've see what the Fromme and MacArthur Families have done? They used the money made from mink to diversify - real estate, animal feed, silver fox, banks, even ginseng. Those boys are printing money.

CARL

Flashy guys. Nice enough people. Big City types.

BERNIE

Won't argue with you on that. I'm just saying you got plenty of hustle and pride; you raise great mink. Your bundle price average are sky high; even during this down market. You always make money. But your still a one-horse show.

(MORE)

BERNIE (CONT'D)

I think I can help you teach Chuck to think bigger while he's just a kid. He learns it now, it stays in his head. Show him how creative, challenging, and lucrative this could all be. But in your style; with your values. You not Cadillac guy, your all quality.

CARL

I have dreams. I'm just not sure how to get there.

BERNIE

Well, you're doing pretty great! You started with bringing Chuck out here.

CUT TO:

INT. FUR FASHION BOUTIQUE - NEAR THE RUN WAY

Chuck gazes up at THE MODEL, who in heels has to be six feet and counting.

CHUCK

Excuse me, can I ask you a dumb question?

MODEL

Sure.

CHUCK

I've never seen something like you before. If you showed up looking like you do we'd think you were an alien visitor from a far off planet.

MODEL

Planet New York City?

CHUCK

(laughs at the truth of her comment)
Yes, that's right!

MODEL

Its a crazy world. I'm from Toledo, Ohio. My friends call me their fashion alien; but its good living - being a fashion alien - looking lovely is lovely. Don't you think?

CHUCK

Wearing that coat? Does it make
feel different - better?

MODEL

I guess it does. Do you like how I
look in it?

CHUCK

I think I do. I mean, my
relationship to mink fur is when
the mink are living and not dead.

MODEL

(Smiling at this paradox)
How do you like them best -- living
or dead?

CHUCK

No question about it, dead.

MODEL

Well then I am in luck!

INT./EXT CAB - LATE AFTERNOON

Chuck is still stricken by the vision of the model while his
father looks in judgement out the cab window at a city trying
to measure up to him but he won't allow it. Harrumph!

CHUCK

Those were the tallest women I have
ever seen. Not of this world!

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

High fashion. Auctions are a time
to learn. You're learning. And yes,
some of it is a little out of this
world weird too.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Bernie's a great guy. Really knows
the business.

CHUCK

Seems a little slippery to me. Like
too cool and smooth for school.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Never judge people by what they
look like.

(MORE)

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD (CONT'D)

There are plenty of people better off than we are who choose to dress like bums, drive beat-up trucks, and live in ordinary homes. Appearances don't matter! What matters is what people have in their heart, their head, and in the bank. Its called German poor. Bernie is a great man and a good man.

CHUCK

(blowing his dad off)
Got it, dad.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

Its exciting. We're here to learn. And you will too.
(then)
Tomorrow's the big day - pay day.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - CENTRAL ROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

Chuck, wet hair slicked back, in a bathrobe. He's just showered.

Furtively listens to his father in the bathroom; waits to hear the shower running. There it goes: The whoosh of water, telling Chuck he's got a few minutes to do something that's been eating at him since they arrived.

Chuck hurries to the phone. Dials a number. Gets an operator's taped message:

OPERATOR

"The number you called cannot be completed as dialed. Please hang up and try again."

Chuck SLAPS down the dial tone plunger. Rapidly dials again. Same thing:

OPERATOR

"The number you called cannot be completed as dialed. Please hang up and try again."

CHUCK

(to himself)
Shit.

He dials the hotel operator:

CHUCK
 Uh, hello. I keep trying to dial a
 number and it --
 (listens, then)
 -- I have to dial 9 first? Thank
 you.

Chuck hurries to bathroom door. Listens. Hears his father
 singing in the shower. Rolls his eyes, then sprints back to
 phone. Dials 9 first, then the number.

CUT TO:

INT. CAMPBELL HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

The Campbell's housekeeper, NETTY (female, black, 55,
 antebellum vibe) answers the phone:

NETTY
 Campbell residence.

INT. NETTY/CHUCK PHONE CALL

Nervous as hunting dog, Chuck's voice quivers in the phone:

CHUCK (PHONE)
 Yes, hello, is Stephanie there?

NETTY (PHONE)
 May I ask who's calling?

CHUCK (PHONE)
 Chuck Diedrich.

NETTY (PHONE)
 Oh, yes, the Beaver farmer boy.

CHUCK (PHONE)
 Mink. Mink farming.

NETTY (PHONE)
 Pardon me. Ooh La La, Mink.
 Stephanie is up at the Cottage with
 a friend.

CHUCK (PHONE)
 (uh-oh!)
 A friend?

NETTY (PHONE)
 (getting impatient)
 She's with her folks and the
 Whitfield boy, uh --

CHUCK (PHONE)
 (hard as hammers)
 -- Hummer.

NETTY (PHONE)
 Hummer, that's right. P.S. That
 there is silly name, you ask me. I
 can give you the cottage number, if
 you want to --

CLICK. Chuck hangs up.

NETTY (PHONE)
 Hello?

Netty shrugs, hangs up.

STAY WITH CHUCK: He has the look on his face that condemned
 men have when the priest walks in.

But inconsolable sadness quickly devolves in anger as he
 GLARES at the bathroom door.

INT. HOTEL SUITE - BEDROOM - LATER

Dad Carl puts his wrist watch on. Checks his suit in the
 mirror: all good. FOLLOW him out into...

THE LIVING ROOM

Where Carl finds his son, sitting on the couch in his
 bathrobe and staring at the TV -- which is off.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
 What are you doing? Why aren't you
 dressed, it's time to go.

CHUCK
 I'm.. not ready.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
 Well I can see that. What's the
 matter? Are you sick?

CHUCK
 No. I'm... I dunno, I miss home.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
We've only been gone a day-and-a-half.

CHUCK
It feels longer.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
(sighs, then...)
There is a telephone. You can call --

CHUCK
(interrupting)
-- No, no phone. That'll only make it worse.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Are you going to get dressed or just sit there?

Chuck shoots a defiant look at his father. He'd need a crowbar to get him up as they lock eyes. Dad finally breaks off.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Okay. You sit there and feel sorry for yourself.

They both speak at once:

CHUCK
I'm not feeling sorry for myself.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
I'm going to dinner.

CHUCK
I've just had enough of crowds, I need some time, you know, alone.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
I don't think you're taking this whole trip very seriously --

CHUCK
Maybe if I had a choice.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
A choice? A *choice*? And what would you have done? Gone off with that little rich girl and played along? We're not like them, we earned our money we didn't inherit it!

Chuck gets up to go to his room --

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Where are you going?

CHUCK
To my room --

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Sit down.

Chuck tentatively obeys.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
So you'd rather mope in here than
learn something valuable about our
business. Maybe you don't even want
to be a mink farmer. Is that it?

Their eyes meet. Then Carl discovers the unspoken truth in
Chuck's deep reproachful sigh.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
I see. Maybe you want to be a race
car driver or a fighter pilot, is
that it? Well, you're 13 years old.
(startles Chuck)
WAKE UP.

Chuck, supremely intimidated, capitulates.

CARL DIEDRICK - DAD
Let me tell you something. Whatever
you do? No matter how successful
you are? You'll never equal what
I've done. Because I started with
nothing. Nothing.

Chuck lets what his father said sink in. Then, with some
reluctance...

CHUCK
I'll go get dressed.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Oh, now you want to go?

CHUCK
Dad, I'm sorry, I just --

CARL DIEDRICK - DAD
-- You want to be alone? Greta
Garbo?

CHUCK
(emasculated)
What?

We've never seen Carl mad before. And he's mad -- or acting out to make his point. As he snatches up his hat --

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Then be alone. *I'm* going to dinner,
to be with my friends, people who
are like me. Think about that.

At the door now:

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
I'll be back by Ten. And if you set
one foot out of this suite, *you'll*
be up for auction.

Dad booms through the door. Doesn't slam it but shuts it hard behind himself as if to say he's about had it with the tug of war between his way and that of his son.

STAY ON CHUCK, who stares into a plan...

CUT TO:

INT HOTEL LOBBY - LATER

An elevator opens on...

CHUCK

In his sport jacket and tie, hair combed for church or something. He steps out of the elevator. Looks to his right:

He sees the cavernous entrance to the hotel's restaurant, *CAFE SELECT*, where his father is probably dipping his way through his shrimp cocktail.

He looks to his left, where New York City roars in a blur of people and cars, like a loud prayer to indulgence. Chuck makes a split decision, right then and there...

CUT TO:

EXT. STREETS OF MANHATTAN - EVENING

CHUCK walks down the street looking at people, and into shop windows. He stops at a fruit stand and buys an apple and a banana. He continues down the street mesmerized by the sights and sounds.

He stops to gaze into a Jewelry Store (Luxury Items).

Chuck turns to encounter two young men in jeans, hoodies, sun glasses.

NYC STRANGER 1
Bro, can you tell us how to get to
the Lexington Subway?

CHUCK
No, I'm not from here.

NYC STRANGER 1
Where you from?

CHUCK
... Wisconsin. Sheboygan.

NYC STRANGER 1
She-boy-gan.
(laughs)
Waddo you, got a lot of chicks with
dicks there?

CHUCK
(doesn't get it)
What?

NYC STRANGER 2
You dressed up for church or
something? You got something in
your wallet to help the needy?

The two strangers inch in on Chuck, pressing him between each other. Chuck is scared and senses something bad is up; not knowing what to do, he darts from between them and runs his ass off. The two strangers pursue him.

STRANGER 1
Hey you little shit, get your boney
ass back here!

Chuck throws both the apple and banana at the two strangers. Kind of pointless, but he is doing what he needs to do all the while he keeps running. The strangers gain on Chuck.

EXT. BLUE NOTE CLUB

It is late afternoon, the Maitre'd and/or club manager are outside the club as a few musicians are arriving. Chuck sees them ahead of him and races toward them. The two strangers are at his back, he turns and runs into the club.

STRANGER 2

Come here you little cracker piece
of shit. Give me my wallet back!!

Stranger 1 looks at Maitre'd.

STRANGER 1

He's a thief. He a fucking little
thief dressed up like Sunday
School.

Standing between the two strangers (who are just outside at
the entrance) and Chuck who is just inside the front door is
a 40'ish DIZZY GILLESPIE. Dizzy turns and looks at Stranger 1
and Stranger 2 and then to Chuck.

DIZZY

Are you a thief dressed up like
Sunday School?

CHUCK

(stuttering a little)
No sir. No sir. I was just looking
at stuff in the windows. And....

Dizzy and Maitre'd now walk toward the two strangers.

DIZZY

You two best be running along.

Dizzy gestures to Maitre'd who moves toward the strangers.

MAITRE D'

Get moving. Now.

The two strangers skulk off. Dizzy and the Maitre'd turn to
Chuck who just flew in their doors.

INT. BLUE NOTE CLUB - JUST LATER

Chuck surveys the club. Tables are thisclose together. A
stage with a blue velvet curtain. Spotlights.

DIZZY

How you doing, son?

Chuck is stunned, scared, and at a loss for words. This is a
different world. Tears of fear are in his eyes.

CHUCK

Thank you. I-i-i didn't know what
to do. So I ran.

DIZZY

That was smart. You're safe. All good people here. So, who is my pleasure to be talking to?

CHUCK

My name is Chuck Diedrich.

DIZZY

Well Chuck, can I buy you a soda? Your fine, God brought you through the right door at the right time.

CHUCK

Yes, sir, I'd appreciate a soda.

DIZZY

You can call me Dizzy. Let's sit down over here and say hello to each other.

They both sit down at a table in the empty restaurant.

DIZZY

Where you from; what's your story, Chuck?

CHUCK

I flew in this morning with my dad. We're from Wisconsin. We're farmers.

DIZZY

Sure I know Wisconsin. I've been to Milwaukee a few times. Where's your farm?

CHUCK

About an hour north of Milwaukee.

The Maitre'd sets down a soda for Chuck and a cup of coffee for Dizzy.

DIZZY

Cheese, cows and the Green Bay Packers. In't that what Wisconsin is all about?

CHUCK

And mink.

DIZZY

Mink?

CHUCK
Yes, sir. Lots of mink.

DIZZY
Like in Mink Coat?

CHUCK
Yes, sir Mr. Dizzy.

DIZZY
Just Dizzy, kid.

CHARLES DIEDRICH
Dizzy. We raise about 10,000 mink a year. I mean, my dad does.

DIZZY
You raise 10,000 mink? For mink coats? Wow. Well, Chuck, you're a first for me. I wouldn't know a mink from a black cat.

CHUCK
We're here for the fur auction. My first time outside of Wisconsin, first time on a plane, first time to New York City. First time in a hotel.

DIZZY
First time almost being mugged. That's a big list of firsts. You're pack'em in, son.

CHUCK
My dad thinks I got what it takes to be a mink farmer. I'm the first son he's ever brought to New York for the auction. Not sure what he sees in me.

DIZZY
Well, I just met you and I can see your a good kid. That's plain as day.

As Dizzy looks over his coffee cup at Chuck...

CUT TO:

INT. RESTAURANT

Carl Ries and Bernie Greenberg in a banquet booth:

BERNIE GREENBERG
Where is the Prince of Hides?

CARL DIETRICH - DAD
He wanted to stay in. Said it was a long day. Pretty sure he is stressing about a girl.

BERNIE GREENBERG
Get him to New York for a month.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
Shit!

BERNIE GREENBERG
He won't listen to you. Send him to me.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
I'll send him to god damn Military Academy or better the Jesuit Boarding school - those Jesuits know how to turn boys into men.

BERNIE GREENBERG
Slow down. Sure let's put the fear of God into him too! After a month in The City all he will think about is Mink and making money in the Fur Business.

BERNIE GREENBERG
I talked to Mike Schmidt who's in the auction tomorrow. You know how he got his boys into business?

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
He hired you to brainwash them?

BERNIE GREENBERG
Not quite; my services are only for good friends.

BERNIE GREENBERG
He gave them ten females when they were in eighth grade. Told them, "You treat these girls nice and they will be nice to you."

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD
How'd they do?

BERNIE GREENBERG

First year they each sold 50 hides
at a \$52 average - \$2,500 gross.
That got their attention. Eighth
graders! Just like Chuck. Make sure
he goes to mass on Sunday or
everyday for that matter, but show
him the money. He'll be shoveling
shit with a little more oomph!!!

Bernie laughs, puts his hand on Carl's shoulder and gets Carl
to exhale and laugh as well.

BERNIE GREENBERG

Mike's boys started to focus more
on their school work too. It
motivated them. Chuck needs to see
the connections.

CARL DIEDRICH - DAD

He's not headed to the seminary
from what I can tell.

(Points to his head)

He seems to be lost in life up
here.

BERNIE GREENBERG

A month in New York City will give
him a lot to think about. Let me do
this for you. He will never find
his way in life if we don't open
the door.

As Carl chews a piece of steak and thinks on this...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. BLUE NOTE CLUB

Dizzy and Chuck continue their talk.

CHUCK

What do you do?

DIZZY

I play jazz. You know what that is?

CHUCK

No sir.

DIZZY

It's a special kind of music. Off
beat, beautiful.

(MORE)

DIZZY (CONT'D)

Lotta making up as you play.
Sometimes I think the music plays
me and I'm just letting it fall
out. Kind of like from God's lips
to my horn. I love it and it loves
me back.

CHUCK

How did you know you loved it? How
did it find you?

DIZZY

How come a young fellow like you is
on fire with all that? Those are
big man questions.

CHUCK

Maybe, yeah. But I don't know if I
want to be like my dad.

DIZZY

I see. You don't love it and it
don't love you back. So what do you
love, Chuck?

CHUCK

Her name is Stephanie...
(with a frown)
Her parents are rich.

DIZZY

Ah ha. You got a little Romeo and
Juliet thing going.

CHUCK

Is that a jazz song?

DIZZY

Shakespeare. Your dad know you're
out and about?

Chuck shakes his head.

CHUCK

My dad is at dinner.

DIZZY

I see. Lost your appetite on a
cause a pretty Stephanie.

CHUCK

Some days I feel like I'm going to
explode. Like there's this crazy
person trapped inside of me.

DIZZY

I know how you feel. Like you are two people. One that your folks want you to be and one who you want to be. Maybe a little of both.

CHUCK

I think I don't wanna be both. I want to be good at something and love it. Like you love your jazz.

DIZZY

So mink is a plink.

CHUCK

A plink?

DIZZY

A note in music that doesn't sound right.

CHUCK

I don't want to be a mink farmer. But it seems that's what I'll be.

DIZZY

Nothing wrong with being a farmer, but you want to be you, too.

CHUCK

I don't know who that is I get all knotted up in my head and I can't even speak right sometimes. I sound like an idiot.

DIZZY

When you love something, you just know it. You might love it in a kind of quiet way at first, but if it grows and grows, then you just have to chase it. Because its kind of chasing you too. If you do, and if its true, it will love you back.

CHUCK

So, I'll just know.

DIZZY

That's right.

CHUCK

Sounds so simple.

DIZZY

In a complicated way. There is something you love, and there is something loving you back. When you find that; well you just got to jump!

CHUCK

(re: the muggers)

Um, thanks for chasing those guys off.

DIZZY

You made my day, Chuck from Wisconsin.

CHUCK

I still don't know exactly what you do. But I like talking to you.

Dizzy reaches into his pocket puts a mouth piece to his lips and lets it toot. He then hands it to Chuck.

DIZZY

Give it a try; see if you can make it talk back.

Chuck takes the mouth piece, puts it to his lips and blows. He manages to make an audible toot.

DIZZY

Mmmm....not bad. That's not so easy to do the first time. Maybe if you keep trying, it will start talking back to you; saying things just fall from your lips and land in hearts.

Chuck tries to hand the mouth piece back to Dizzy.

DIZZY

That's for you...when you get a little older and you see my name, you just come to the where I'm playing and you tell them Chuck The Mink Farmer is here. I'll make sure you sit right up front.

Now ROCK, a husky, well-dressed white man in a skull cap and in a hurry approaches.

DIZZY

Chuck, meet my base player, Rock. Rock this is Chuck from Wisconsin.

ROCK
 Yo, Chuck what's the word.
 (then, to Dizzy)
 Quarter to, Dizz, we're up in
 fifteen.

Chuck suddenly panics.

CHUCK
 Quarter to what?
 (checks his watch and
 answers himself)
 TEN!? Holy shit, I gotta be back
 before my father knows I'm gone!

Dizzy sees the fear crackle in Chuck's eyes and immediately understands as...

EXT. JAZZ CLUB - A LINE OF TAXIS - SECONDS LATER

IDLING at the curb. Dizzy packs Chuck in the back of the first cab in line, then hands paper money shaped in a v between his fingers to the cabbie and orders him --

DIZZY
 You get my boy over to the Morgans
 before Ten pronto, you know what
 I'm sayin'?

HENRY
 I'm there, Dizz.

Chuck tries to wave but -- eeeeeeeeerrrr! -- gets thrown back against the seat as the driver squeals off.

CUT TO:

INT. MORGANS HOTEL - RESTAURANT

While that whisper of canned pop evening music lilts through the Restaurant like a herd of sheep, at their booth, Carl and Bernie get a country load of their WAITRESS as she sidles up to warm their coffee.

WAITRESS
 Had a look at the dessert menu?

BERNIE
 Ooof. I want to but I'm stuffed.
 Carl?

CARL
I'll have a wedge of that Key Lime
Pie I had last time I was here.

WAITRESS
Good choice!

CUT BACK TO:

EXT. 10TH AVENUE - CHUCK'S CAB

Slaloms through the traffic at twice the speed posted, Chuck amazed by the cabbie's skill. Chuck flinches when the cab veers so close to a bus he couldn't spit between them, the cabbie calm and zenned out as if he's meditating on the pavement they eat up speeding through The Village and...

CUT BACK TO:

INT. THE MORGANS HOTEL RESTAURANT

As the waitress strides empty-handed back to Carl and Bernie's booth.

WAITRESS
I'm sorry, Mr. Diedrich we're all
out of the key lime.

CARL
(self-consciously)
Oh.

CUT TO:

INT./EXT. CHUCK'S CAB

ERRRRRRRR! Chuck's cabdriver has to stand on the breaks to avoid rear-ending a handsome cab, it's sullen horses wagging their tails, as..

CUT BACK TO:

INT. RESTAURANT

CARL'S WAITRESS

Uncrossing her legs as she stands there:

WAITRESS

Can I get you something else? The volcano chocolate cake is really good.

Carl quickly peruses the dessert menu, as...

CUT TO:

CHUCK'S CAB

Takes the corner of 5th Avenue and 10th Street as close to on two wheels as Gravity allows without breaking stride, Chuck peaking out the back window as if his soul ran alongside the roaring taxi until...

CUT BACK TO:

CARL AND BERNIE

Stand on their full bellies and shake hands good-night.

BERNIE

And be sure to talk some sense into that boy's head, Carl. You'll see, he'll come around --

As we...

CUT TO:

CHUCK'S CAB

Screeching to a landing in front of The Morgan's Hotel like a yellow rocket ship. As the driver runs around to let Chuck out, he checks his watch.

CABBIE

You made it for the bedtime story, kid, Ha ha.

CHUCK

(hurrying from the cab)
Thanks, Mister.

As the cabbie waves and tears off...

CUT TO:

CHARLES DIEDRICH

IN THE MEN'S ROOM of THE LOBBY, as he meditatively takes a piss in the alabaster urinal. Zips up.

CUT TO:

CHUCK, ENTERING THE LOBBY

Checks the hall to the restaurant. Coast is clear. Skitters across to the elevator, when he spots HIS FATHER, buying a newspaper. Chuck dashes around a corner. Waits there. Listens. Hears the DING of the elevator. Peaks. OHMYGOD, he sees the silhouette of his father enter the elevator.

The doors close. He spots the stairs. Tears up them two at a time, to the third floor only to see from the stairwell...

His father stride out onto the third floor. Chuck ducks down the stairs, wonders what the fuck he's going to say, waits to hear the door open when, well, he *doesn't*. Then he hears...

KNOCK KNOCK. His father is actually *knocking* on their door! Now his father whispers into the door so as not to wake the other hotel occupants on the floor:

CARL

Chuck?

(KNOCKS again)

Chuck, it's me, I left my key somewhere. Chuck?

(KNOCK KNOCK)

CHUCK?

Carl finally gives up. Hurries for the elevator. Knowing he's gone, Chuck scampers to the door, opens it with his key, then closes it behind him, as we...

CUT TO:

INT. THE LOBBY - MAIN DESK- CHECK IN

As Carl approaches the main desk he's intercepted by THE WAITRESS, who smiles and shows him what he inadvertently left behind at his table and calls to him...

WAITRESS

(joke)

Mr. Diedrich! Well, we were out of lime but we have your key.

As Carl, with an appreciative grin, takes his key, looks at it bashfully, then...

EXT. THIRD FLOOR - JUST LATER

Carl opens the door to his suite. Walks through the dark and FLIP! Slips on Chuck's shoe (hastily removed by Chuck as he scurried to get into bed).

Carl catches himself before he falls; picks up the shoe with some irritation (he'd horsewhip his boy if he *really* knew what happened) an irritation that slowly dissolves as Carl approaches...

His son's room. Dark. He sees the lump of his son's figure, asleep (though not really asleep, just faking -- and dressed under the covers).

Something catches Carl's eye, the moonlight reflecting off of something shiny, or rather brassy. It's coming from Chuck's sport coat, strewn on the floor.

Carl moves closer to see the object, half-out of the sport coat pocket. Carl bends down and retrieves...

THE MOUTH PIECE

Dizzy gave to Chuck, the mouth piece exposed in the moonlight like a glowing phallus, rigid and brilliantly obscene to the father who plays no music, who sits down in an easy chair in his son's room and waits for tomorrow to come...

GO TO BLACK.

END OF EPISODE TWO

