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FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM - EARLY MORNING

The place is a mess - as though it's been rifled by a determined thief. CDs are strewn everywhere. Some titled in German, in Arabic, in Chinese. Technical drawings are scattered around with precise notations on their margins.

An open laptop counts down toward zero in ominous red letters. When they reach 15 they begin beeping audibly with each tick.

Oblivious to all this is the BODY on the floor, its feet sticking out from beside the bed.

5, 4, 3, 2, 1. An EXPLOSION - erupting in HD on the laptop screen. MUSIC blares. It was just an alarm.

The legs on the floor twitch as JERRY STARK wakes up. He's young, 16 or 17, intelligent eyes, acne untamed. He wears a t-shirt designed to look like a tuxedo. A book lies open on his chest - "Overcoming Dyslexia."

He gets to his feet, opens his bedroom door.

JERRY

Mom! What's for breakfast?

INT. PLAINVIEW HIGH SCHOOL - DAY - ESTABLISHING

So suburban you can't even see urban from here. Jerry, backpack slung over one shoulder, hurries inside. His fresh t-shirt reads "My tux is at the cleaners."

INT. PLAINVIEW HIGH SCHOOL, HALLWAY - DAY

SLOW MOTION. Jerry makes his way through the press of STUDENTS and TEACHERS with elaborate spins, ducks and dodges. He is very skilled - in his head anyway.

In reality and at speed, he's a total spazz. Arms flailing, legs swinging, head bobbing. Whatever eyes he attracts are filled with laughter or derision.

With one more completely unnecessary move, he makes it to his locker. He undoes the combination without looking at the numbers, just listening to the clicks. It takes 3 tries.

CARL (O.S.)

You're getting better.

This from CARL HIGGINS. Big and gumpy with a side of geek - 2 heads taller than Jerry but in no way intimidating.

JERRY

If it weren't for the sheeple
blatting, I could do it in one try.
You study for Mrs. Kettler's exam?

CARL

One-third our grade for the
semester? You better believe it. I
even turned off the Bond Marathon.

JERRY

You up for the park after school?
Gotta hone my observation skills.

CARL

Can't. Podiatrist.

JERRY

Again?!? God.

He look at Carl's feet. They are huge and problematic.

JERRY (CONT'D)

You must be responsible for half
that guy's income.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - LATER

Jerry seats himself, pulls an mp3 player from his backpack.
The bell RINGS. A SUBSTITUTE TEACHER comes down the aisle
passing out exams. He sets one on Jerry's desk.

SUB

No music during the exam.

Jerry looks up, surprised to see the sub. Bleached blonde, he
looks like a boy-band reject in a shirt and tie.

JERRY

Where's Mrs. Kettler?

SUB

No idea. I'm subbing today. Put the
music away.

He moves down the aisle to pass out the rest of the tests.
Jerry follows.

JERRY

It's not music. I'm Jerry Stark.

The sub's expression reveals just how little that means.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I'm supposed to get a recording of the exam. I can't take a written test.

SUB

Can't read?

Jerry reddens, lowers his voice.

JERRY

I'm dyslexic.

Other students are listening.

SUB

That true?

CARL

It is. Jerry always gets--

The student next to Carl, punches him in the shoulder. This is DICK - big man on campus, small man at heart.

DICK

That's B.S. These guys are friends. He's just covering for him.

JERRY

Dick's lying. I always get a recording.

SUB

Sorry. There's nothing about it in the lesson plan. You'll have to take the written test.

JERRY

But it's a third of our grade. If I don't keep my grades up, I don't get into a good school. If I don't get into a good school, I won't get into the C.I.A.

In his desperation he forgot about the other STUDENTS. They burst out laughing. Carl shakes his head in sympathy.

SUB

Sorry.

LATER

Jerry struggles with the exam. The words seem to rearrange themselves on the page. Jerry sweats. Dick smirks at him from across the room, goes back to copying off of Carl. Jerry fumes. He tears off a small piece of notebook paper and jots a little note.

LATER

The hour is almost up. Finishing as best he can, Jerry goes to the desk to drop off his exam. As he does so, he drops the note surreptitiously on the sub's desk.

SUB (CONT'D)

What's this?

Jerry shrugs, goes back to his desk. The sub opens the note. It says "Teacher is a Dick." The sub rises, angry, slams the note down on Jerry's desk.

SUB (CONT'D)

You think that's funny?

All eyes are on them.

JERRY

It's not a joke.

SUB

So I'm a dick?

Student's gasp, giggle.

JERRY

What?

The sub traces his finger along the note.

SUB

"Teacher is a dick."

JERRY

Shit.

SUB

Excuse me?!?

JERRY

Sorry. It's... that's not what it's supposed to say. I told you, I'm dyslexic.

SUB

Uh-huh. What was it supposed to say?

Cognizant of the eyes on him, he shakes his head.

JERRY

I um... I can't say.

SUB

You'll say right now or you'll go see the principal.

Jerry whispers, way too quiet to hear.

SUB (CONT'D)

What was that?

JERRY

Dick is a cheater. It's supposed to say "Dick is a cheater." He's been copying off Carl since we started.

The sub looks over his shoulder, sees the guilt in Dick's eyes. All Jerry can see is the promise of vengeance.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY - LATER

Jerry eases himself into the empty hallway, looks around. Practicing stealth, he comes to an exit - almost there, almost safe. He spots Dick outside. Their eyes meet. Jerry turns and runs - poorly. Like a girl with braces on her legs.

Dick is already after him, jock legs pumping, gaining.

DICK

You're dead, Jerry!

Jerry reaches a dead end, reaches into his backpack and pulls a lockpick set. Madly tries to unlock the janitor's supply room. Dick is almost there. With a final twist, it unlocks. Jerry throws himself inside, locks it behind him.

Dick yanks on the handle, pounds on the door. Jerry's relieved laughter seeps through the door.

DICK (CONT'D)

When I catch you I'm gonna kick your ass so hard your boyfriend's gonna be fucking my shoe.

INT. JANITOR'S SUPPLY ROOM - DAY

Jerry leans against the door, catching his breath.

JERRY

That's um... really intolerant.
And... and kinda gross.

Jerry looks around, notes all of the chemicals and supplies, cleaning agents. And there, on the far wall, just what he needs - a window. Relieved, he heads over to climb out.

EXT. PLAINVIEW HIGH SCHOOL, COURTYARD - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Jerry lowers himself from the window. Safety is his. It doesn't last. Dick comes around the side of the building.

DICK

You think I'm stupid?

JERRY

Yes?

DICK

Oh, I'm gonna enjoy this.

Jerry throws himself into a tai-chi stance.

JERRY

Don't be so sure. I've been practicing.

He goes through some forms - it's almost impressive. Dick shrugs, punches him - once. That's all it takes. Jerry hits the ground, doesn't get up.

EXT. PLAINVIEW PARK - DAY - LATER

Jerry sits on a park bench obscured by shrubbery. He's already bruising from the fight. In one hand is a digital recorder, in the other a small, hand-sized telescope. He points it at a WOMAN on ROLLERBLADES.

JERRY

(into recorder)

Woman. Red hair. Five-nine with rollerblades, Five-six or five-seven without. Hundred and fifteen pounds. Breasts are... real. I think. I hope. Listening to music. Based on her skating rhythm, she's probably listening to something up-tempo.

He shifts his gaze to a MAN with a STROLLER.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Man with stroller. Approximately thirty years old. Little familiarity with stroller pushing. Seems to think it's a vacuum. Back and forth, back and forth. Supposition - wife got pissed that he never helps with the kids. Has refused either food or sex until he helps.

The Man checks out the rollerblading woman.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Sex.

Jerry pulls the scope away, scans others in the park as likely targets for observation. Finally he comes to an OLD MAN walking calmly through the afternoon sunshine.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Old Man. Late sixties, early seventies. Spry for his age. No noticeable limping. Good posture. Clearly active throughout his life. Happy. Confident. Content? Almost too content. Must be on something. Xanax or Viagra, maybe. Nothing out of the ordinary there.

The old man sits at a distant bench. Jerry is about to move his scope when he catches a quick glimpse of the guy sticking something to the bottom of the bench.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Oh, that's great. Stick your gum under the bench.

(beat)

Wait. He wasn't chewing gum.

Jerry freezes, sits up in his seat, excitement in his magnified eye.

JERRY (CONT'D)

He's making a dead-drop. Holy shit, this guy is a player.

His excitement bubbles up as giddy laughter.

JERRY (CONT'D)

I gotta tell Carl about this.

He focuses on the bottom of the bench. It's hard to make out but it looks like some kind of flash drive is taped there.

The old man rises. Jerry does the same. And gets spotted. The old man's eyes widen. Jerry lowers his scope.

JERRY (CONT'D)

Shit.

The old man turns quickly, too quickly. He steps right into the path of the rollerblader. They collide heavily. There's an audible cracking sound. The old man grunts.

OLD MAN

My hip.

LATER

Jerry watches as the old man is loaded into an ambulance. The old man's eyes find Jerry's. Compared to this guy, Dick is an amateur - this look promises death.

Jerry flinches. Then the doors are closed and the ambulance heads off. Jerry immediately heads for the bench, ducks under - NOTHING.

Whatever was there is already gone. Jerry whips out his scope, scans the people in the park. No one at all suspicious - no sign of the flash drive.

But from across the park, someone WATCHES. Has Jerry in a scop of his own.

INT. HOSPITAL - NIGHT

Jerry walks up to the admissions desk. A NURSE looks up.

NURSE

Can I help you, hon?

JERRY

Um... Yes. There was a man brought in earlier with a broken hip.

NURSE

We get lots of broken hips, sug. Gotta be more specific.

JERRY

This was about two hours ago. He was brought in from Plainview Park.

The nurse nods.

NURSE

And?

JERRY

I wanted to know his name.

She looks at him curiously. He hurries on with his story.

JERRY (CONT'D)

He dropped some money when he fell.
I didn't find it til he was gone.

NURSE

Oh. Well. Leave it with me. I'll
see that he gets it.

JERRY

No offense but... I don't know you.
I don't know what nurses get paid.
Just tell me his name. I'll look
him up in the phone book and mail
it to him.

The nurse considers him for a moment.

NURSE

You're awfully young to be so
cynical.

JERRY

I'm in highschool, Ma'am.

She shakes her head, reads the admissions sheet.

NURSE

Ken Hammond.

Jerry smiles at her.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREET - DAY

SUPER: "2 WEEKS LATER."

Jerry and Carl crouch behind a hedge as they observe the
house across the street.

JERRY

I'm telling you. Other than the
phone book listing, this Ken
Hammond doesn't exist. He just
appeared. Like magic.

CARL

Did you try Google?

JERRY
I tried everything.

CARL
Yahoo?

JERRY
Jesus, yes. Plus I checked his mail when he was in the hospital. He's on a government pension and--

CARL
Lookout.

They both duck as the front door opens and Ken Hammond comes onto the porch. He hobbles over to the mail box with the help of a cane. His eyes barely turn in their direction.

CARL (CONT'D)
(whispering)
That's him? I though you said he was a spy.

JERRY
He is. This guys is totally like double-o-seven.

CARL
More like double-o-seventy. He's ancient. Just look at hi-- Where'd he go?

Jerry looks through the hedge. No sign of Hammond. WHAM! Hammond's cane jabs Carl in the stomach, buckling him over. With a twist, he pulls a knife from the tip of the cane and presses it to Jerry's throat. Jerry is scared stiff. Silent.

HAMMOND
Give me one reason why I shouldn't kill you.

Jerry SQUEAKS. Carl gets to his feet, tries to run. Hammond pulls a gun from the pocket of his bathrobe and shoots Carl with a tranquilizer dart. He drops.

Hammond presses the dagger closer, drawing just the smallest hint of blood.

HAMMOND (CONT'D)
Who do you work for?

JERRY
Nnn-n-no one.

HAMMOND
No one?

JERRY
Not yet.

Hammond raises an eyebrow, intrigued.