

Delivered Recognition

FADE IN:

INT. GIRL'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

A teenage BOY, dressed in black SWAT-team style clothing, is hanging upside down inside a girl's bathroom. His nose is about an inch away from a tampon dispenser.

He tries reaching up to the harness release that's located at his feet. However, after multiple attempts he flops back down and starts spinning slowly in circles.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

COMMANDOS, dressed in black with automatic weapons, make their way down the high school hallway combat style. One of the leaders raises his hand to stop them and points to the girl's bathroom door.

The lead commando pulls the pin off a grenade. He motions another commando to open the door.

He throws the grenade into the bathroom.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Camera FLASH.

LESTER, a gangly teenage boy dressed in a pressed button down shirt, wipes his eyes after being blinding by the camera flash. He's seated on a stool in front of a blue screen that has been setup in a high school classroom.

The PHOTOGRAPHER, a forty-something guy, enters the student's data in to the computer without ever looking up.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Next.

Lester gets off the stool and makes his way to the door. He stops as he passes the video monitor showing the picture.

COMPUTER SCREEN

Lester's eyes are half-closed and he's got a goofy grin on his face.

CLASSROOM

LESTER

You can't use that. It's terrible.

PHOTOGRAPHER

C'mon kid. Move along.

The photographer goes back to his computer.

LESTER

At least look at it again.

The photographer sighs and turns the monitor around to see the picture.

LESTER

You're not even looking at the pictures in the first place?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Listen, Kid. You look no different than the thousands of other puss-faced, hormone raging, braces wearing teenagers I photograph daily.

LESTER

But it'll only take a second to reshoot.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I don't care.

The photographer spins the monitor away from him again.

PHOTOGRAPHER

(coldly)  
Next.

Another student takes a seat on the stool as a dejected Lester shuffles out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Lester is getting text books out of his locker when his friend, PAT, comes up behind him and flicks his ear.

LESTER

Geez. You know I hate that.

PAT

That's why I do it.

LESTER

Remind me again why were friends?

PAT

What the hell is your problem?

Lester closes his locker and the two boys make their way down the hallway.

LESTER

My yearbook picture is terrible.

PAT

There's only so much they can do with modern technology. You do have a face like a raccoon's ass.

LESTER

Screw you. What does that even mean?

PAT

I'll find you a mirror. Anyway, how bad can it be?

LESTER

My eyes were half-closed and I had a strange...grin on my face.

PAT

Who cares? It's a stupid high school yearbook picture.

Lester stops and looks at Pat in shock.

LESTER

That picture will follow me around the rest of my life. It will be archived in the school's library and be forever collecting dust in the basement of every student that attended West High this year.

PAT

So you take a better picture next year.

LESTER

But this picture will haunt me for eternity.

PAT

Any picture of you haunts me.

LESTER

How can you make jokes?

PAT

It's your face.

LESTER

Your supposed to be my best friend. Support me in my time of need. Don't you see how much this means to me?

PAT

First, you need a girlfriend. Second, go talk to somebody then. Bitching to me isn't going to solve your problem.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Lester is seated in front of the principal's desk. The PRINCIPAL is a large imposing man with a marine buzz cut.

PRINCIPAL

Let me get this straight. You want me to force the school photographer to retake your picture.

LESTER

Yes.

PRINCIPAL

And all because you don't like it.

LESTER

You don't know how bad it is. It's terrible looking. He didn't even bother looking at it.

PRINCIPAL

I'm sure you're mistaken. He's a professional that's been doing this for a long time.

LESTER

Go down there and take a look at it if you don't believe me.

PRINCIPAL

Listen. We've got drug problems, gang violence and half the girls trying to seduce their male teachers for better grades. I even have one case of a female student trying to seduce a female teacher.

LESTER

Nice.

The principle stops and glares at Lester.

PRINCIPAL

So as you can see, I have bigger problems than a student who isn't happy with his yearbook picture. Understand?

Lester grabs his book bag and stands up.

LESTER

Yes, sir.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Lester is back in the make-shift photo studio. The photographer is taking down his equipment.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Do you know who the first postmaster general was?

LESTER

Ben Franklin.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Very good. Now if you have his portrait in your wallet, I'll retake your picture.

LESTER

You want money?

Lester digs through his pockets and wallets. He comes up with a small pile of crumpled up bills.

LESTER

I've got \$12.50. What do I get for that?

PHOTOGRAPHER

You get to leave. And don't bother coming back if you don't have the money.

LESTER

But --

PHOTOGRAPHER

Beat it.

EXT. SCHOOL COURTYARD - DAY

The students are seated in various groups around the courtyard. The activities range from football to eating lunch.

Lester and Pat are seated under a tree eating their lunch.

LESTER

This is a disaster. Where can I come up with that kind of money?

PAT

Ask your parents?

LESTER

Dude. If they were any cheaper we'd celebrate Hanukkah instead of Christmas.

PAT

Screw you, asshole. My cheap parents took me to a professional photographer.

LESTER

Sorry. I'm just so frustrated.

PAT

You should tell the principal that the photographer tried shaking you down for a hundred bucks.

LESTER

I don't know. He was pretty upset last time I talked to him.

PAT

What do you got to lose?

LESTER

I suppose.

Lester stands up and heads back towards the building. Before he reaches the corner he stops and looks back at Pat. Pat flips him the bird.

AROUND THE CORNER

Lester takes one step around the corner when he sees the principal and photographer talking. He quickly steps back and pokes his head around the corner.

PRINCIPAL

One hundred dollars? You used to do it for twenty.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Inflation. Plus this kid annoyed the hell out of me.

PRINCIPAL

Tell me about it. He came crying to me.

(mockingly)

He didn't even bother to look at the picture.

PHOTOGRAPHER

Remember the days when we would beat up pussies like that?

PRINCIPAL

Every day, my friend.

The two men high five each other.

UNDER THE TREE

Lester runs up to Pat.

LESTER

He knows that he shakes down students. They're old friends.

PAT

Now you're just being paranoid.

LESTER

See for yourself.

Lester grabs Pat and drags him towards the corner of the building.

AROUND THE CORNER

Lester and Pat are both peeking around the corner.

PRINCIPAL

See you Thursday for Poker night?

PHOTOGRAPHER

Wouldn't miss it.

PRINCIPAL

Too bad you didn't get that money. I'd love to win it off of you.

PHOTOGRAPHER

I'll have that money. He's probably already called his mommy crying that he needs \$100.

OTHER SIDE OF CORNER

Lester and Pat pull back from spying.

PAT

I don't believe it. You're screwed.

LESTER

I'm not going down without a fight.

PAT

They're adults. You can't fight them.

LESTER

We'll see. They may have won the battle but I'm going to win the war.

PAT

What are you talking about?

LESTER

We need help and I know who to ask.

EXT. SCHMIDT'S YARD - DAY

A small ranch home is surrounded by a perfectly manicured lawn. There is a line of bushes extending from the back yard. Every bush is trimmed and there is no sign any weed has ever dared to grow on the lawn. There is a large antenna tower erected behind the home. The tower is jammed with multiple antennas of various designs.

An older gentleman, SCHMIDT, is planting a bush in his front yard. He's clean shaven and muscular. His silver streaked hair says he close to retirement age. He packs the dirt in around the bush and starts talking to it.

SCHMIDT

There you go, darling. Another job well done. We'll see about getting you a neighbor soon.

Schmidt gets up and moves over to another bush and lovingly trims it back.

SCHMIDT

You are such a rascalion. None of your siblings grow as fast as you do.

ACROSS THE STREET

Lester and Pat are hiding behind some garbage cans spying on Schmidt.

PAT

He's not a spy.

LESTER

Every time he goes out of town he comes back and plants a bush if he's killed a terrorist.

PAT

Where did you hear that?

LESTER

Everybody on the block knows you don't talk to Schmidt. You remember what happened to Jimmy Serbos.

PAT

Yeah. He fell out of his tree house.

LESTER

He claims he was pushed. Don't you find it odd that it happened the same week Jimmy rode his bike through Schmidt's lawn. And look at all those antennas. That's how he gets his orders from the CIA.

PAT

He's probably one of those ham radio geeks.

LESTER

It's a cover.

PAT

Even if any of that is true, which I doubt, what's that crazy old man going to do for you?

LESTER

He can teach me how to break into the school and hack into the yearbook computers.

PAT

Because I'm sure a CIA operative  
has nothing better to do with his  
time.

Lester stands up and straightens out his clothes.

PAT

What are you doing?

LESTER

We're going to talk to him?

PAT

Wrong. You can talk to him but I'm  
going home.

LESTER

I thought we were partners?

PAT

Sorry, dude. I just don't feel  
that way about you.

Pat grabs his stuff, looks at the old man and then  
salutes Lester before walking away.

FADE OUT: