



UNIVERSAL CABLE PRODUCTIONS

THE TAP

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Network Revised Draft:

July 14, 2016

Universal Cable Productions
10 Universal City Plaza
Bldg. 1440, 34th Floor
Universal City, CA 91608

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OVER PITCH BLACK

JAY (V.O.)
Sometimes I lay awake, thinking
about how I'd describe myself to a
stranger. To *you* all, in fact.

A beat and then --

JAY (V.O.)
My fear is that I'm just the sum
total of the things that have
happened to me. The experiences
that were *handed* to me.

We notice a very slight shift in Jay's tone here. A pivot.

JAY (V.O.)
My father teaching me to sail...

BREAKING THROUGH THE DARKNESS, a FLICKERING image of a
handsome middle-aged WASP, in a white cashmere sweater,
teaching YOUNG JAY to sail on a beautiful, 80-FOOT YACHT.

JAY (V.O.)
My mother teaching me to ride...

FLICKERING image of an elegant woman in jodhpurs, leading
YOUNG JAY at a horse ranch.

The images are fleeting, illusory, like home movies on film
stock that's degraded.

JAY (V.O.)
It terrifies me. Because if I *am*
just an amalgam of my birthrights,
some fucking upper-crust
Frankenstein, then I'm doomed to be
whatever all that shit adds up to.
(then)
Like my past, my future is a series
of choices already made *for* me.

FADE UP ON

JAY BUTLER (21), LAYING IN A COFFIN.

HE'S STARK NAKED. Surrounding him, older men in hooded black
robes appear through blinking candlelight.

HOODED FIGURE
You may proceed. Voluptatem sui.

Jay nervously shuts his eyes. And just when it seemed things couldn't get any weirder...Jay drops his hand below frame.

Then, in this roomful of strangers, JAY STARTS JERKING OFF.

BLACK.

SUPER: ONE WEEK EARLIER

EXT. CHAPEL STREET -- NEW HAVEN -- DAY

The OMINOUS WAIL of a police siren.

TWO WHITE COPS pull over a PONTIAC GTO, being driven by a YOUNG BLACK MAN, a good 10 MPH below the posted limit.

The Cops approach, hands already on their holsters.

BLACK DRIVER
I wasn't speeding.

WHITE COP
No problem.
(thinks)
You rolled through that stop sign.

The driver knows it's futile to point out there is no stop sign on this street.

And then...a muffler announces an approaching vehicle.

A SILVER VAN, with blacked-out windows, rolls around the corner, and pulls up across the street. The doors open --

And 10 BLACK MEN EMERGE.

Sunglasses, trench coats, all strapped with automatic rifles.

There's no mistaking them: THEY'RE BLACK PANTHERS.

They line up shoulder-to-shoulder. Fingers on triggers.

Policing the police.

One steps forward. He holds up a permit for public display of firearms in one hand. Raises his other in a closed fist.

The cops try to remain stoic.

WHITE COP (CONT'D)
Friends of yours?

BLACK DRIVER
Friends to us all.

Looking over the lily-white cops.

BLACK DRIVER (CONT'D)
Well, maybe not all.

The Cops and Panthers stare each other down for an eternity.
The Cops blink first. They return to their car and retreat.

EXT. TENEMENT - THE BRONX - EVENING

Jay sits on the stoop of a run-down housing project, lost in thought. His sister, JULIA (17), flower child, emerges.

JULIA
Sitting out here all night won't
make this place stop existing.

Jay musters a half-smile, grudgingly follows her inside.

INT. BRONX TENEMENT - BUTLER APARTMENT - NEXT

As the siblings enter, Julia touches the mezuzah on the door. Jay touches it too, but a bit more tentatively.

Their mother SOPHIE (40s) is serving Shabbat dinner. She sarcastically genuflects in Jay's direction.

SOPHIE
He graces us with his presence.

JULIA
Leave him alone, Ma.

One look at Jay's mother, and around this shabby, cramped home...and it's instantly clear that Jay lied about everything he shared in the coffin.

Everything except for the central point he made. He is, indeed, terrified of becoming the experiences handed to him.

Jay scans the familiar apartment, filled with cheap knickknacks and dusty books: Thoreau, Marx, Reed...

Jay is hesitant to even touch anything. It feels like the poverty could *infect* him.

Jay's father, BERT (40s), enters in overalls. The hands-on owner of a small junk shop, his every day is a grind.

He pours himself a stiff drink, before kissing anyone hello.

SOPHIE

God forbid he invites even his
sister to visit him at school.

That lands on Jay. He turns to his sister.

JAY

Jules, you know I want--

JULIA

Course. You're so busy up there.

She lets him off the hook. Which stings Jay even more.

BERT

How *is* school? You get into that
student club you wanted?

JAY

It's not a...not yet, Pop. They
make their decisions this week.

As Sophie prepares to light the Shabbat candles --

SOPHIE

They'll want you. You'll see.

JAY

You have no idea how it works.

BERT

All groups based on a shared
ideology work the same.

SOPHIE

You either belong, or you don't.

FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR (PRELAP)

(over bullhorn)

It's my privilege to welcome you.

INT. PAYNE WHITNEY GYMNASIUM - "HOUSE OF PAYNE" - MORNING

Dozens of FRESHMEN WOMEN line up for their "posture tests" in
a windowless room, on an upper floor of the Gothic gym.

FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR

(over bullhorn)

After two and a half centuries...
you represent Yale's first-ever
female class.

The women hoot and holler triumphantly.

FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

When you finish your posture-tests,
grab a pamphlet by the door.

She points to a pile of "So You're A Woman at Yale" booklets.

FEMALE ADMINISTRATOR (CONT'D)

You'll find a lengthy discussion on
contraceptives. *Memorize it.*

CLOSE ON a camera lens. Its black mirror reflects the girl
staring into it, lost in thought.

REVERSE TO FIND -- **MICHELLE CUTTRISS** (18). The soft, pretty
face of a high school sweetheart. But the clenched jaw of an
ambitious trailblazer.

Michelle is tall and thin. Her roommate SANDY (18) short and
round. Next to one another, they look like the number ten.

Sandy is talking. And talking.

Eventually, Michelle snaps out of it.

MICHELLE

Sorry, what'd you say?

SANDY

I said my cousin at Mount Holyoke
was told her curve was "too
violent." She had to take remedial
posture class.

MICHELLE

Is "remedial" even necessary there?

FEMALE NURSE

Next up!

Michelle grudgingly disrobes...until she's stark naked.

The Nurse attaches *4-inch metal pins* to her vertebrae.

Michelle poses front, side, and rear, as a camera SNAPS AWAY.

The sharp metal pins stick out from her spine. Like a voodoo
body-piercing ritual, masquerading as science.

Sandy, meanwhile, has broken into a cold sweat.

MICHELLE

You'll be fine, Sandy. Bright
side: it's not even that cold yet.

The Nurse turns to Sandy.

NURSE

Let's go, Sandy. Off with it.

Sandy looks around, watches gorgeous hippies happily
disrobing. Her stomach turns.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Are you okay, Dear?

Sandy nods and undresses. Vulnerable and raw. The Nurse
tapes metal pins to her spine.

They don't pierce her skin -- only her dignity.

Floodlights illuminate her pin-spiked profile.

SANDY

I hear Skull & Bones steals the
negatives, to give as initiation
gifts to new members.

Two skinny hippies slipping off their underwear overhear --

HIPPIE CHICK

Doubt you have to worry about that.

They snicker at Sandy. Michelle glares at them, defending
her roommate and first friend at Yale.

She helps Sandy on with her clothes.

And then Michelle leads Sandy away.

They enter --

INT. LADIES' ROOM -- PAYNE WHITNEY GYMNASIUM -- CONTINUOUS

The first thing they both immediately notice is --

A ROW OF URINALS.

In the *women's* restroom.

They take in the image. Michelle looks down at her pamphlet.

MICHELLE

So. You're a woman at Yale.

INT. JAY'S DORM - BATHROOM - DAY

A steamy, communal *men's* bathroom. Half-naked young men come and go in towels, carrying toiletries.

A shower curtain dances in the mist.

On the other side, we find WARREN MICHAELS (22), blonde, Waspy, moneyed. Couldn't be more sure of himself.

He's lathering the lower back of A GORGEOUS YOUNG COED.

NAKED COED

I think I failed my posture test.

WARREN

Hard to believe. Lemme see you touch your toes.

She smiles wickedly. Kisses him. And does as she's told.

Warren moves in for a closer examination.

INT. JAY AND WARREN'S DORM ROOM - NEXT

Jay at his desk. Warren and the Coed enter, wearing towels.

WARREN

How was Manhattan? Anything rowdy?

JAY

What's less rowdy than Park Avenue?

Warren and the Coed start getting dressed, zero inhibitions.

In Warren's dresser, a stack of Playboys instead of socks.

WARREN

Least you're still *welcome* at home.

YOUNG COED

Why, what'd you do?

WARREN

Let's just say orgies in the maid's room are frowned upon in Bedford.

(beat)

Especially with Lupita *in* the bed.

Warren cracks himself up. The Young Coed doesn't even smile.

WARREN (CONT'D)

You're so young.

The Coed pulls on her underwear two inches from Jay's face, daring him not to notice.

But Jay's focused on his handmade SKULL & BONES FLASHCARDS.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Still studying those?

JAY

I'm not a legacy. When they test me on alums, I have to be right.

YOUNG COED

This frat actually *tests* you on--

WARREN

Frat? Do I have to take you back into that shower, young lady, and wash your mouth out? What we're discussing is a secret society, where gentlemen gather to recognize achievements in scholarship, leadership, and public service.

(then)

And how many frats you know with their own private fucking island?

The Young Coed shuts up. Warren grabs Jay's flashcards and tosses them on the desk, deciding to show off for her.

WARREN (CONT'D)

Founders. Go.

JAY

William Huntington Russell, father of the Republican Party. Alphonso Taft, Secretary of War and father of a president.

Warren shrugs. Easy one.

WARREN

Bones Alum who inherited the largest fortune in history.

JAY

W. Averell Harriman, class of '13.

As they continue...

The Bones flashcards on the desk SPRING TO LIFE.

QUICK CUTS on a series of TALKING HEADS -- white men in suits, military uniforms, judicial robes, etc. -- looking directly AT JAY, rather smugly introducing themselves.

BUNDY

McGeorge Bundy. National Security Advisor.

LUCY

Henry Luce. Founder, *Time Magazine*.

WAITE

Morrison Remmick Waite. Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

STANLEY

Harold Stanley. Co-Founder, Morgan Stanley.

TAFT

William Howard Taft. President of the United States.

And now the Bones Alums come at us RAPID FIRE --

MACVEAGH

Franklin MacVeagh. Secretary of the Treasury.

EVARTS

William Evarts. Secretary of State.

LOVETT

Robert A. Lovett. Secretary of Defense.

GATES

Artemus Gates. President, Union Pacific.

DESILVER

Albert DeSilver. Co-Founder, American Civil Liberties Union.

STEWART

Potter Stewart. Supreme Court Justice.

HEINZ

H.J. Heinz. Heir to the Heinz fortune.

PRENTICE

John Rockefeller Prentice. Heir to the Rockefeller fortune.

VANDERBILT

Alfred Vanderbilt. Heir to the Vanderbilt fortune.

PILLSBURY

Donaldson Pillsbury. Heir to the Pillsbury fortune.

100 MORE BONESMEN stand single-file against a white backdrop.

They SHOUT their bona fides, rising to a cacophony of voices:

"Ambassador -- Secretary of War -- CEO -- Director of the CIA -- Governor -- Congressman -- Senator -- Senator -- Senator!"

BACK TO JAY

Who's feeling some mix of humbled and euphoric.

Warren looks at Jay. A newfound respect, and kinship.

WARREN

Look forward to you and me being
immortalized on flashcards someday.

Jay cautiously takes in that fantasy.

He looks around, realizes the Coed is gone.

JAY

Sorry, man.

Warren didn't notice, nor does he give a shit.

WARREN

Chicks don't wanna *understand* the
power of Skull & Bones. They just
wanna feel it between their thighs.

Warren grins and lights a cigar, enjoying it in his skivvies.

EXT. NEW HAVEN - EVENING

Less than two miles off campus, a completely different world.

Graffiti and decay. Yalies rarely set foot in this area.

We land on a modest one-story home.

INT. MURPHY HOME - EVENING

GLORIA MURPHY (18), black, passionate but level-headed, eats dinner with her militant older sister, NIA (26). Nia's in the Black Panther uniform -- big afro and black turtleneck.

They're mid-argument.

NIA

...and that's because Yale Med uses
blacks from this community as
experimental patients for doctors.
Untrained doctors.

GLORIA

That's a rumor. An *absurd* one.

Nia shakes her head at her little sister's naivete.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Either way, have you ever seen this as *my* opportunity to use *them*? A Yale degree, then a law degree, and then I can fight *from a position of strength*, in the long run.

NIA

When, in a *decade*? "In the long run" is the patron saint of every sell-out too scared to fight *now*.

That lands on Gloria. Nia finishes eating, lights a joint.

GLORIA

We've lived 5 minutes from that campus our entire lives. Now I live *on it*. Can't you be happy for me, that I actually *escaped*?

Nia considers. But before she can respond...THUD, THUD, THUD. Footsteps upstairs. They both stare at the ceiling.

NIA

Guess she's outta bed at least.

GLORIA

She going back to work this week?

Nia shakes her head. Gloria reflexively turns to a framed photo of her late brother, FREDDY (21), on a side table.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

They'll fire her, Nia.

NIA

She's mourning her *son*, Gloria.

Gloria shoots her sister a loaded look.

But doesn't say what she's thinking.

GLORIA

I'll go check on her.

NIA

No, I'll go. You should get back to the "dormitory."

Her inflection says it all.

GLORIA

I may not live here anymore, but--

NIA

But nothing. You *escaped*, right?
Don't worry. The rest of us
inmates will look after each other.

Nia heads upstairs, leaving Gloria to finish her meal alone.

Gloria pushes her plate away.

EXT. GRANITE BAY, CONNECTICUT - MORNING

A dozen sailboats glide across the water, past Horton Point.

Jay captains one of the boats, expertly making it dance
against the tide, thrilled, in complete control of his mast.

He shouts orders to his teammates. Very much in charge.

JAY

Get ready to jibe!

Two BONES ALUMS in blue blazers watch from shore. Impressed.

But then something odd happens. Jay grows SHORT OF BREATH.
Disproportionate to his exertion. HIS HEART RACES AUDIBLY.

He looks around, makes sure no one else is noticing this.

EXT. GRANITE BAY - NEXT

Jay towels off on the shore in his short trunks and mock
belt. The Bones Alums approach. No introduction required.

The Bonesmen are effortlessly cool. Impossibly handsome,
charming, and even though they don't need to be, solicitous.

Born leaders.

BONES ALUM

Mr. Butler. Nice moves out there.

BONES ALUM #2

Where'd you learn to sail?

JAY

(no hesitation)
Vineyard, Hamptons, Palm Beach.

BONES ALUM #2

You're captain this year, right?

JAY

I am.

BONES ALUM

We've tapped the team captain seven out of the last eight years.

JAY

Really? Didn't know that.

Yeah, right.

BONES ALUM #2

We hear you also *teach* sailing, down in Milford every summer.

JAY

(shrugs)

Just trying to give back.

BONES ALUM

We applaud philanthropy.

(beat)

What made you major in Econ?

Jay considers that question a moment. But not too long.

JAY

My old man. Says it's the only way to get where I wanna go.

The Bonesmen share a look.

BONES ALUM #2

Fair enough. But we're a big fan of upper-level History classes.

Off Jay, surprised to learn that --

BONES ALUM #2 (CONT'D)

Don't know where to go, if we don't know where we come from. Right?

Jay just smiles and nods.

BONES ALUM

So. Maybe we'll see ya around.

JAY

Yeah. Maybe.

And just like that, *interest has been expressed and requited.*

The Alums saunter off. Jay watches them go, a grin escaping.

INT. YALE LAW SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

A black face in a sea of white, we pick up Gloria practically tiptoeing through the halls, while others stroll and gallop.

Gloria's the only one in sight without a penis *and* European ancestors. And she's younger than the rest too.

She slips into a lecture hall. At the lectern stands a local JUDGE, ANTHONY LINK (55), who's also an adjunct professor. As intimidating as he is erudite.

JUDGE LINK

Those of you who came here to
become Atticus Finches-for-the-
revolution...the exit is that way.

As he points to the door, he spots Gloria. Sitting all the way in back, but as easy to pick out as a fly in a rice bowl.

He studies her a long moment.

JUDGE LINK (CONT'D)

I do not train moral crusaders.
But I do train intellectual giants.
Mr. Calaman, would you recite for
us the facts of Berman V. Parker?

As the student answers, Gloria scans the room. She finds another rare black student, OLIVER (26), chiseled, handsome.

Oliver catches her glimpse and returns it. Along with a nod.

EXT. CROSS CAMPUS QUAD - DAY

After class, Gloria exits. She sees Oliver approaching and tenses up. Luckily, he's intrepid enough for them both.

OLIVER

I don't think we met at 1L
orientation?

Gloria coyly averts his curious gaze. Oliver does the math.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Aaaand that's because you're an
undergrad. Wow. How enterprising
of you. I'm Oliver.

GLORIA

Gloria.

OLIVER

I didn't know there were any sisters in the new class.

GLORIA

There are 6 of us.

OLIVER

I doubt there's more than one of you.

Gloria's so on edge, she needs a second to realize he's flirting. She blushes, lets his soulful eyes lure her in.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

You embarrass easily for a hustler.

GLORIA

I'm not embarrassed. Or hustling. Just trying to get to my next class.

Oliver smiles, intrigued by her.

OLIVER

Well, let me get out of your way.

(then)

But first, promise you'll come to a party Wednesday night. It's kind of a family thing. Will be so much more interesting if you're there.

Gloria's stunned and excited by that offer. Before she can even respond, Oliver scribbles an address, hands it to her.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

8pm. See you there, Gloria.

He winks and walks off. Gloria beams as she watches him go.

INT. PAYNE-WHITNEY GYMNASIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

Michelle pulls Sandy through the halls, after-hours.

SANDY

I'm not sure I can do this.

MICHELLE

We're almost there. We go downstairs, cut through the pool, and access the archive directly.

SANDY

We could get in serious trouble--

MICHELLE

(pointed)

They should be the ones in trouble.

Sandy stops. Michelle looks her over. Makes a decision.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Go home. I'll do it myself. On behalf of you, and the rest of us.

SANDY

Are you sure?

MICHELLE

Less likely to get caught alone.

(then)

And don't worry. I'll still make sure you're there for the fun part.

Seeing that Michelle's being sincere, Sandy smiles. Grateful and relieved. She turns and hurries away.

Michelle keeps moving, alone. No one slowing her down now.

INT. PROFESSOR ROBINSON'S OFFICE - HARKNESS HALL - AFTERNOON

Jay sits opposite **PROFESSOR GEORGE ROBINSON** (40s).

Hip and disheveled, brilliant and charming, Robinson is a firebrand and campus legend. Yale's answer to Timothy Leary.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Enrollment for my class has been closed for a month.

JAY

Yes, Sir. I know.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

And your counterargument is...?

JAY

Your class is legendary. And this is my last chance to find out why.

Robinson looks bored, effortlessly detecting the bullshit.

Jay sees this and comes clean.

JAY (CONT'D)
 Skull & Bones recruits heavily
 among your History students.

Now Robinson's listening.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
 Tell me about yourself.

JAY
 I live in Calhoun. Econ major.
 Captain of the sailing-

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
 Don't give me your transcript,
 Butler. I can look that up myself.
 Tell me about yourself *pre-Yale*.

Just like in our opening scene, Jay's tone shifts here.

JAY
 Raised on the Upper East Side. Got
 shipped off to a small prep school
 no one's ever heard of, outside San
 Francisco. Played the flute, ran
 track, studied my ass off.

CLOSE ON ROBINSON. Who starts studying Jay more carefully.

As though he noticed Jay's pivot into artifice. If Jay's
 bullshitting him again, he's now doing it with *skill*.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
 Sorry, do you mind repeating that?

Jay is taken aback. Hesitates. Then --

JAY
 Raised on the Upper East Side. Got
 shipped off to a small prep school
 no one's ever heard of, outside San
 Francisco. Played the flute, ran
 track, studied my ass off.

Repeated. Verbatim.

A moment passes between them.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
 See you Tuesday, 9am sharp.
 (then)
 And lose the tie.

Off Jay, unsure what did the trick, but delighted.

EXT. THE TOMB - AFTERNOON - ESTABLISHING

A windowless, granite fortress, and home to Skull & Bones.

Triple-padlocked, soaring black doors, flanked by sky-high stone wings.

Gloria escorts her mother, MRS. MURPHY (45), who's dressed in all black, except for a white apron.

She's shaky, still overcome by grief.

GLORIA

Pick you up after your shift, ok?

Gloria's mother nods, raw and vulnerable, and far away.

Gloria grasps for a moment of connection to her mom. A connection to everything Nia accused her of leaving behind.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

Crazy that I go here now, huh?

But her mother doesn't even acknowledge it. She just heads toward the back of The Tomb, *to the servant's entrance*.

Gloria watches her go. Then turns back towards the quad.

INT. MEN'S POOL - PAYNE-WHITNEY GYMNASIUM - LATE AFTERNOON

Michelle enters, surprised to find it's not empty. A DOZEN MEMBERS of the all-male swim team are here for late practice.

AND THEY'RE ALL STARK NAKED.

Diving in, doing laps, hopping out.

A sign reads, "Men Must Now Wear Towels At All Times."

But for 250 years, men have used this gym as their own private locker room. A habit that won't die easily.

Michelle quickly turns to leave...

SWIMMER (O.S.)

Oh, Miss! Don't leave just yet!

As soon as they see her, they're like dogs spotting a pigeon.

Three of them run to the door, blocking her exit.

One shy boy quickly covers himself.

But the others let it all hang out.

SWIMMER #2

It's ok, these things won't bite.

(then)

Well, Bozinovski's might.

They crack up. Several encircle Michelle, who's uncharacteristically lost for words. She turns red.

One pulls up Michelle's blouse, untucking it.

Another "accidentally" splashes water on her chest, bringing its contours into more specific relief.

Another apologizes, and tries patting it dry with his hands.

Michelle tries to bat them away, but they just laugh it off.

And now Michelle starts to feel UNSAFE. *Robbed of control.*

Finally, the COACH comes in from a different door.

COACH

The hell is this?

Michelle exhales, thankful an authority figure is here.

SWIMMER #3

She wants to join the team, Coach.

The Coach stares down his swimmers. A long moment. Then --

COACH

Bus leaves at 5am. Better teach her the stroke *quickly*.

He smiles to himself and walks out: "Boys will be boys."

Michelle tenses, even more scared now.

Finally she pushes the closest boy into the pool, and then rushes for the door. They laugh as she runs out.

INT. JUDGE LINK'S OFFICE - YALE LAW SCHOOL - LATE AFTERNOON

Gloria, sheepish, enters the Judge's private office.

GLORIA

Your Honor? You wanted to see me?

She remains standing nervously by the door. He clocks her.

JUDGE LINK

This semester, 278 law students applied for 60 spots in my class.

GLORIA

Yes, Sir.

JUDGE LINK

I select carefully, very carefully.

She knows where this is going, and gets ahead of it.

GLORIA

I'm not in your class. I snuck in.

JUDGE LINK

I doubt *camouflage* will be your ticket to success here at Yale.

Gloria tilts her head downward.

JUDGE LINK (CONT'D)

I suppose you think I should see past your wanton disregard for my course protocol?

GLORIA

No, Sir, you shouldn't.

(beat)

It's precisely why you should let me audit.

The Judge is surprised. Gloria builds a head of steam.

GLORIA (CONT'D)

As I'm sure you well know, black men right now are *ten times* more likely to be incarcerated than white men. Public defenders aren't cutting it for my community, and capable defenders are either unaffordable or uninterested. The truth is, with my course load and...family responsibilities, I can't afford to audit your class.

(then)

But I can't afford *not to* either. I've got a lot to learn, and I gotta start *now*.

He considers that. Then scans her head to toe.

JUDGE LINK

Just so happens I'm a sucker for
moxie.

(thinks)

I preside over New Haven County's
bond court. I invite promising
students to observe. Come this
week, take notes, then we'll
discuss your future in the law.

Gloria can barely contain her relief. And optimism.

GLORIA

Thank you, Sir. I'd love that.

EXT. WALL STREET - NEW HAVEN - NEXT

As Gloria walks, a Dodge Charger pulls up alongside her.

JOHN (O.S.)

Dig the threads, Girl.

Gloria turns to find JOHN CLEAVER (28) driving. We recognize
him as one of the gun-toting Panthers from the traffic stop.

Radicalized and aggressive, he's the opposite of Oliver.

JOHN (CONT'D)

What're you doing up in this part?

He notices her books, sees where they are, and realizes...

JOHN (CONT'D)

Get the fuck outta here.

GLORIA

I'm gonna ask you to do the same,
Clever.

JOHN

They let *bitches* into this school?
Black bitches?

Gloria gets more annoyed by the second.

JOHN (CONT'D)

If your bro wasn't already dead,
this woulda done it fo sho.

That stops her in her tracks. Crossing a line.

Her eyes harden as she glares at him.

JOHN (CONT'D)
Does Nia know?

Gloria spots a few WHITE FRESHMEN GIRLS nearby, watching.

GLORIA
Yes. And keep your voice down.

JOHN
Come out with me tonight.

GLORIA
Once again, not tonight. Not ever.

JOHN
What, you meet somebody else? Some
brother covered in ivy and shit?

She doesn't answer that, but her stifled smile says it all.

John spots the white girls, decides to have the last word.

JOHN (CONT'D)
(loudly)
Hey G, what do white women and
tampons have in common?

GLORIA
Shut up, Cleaver. I mean it.

JOHN
They're all stuck up cunts.

The white girls react. He honks loudly, drives off laughing.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (PRE-LAP)
America 1776. France 1789. Russia
1917. How is what's happening in
this country now any different?

INT. HARKNESS HALL - DAY

Professor Robinson sits at the head of an oval table, in a sunny, stained glass, wood-paneled room that the Knights of the Roundtable would recognize.

18 students, including Jay, are privileged to sit around him.

Warren and three other impressive young men -- all potential Skull & Bones prospects -- scoff at the question.

WARREN
This is *social*, not political.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
This isn't political? LBJ being
forced from office last year?

SPENCER MELLON (21), sexual appetite as big as his blue-
blooded trust fund:

SPENCER
But this revolution is focused on
identity, nonconformity, the arts.

NICK CHAMBERS (22), a football God with a megawatt smile:

NICK
A fundamental shift in class
structure, rather than a toppling
of existing government hierarchies.

The Bones prospects are clearly incisive, sharp young men.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
Isn't revolution *necessary* when
government becomes tyrannical?

KIRK LEWIS (21), a Midwestern scion and epitome of WASP self-
entitlement:

KIRK
That's not the case here.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
J. Edgar Hoover isn't a tyrant?
What about Nixon's autocratic
decisions on Vietnam? Women and
minorities being denied rights?

WARREN
(under his breath)
Cough -commie bastard- *Cough*.

A few students crack up.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
(under his breath)
Cough -capitalist warmonger- *Cough*.

And now everyone cracks up.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)
What about our use of torture? The
ultimate denial of the individual
at the hands of the State.

Jay, who's been listening quietly till now, chimes in.

JAY

What about the Viet Cong?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

What about them?

JAY

They'll use meat hooks to hang a U.S. Marine by his ankles, and then let a nest of army ants eat his face off. They've elevated torture to an art form.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Your argument is "They started it?"

JAY

My argument is, the only way to win a war is with overwhelming force, not restraint. We send soldiers to boot camp, not finishing school.

The other Bones-hopefuls hoot and holler for Jay.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

And what if our torturers grow more heinous than our enemy?

JAY

Just down the hall, Professor Milgram *proved* that average men can torture strangers without adverse-

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Fuck Milgram.

Hearing him dismiss a fellow Yale legend surprises them.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

This isn't social psychology. And we're not talking in the abstract. Men are defined by where they stand *when it counts.*

Robinson aims that directly at Jay. And for Jay, the words resonate deeply, for reasons no one here can even imagine.

Jay weighs his thoughts carefully, and glances subtly towards the Bones-types, before pushing back --

JAY

Torture is in our nature. And if the enemy does it, we better do it too. And we better do it *best.*

(MORE)

JAY (CONT'D)

Or else our kids'll be having this debate on a bread line instead of an Ivy League campus.

Warren and his pals polite-clap for Jay. Robinson grins, but he's clearly impressed by Jay. Continuing to size him up.

INT. VANDERBILT HALL - DINING HALL - DAY

Michelle sits alone. Pen and paper, hard at work.

Joan Didion's *Slouching Towards Bethlehem* and Yale's Facebook both sit right beside what she's composing.

Sandy approaches with a salad.

SANDY

Have you ever had Mexican food? Supposed to be good. Maybe they have a suggestion box here.

Michelle looks at Sandy like she missed the big memo.

MICHELLE

If they do, Sandy, let's not fill it with a *lunch order*.

(beat)

How's this for a title: "Dear President Brewster. So I'm a Woman at Yale. Here Are My Grievances."

SANDY

You're calling out the university president? In your first week?

MICHELLE

After what happened at the pool, he's lucky I waited *this* long.

Sandy offers a sympathetic look, but isn't convinced.

Michelle opens the Yale Facebook to the first page --

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

"Treat Yale as you would a good woman, take advantage of her many gifts...and congratulate yourself in your possession of her."

(beat)

Sandy, that's the fucking *preface*.

Sandy picks at her salad.

SANDY

Then maybe don't read any farther?

MICHELLE

There are 8 men for every woman on campus. We're just shiny little objects for all those boys to collect. Walking welcome gifts, just like those posture photos.

SANDY

And a letter to Brewster is gonna change all that? Before or after he tosses it in the trash?

A moment as Michelle gathers herself. And then grins.

MICHELLE

I'm not sending it to him. I'm sending it to the *Yale Daily News*.

Sandy can't help being impressed by that.

Michelle can't help feeling egged on by Sandy's nervous grin.

PRE-LAP THE SOUND OF: A needle being lifted from vinyl.

INT. HOUSE PARTY - ORANGE STREET - EVENING

A partygoer scans a collection, pulls an album from its sleeve, and places the shiny black vinyl on the turntable.

Zeppelin's *WHOLE LOTTA LOVE* blasts from a Buick-sized stereo.

Michelle enters the raucous house party.

We stay with her as she moves between rooms:

-- **Room 1:** A dozen women in a Nonverbal Communication Session. Sundresses and bandanas abound. Plentiful hugging, touching, and dancing. But no talking.

-- **Room 2:** Students sit cross-legged in a circle, passing a joint, intensely engaged in existential discussion.

None of it intrigues her. Then she sees something that does:

Professor Robinson.

Being mobbed by adoring students. With his 3-day beard, air of campus celebrity, and tight denim, it's like a rock star has stumbled in. They hang on every word, as he holds court.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

You'll never see another western.
At least not the kind that raised
you. Westerns were about codes of
honor, building myths. Now we tear
myths down. You all see The Wild
Bunch yet? Butch Cassidy? All the
heroes dead by closing credits. We
don't celebrate heroes anymore, we
murder 'em. Just ask the Kennedys.

STUDENT GROUPIE #1

My dad still loves John Wayne.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

The Duke's passed his expiration
date. He's got no place in *this*
revolution. Neither does your dad.
There's a whole new frontier out
there. New fight for the cowboys.

His words resonate with Michelle. And with the rest of the
students. Even the one whose father he just insulted.

But Robinson's attention subtly shifts to the door...

A Senior has arrived with a Vietnamese Man, TRAN DINH (30), a
religious man in a saffron robe, looking wildly out of place.

SENIOR GIRL

Is that the guy speaking to my
divinity class tomorrow???

SENIOR BOY

I picked him up at the airport.

SENIOR GIRL

You're not supposed to bring him to
a Bacchanal, dipshit.

SENIOR BOY

He's cool. He said he wants to see
student life. Here it is.

A few students flock to Dinh, to talk world politics. Dinh
smiles warmly as he shakes hands.

Robinson quietly observes.

Michelle, however, continues watching Robinson. She
approaches, loitering well behind his groupies.

Over their shoulders, Robinson catches her look.

And holds it.

INT. PROFESSOR ROBINSON'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

Robinson is on his balcony. He turns his red flower pot 180 degrees. *Strange.* Then he returns inside.

It's decorated as if color were just invented. Neon lamps, purple walls, meadow-green floor.

Some students have invited themselves over for a nightcap. Including Michelle. She looks around, drifting into:

INT. LIBRARY - PROFESSOR ROBINSON'S COTTAGE - NIGHT

She fingers the spines of the *many* books on his shelves.

After a moment, Robinson quietly steps in, sparking a joint.

He's not surprised to find Michelle in here.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

You're a writer.

MICHELLE

Hmm? Oh, I dunno. I try-

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

It wasn't a question.

(beat)

I'm on Admissions. I read your essay. *You have a gift.* And you'll use it to do important things. Even if they won't come easily.

Michelle beams. For the first time at Yale, some validation.

More importantly, for the first time, she's connected with someone who gets her.

Before Michelle knows it, she's staring into Robinson's eyes.

She shuts the door, locks it.

Then puts up her hair, never breaking eye contact.

She undoes her top button.

She comes to him. He offers his joint. She takes a hit.

Then she shotguns the next hit into Robinson's mouth.

Which Michelle segues into a long, swaying kiss.

After a moment, Robinson PULLS BACK. Looks at her.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)
There's a rumor. About professors
looking to barter? Sex for
enrollment in coveted courses?

MICHELLE
I heard. So?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
They've never taught women before.
Some have been here since the '20s.

She unbuttons his shirt. Runs her hands over his bare chest.

MICHELLE
But *you're* more...modern than that?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
I grade on merit, and I fuck on
principle.

He shoots her a pointed look. Michelle just starts laughing.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)
Stoned already? That was fast.

MICHELLE
No, I just find it adorable you
think I'm here for some kind of
help.

She means it. He smiles, enjoying her.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
Still, I'm faculty. Some might say
I coerced you. I have all the
power here.

She laughs. But he's unamused. Robinson fiercely protects
his reputation. Or, he can't afford any negative attention.

Michelle says the following while slowly undressing --

MICHELLE
I'm not naive. I know there's no
such thing as sex without
consequences.

Off with the blouse.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

But that doesn't mean I need a seat
in your hallowed lecture hall. Or
that I *surrender* to you just
because your tweed jacket has elbow
patches, and your name has a PhD
after it.

The pants. Down to her bra and panties.

MICHELLE (CONT'D)

Can't a girl ever exercise *her own*
power around here?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Not sure any girl has ever tried.

She runs her hand over his eyes, closing them.

She starts kissing his chest, working her way down, Robinson
keeps both his eyes and mouth firmly shut.

EXT. 35 HIGH STREET - MORNING

Jay walks to campus, passing by a tiny demonstration of
Jewish students and a Rabbi. Their signs read, "End Yale's
diaspora, build a center for Jewish life on campus."

Across the street, Jay notices two students, who are clearly
mocking the protestors, imitating their walk and bearing.

Jay puts his head down, walks off, hoping not to be noticed.

DOCTOR (PRELAP)

Have you tried cranberry juice?

INT. STUDENT HEALTH CENTER - NEXT

An OLD-GUARD DOCTOR (61) in a white smock eyes Jay as he
enters, already judgmental.

JAY

What?

DOCTOR

I assume you've got something
venereal? Like every young patient
I've seen so far today?

JAY

Actually...shortness of breath.

The doctor takes that in, relieved by a fresh complaint.

He starts taking Jay's blood pressure.

DOCTOR

Not uncommon first week of the
year. Any *added* stress lately?

Jay blushes vulnerably, hesitating to confess:

JAY

Waiting to see if I get tapped by
Skull & Bones.

The doctor looks Jay over, as he removes the cuff.

DOCTOR

That'll qualify as added stress.

He goes to his prescription pad, scribbles on it.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

This is for Librium. Just don't go
snorting it with your buddies.

JAY

It helps with stress?

DOCTOR

Just like grass. But good for you.

Jay clearly isn't satisfied.

JAY

What if it keeps happening?

DOCTOR

If the symptoms persist, we'll want
to determine what it stems from.

Jay takes that in. He has a good guess.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

I can recommend an excellent
analyst. He's expensive, but I'm
guessing that's not an issue here--

JAY

I don't need a shrink.

Jay stands, snaps his machismo right back on. The doctor
sees through it, but knows he won't *break* through it.

Jay grabs his shit and defiantly walks out.

EXT. CAMPUS - DAY

CLOSE ON:

Robinson strolls across a leafy campus, whistling to himself.
His hair is now combed and he looks markedly less disheveled.

PULL BACK:

To find that it's not Yale.

He's on a MILITARY CAMPUS, 90 minutes north of New Haven.

He nods to an armed guard and ducks into a nuclear command bunker, built inside a mountain.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (PRELAP)
I'd like to investigate further.

INT. NON-DESCRIPT ROOM - DAY

Robinson sits with four men in suits.

And one with a shitload of stars and bars on his chest.

We'll come to know them all as INTELLIGENCE OFFICERS.

And they're all surprised by what Robinson just proposed.

SENIOR OFFICER
This is why you signaled for a
meet? Tran Dinh? The man's a monk
on a damn peace tour.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON
Maybe there's more to him than
that.

SENIOR OFFICER
Maybe all that hair of yours is
finally blinding you.
(then)
Or, all the teenage muff you're now
surrounded by is dulling your
senses.

The clean-shaven officers smirk.

Robinson can't help wondering if that was just a lucky guess.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

I'm not making an accusation. Yet.
But given where *else* his travels
have taken him lately, I think he
merits further exploration.

SENIOR OFFICER

We're listening.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

He has talks on campus all day
tomorrow. Shouldn't be back at his
hotel till dark.

The Officers share a look. He's made it hard to object.

They nod their consent.

INT. OUTSIDE ROBINSON'S OFFICE - HARKNESS HALL - DAY

Two students approach from opposite directions:

Jay. And Michelle. They run into each other at the door.

JAY

You're seeing the professor too?

The question throws Michelle.

MICHELLE

You go ahead. I'll come back.

Whatever Michelle was here to do, she's thought better of it.

She turns and walks away, as Jay knocks on the door.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (O.S.)

Come!

INT. PROFESSOR ROBINSON'S OFFICE - HARKNESS HALL - CONTINUOUS

Jay enters to find Robinson back in hippie-professor garb.

Feet up on the desk, reading Vietnam coverage in the paper.

JAY

You wanted to see me, Sir?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Got a faculty advisor yet, Butler?

JAY

They'll give me someone in Econ.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

You don't want a stuffy economist.
They think every global event can
be explained by hyperinflation.

JAY

Weren't you an Econ major here?

Off Robinson, surprised that Jay knows that --

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

I prefer not to dwell on the past.

JAY

You're a *history* professor.

Robinson grins. Decides to be a hair more forthcoming.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Maybe I'm just embarrassed that I
used to be so...conservative.

JAY

What changed?

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

I did. Don't be so sure your
identity today is set in stone.

Jay takes that in.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

You still hoping to be tapped?

Jay nods. Robinson makes his disapproval palpable.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

What about them appeals to you?

Jay answers without hesitation.

JAY

Only 15 new Bonesmen a year. 2,000
total since their inception. You
know how many are congressmen,
CEOs, captains of industry? *I do.*
And I like those odds.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

We both know the odds were stacked
in their favor at conception.

(MORE)

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

(beat)

And, I'd bet being in a secretive organization has its drawbacks too.

Jay considers that, but has no idea it comes from experience.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

But enough about them. Tell me more about your upbringing, on the *Upper East Side*...

JAY

I prefer not to dwell on the past.

Touché.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Little advice. You only get one life, Butler. And it's gonna have a shitty ending. Lead the life you believe in.

Jay lets that sink in. Then --

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

I only take on one student advisee a year. It's a highly coveted slot, and if I were to select you, it may even help your chances of being tapped.

(then)

But I'm happy to do it anyway.

Jay allows a smile. And then a nod.

INT. COURTROOM - BOND COURT - NEW HAVEN - AFTERNOON

Gloria walks into a chaotic, overflowing bond court.

Judge Link is on the bench.

Gloria's excited by the energy of the place. And even more by her personal invitation to be here.

JUDGE LINK

Next up. Batter beware.

Gloria grabs a seat in the gallery and opens her notebook. Link notices her, offers a half nod.

A harried, white male PROSECUTOR, and equally harried white male DEFENDER, bring a series of cases in quick succession.

PROSECUTOR

People vs. Lancaster. Inciting a riot. People request \$1,000 bail.

The DEFENDANT is black, late 30s, scruffy. In handcuffs.

DEFENDER

Mr. Lancaster has 6 kids, Judge.

JUDGE LINK

6 reasons he shouldn't urge violent conduct. Bail \$1,000. Next.

The Defendant is taken to the prisoner holding area.

Gloria is impressed by Link's command of the chaos.

PROSECUTOR

People vs. Wagner. Armed robbery.

Again, the DEFENDANT is black, 20s. In handcuffs.

PROSECUTOR (CONT'D)

Wagner is a member of the Black Panther organization. Robbed a convenience store, likely for cash to fund his group's activities. Request \$4,000 bail.

DEFENDER

Mr. Wagner denies membership in any such organization. No priors or-

JUDGE LINK

Bail set at \$4,000. Next.

Gloria watches the bailiff lead him to the holding area...

Which Gloria now realizes is entirely populated by black men in handcuffs. Her skin begins to crawl.

PROSECUTOR

People vs. Wilson, criminal trespass. Request \$1,000.

Another black defendant. Judge Link appears to enjoy throwing the book at all of them.

Gloria's excitement has now faded. She closes her notebook.

DEFENDER

Mr. Wilson has gainful employment, Judge. He never received verbal warning that he was on private prop-

JUDGE LINK

This court takes trespassing very seriously, Mr. Wilson.

The Judge finds Gloria in the gallery.

JUDGE LINK (CONT'D)

Some people need to learn not to go where they don't belong.

With that, *he looks straight at Gloria.* Her heart races.

Link only invited her here...to put her firmly in her place.

JUDGE LINK (CONT'D)

Bail set at \$5,000. Next.

INT. LINSLEY-CHITTENDEN - LECTURE HALL - AFTERNOON

Tran Dinh, still in his saffron robe, lectures to a packed house. Discussing Buddhist principles of peace.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. DINH'S ROOM -- NEW HAVEN HOTEL - SAME

Agents ransack the room. Searching every inch of it.

Finally, they find something SEWED INTO his suitcase lining.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NEW HAVEN - NIGHT

Making sure no one's looking, Sandy helps Michelle carry boxes OVERFLOWING with this year's nude posture photos.

SANDY

You were really brave to go back.

MICHELLE

Bravery favors the enraged. I'm done asking permission to do the right thing.

SANDY

Here's to going rogue.

They both smile. Then hurl the photos into a metal bin.

MICHELLE

Bonfire of the best and brightest.

Michelle nods to Sandy, who pours gasoline over the photos.

Michelle lights a match and drops it in the can.

They women step back and enjoy the show.

INT. THE TOMB - BASEMENT - NIGHT

A handful of Bonesmen in the cavernous cellar. Two jocks wrestle, shirtless. All of them are fucking hammered.

Mrs. Murphy (Gloria's mom) cleans up and scurries out.

Bonesmen swig unaffordable Scotch straight from the bottle.

Two others piss into balloons. They are --

CHARLIE and TUCKER (mid-20s), equal parts cerebral and crass.

CHARLIE

(re: his piss)

This is not a good color. This is not, for instance, yellow.

TUCKER

Just keep going.

Next to them, a PILE of tied-up balloons, filled with piss.

CHARLIE

I'm just sayin', this is way closer to green than yellow. My dad says I have money in my blood, but he never said anything about my piss.

Tucker pours tequila down Charlie's throat, to try to increase the flow. And to shut him up.

Charlie ties up another finished balloon, places it in the pile, and snaps a fresh one over his cock.

He clasps his hands behind his head and whizzes away.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

I feel like this is definitely how blowjobs were invented.

Tucker hurls the empty Scotch bottle against the wall over the heads of the wrestlers, shattering it.

They all cheer.

A contingent of more mature Bonesmen, in blue blazers, descend to the cellar, surveying the distasteful tableau.

BONES ALUM #3

You guys are fucking Neanderthals.

BONES ALUM #4

And you all need to get dressed.
Limos leave for the mixer in 10.

CHARLIE

Meet you there. We've got some
community outreach to do first.

The blazered Bonesmen roll their eyes and head back upstairs.

EXT. NEW HAVEN STREETS - NIGHT

Charlie and Tucker pile into a '57 Corvette.

They race off, towards the edge of campus and into the night.

On Chapel Street, they find Jay and Warren walking home.

CHARLIE

Butler, Michaels, what're you dry
pussies doing alone in the dark?

TUCKER

Get the fuck in this car. Now.

Warren is thrilled. Jay a hair less so, but hides it well.

They both jump into the convertible, squeezing into the
backseat as the car roars off.

EXT. NEW HAVEN -- NIGHT

Tucker kills the headlights as they glide into the
impoverished residential section of town.

TUCKER

Fuckin' townies. They should nuke
this whole goddamn neighborhood.

CHARLIE

That'd waste a perfectly good nuke.

TUCKER

Good thing we have other options in
our arsenal.

(MORE)

TUCKER (CONT'D)

(then)

Bring the heat, Seaver.

Charlie grabs a balloon from the pile in back, winds up...

AND HURLS THE BALLOON AGAINST THE DOOR OF A RAMSHACKLE HOUSE.

Piss splatters all over the door.

The Bonesmen cheer. A dog starts barking.

They bark back and keep driving.

Jay remains quiet, unsettled.

Charlie takes the wheel and hands Tucker a balloon. Tucker hurls the balloon at the door of the next house. SPLAT.

More cheers.

CHARLIE

Michaels, let's see what you got.

Warren doesn't need to be asked twice. He grabs a balloon and throws it against the next house. SPLAT.

A few lights in the neighborhood turn on.

WARREN

You're up, Butler.

JAY

I'm good actually.

TUCKER

You're nowhere *near* fucking good.
There's a target for you.

At the end of the block, a BLACK GIRL exits her house.

Tucker guns it for her. Charlie hands Jay the last balloon.

CHARLIE

All you, Butler. Aim for the tits.

Jay glares at Charlie. He's appalled. And he's not alone.

TUCKER

Charlie, I think that's above and beyond the call of duty here.

JAY

I agree. Strongly.

Charlie ignores Tucker and gets right in Jay's face.

CHARLIE

Do it. Or find another ride back.

The black girl carries a trash bag to a silver can.

Jay rises from his seat and takes aim at the girl. Trying to see if he even *has the nerve* to do this.

As they get closer, we begin to make her out. Thick afro, black turtleneck. *We realize it's Nia* (Gloria's sister).

Nia looks up in time to see four white boys, racing towards her in a pristine convertible. She can see what's coming.

Jay stands, arm cocked. He and Nia hold each other's stare.

JAY confronts her inability to pass for anything other than what she is. While he passes for something else entirely.

She refuses to look away, as though announcing to him:

"If you do this, you're gonna look me in the fucking eye."

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Butler, let's go! Now!

Jay hesitates. Desperately wanting not to do this.

Finally, he aims carefully...and chucks the balloon.

It explodes on the sidewalk, missing Nia by a few yards.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Fucking pathetic, Butler. She's lucky we're all out of ammmo.

Jay ducks down in his seat. A cold sweat on his face.

He grows short of breath, his heart races. *Another panic attack.* Which he does his best to conceal from the others.

ON NIA

She holds her ground, unblinking, watching the car's tail lights recede away.

Off piss dripping off the sidewalk, we...

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. MILITARY CAMPUS BUILDING - NIGHT

Identical drops, falling from A MAN'S SAFFRON ROBE.

Tran Dinh is handcuffed to a metal chair behind a metal desk, bare-chested.

He looks like he spent the night tossing and turning on an iceberg, reddened and raw.

But don't worry. He's slowly thawing, thanks to the CIA officer PISSING ON HIM.

CIA OFFICER

Who you meeting on campus, Dinh?
We found the weapon schematics
hidden in your Samsonite.

(beat)

"Blen Suk Sol." We found that too.

He flashes a note with that name, and a strange-looking phone number below.

CIA OFFICER (CONT'D)

You gonna tell us who Blen Suk Sol
is? Or why his phone number has an
area code that doesn't exist?

Dinh remains silent.

CIA OFFICER (CONT'D)

You know what phrenology is, *Dink*?
Scientists study the skull to see
where different races are on the
evolutionary scale. Guess which
cranium best makes the case.
That's right, the Vietnamese.

PULL BACK to find Robinson sitting in the corner, observing all this. His expression indecipherable.

The Officer grabs a bucket of ICE WATER.

Half of it splashes over the floor, as he walks with it.

CIA OFFICER (CONT'D)

One look at your misshapen skull,
slanty eyes...it's clear you're of
a lower evolutionary form. Closer
to ape than man. Explains why so
many Gooks are mongrels. It's all
in your head.

Dinh's face contorts. The Officer is getting under his skin.

DINH

The first Noble Truth teaches us
that life *is* suffering.

The Officer shares a look with Robinson, who subtly nods.

The Officer dumps the water on Dinh's head, drenching him.

Dinh shudders.

The Officer flips a switch on the wall.

An industrial-sized air conditioner -- used to cool entire
warehouse floors -- BLASTS Dinh from directly over him.

Wave after wave of FREEZING AIR wash over Dinh's soaked head.

CIA OFFICER

Who the fuck are you here to meet?

Dinh's cheeks ripple from the strength of the air.

And yet, is that...a smirk on his lips?

CIA OFFICER (CONT'D)

Okay, Dinh. See ya in three days.

The Officer hits the lights and exits with Robinson, as the
air conditioner remains blasting.

CIA OFFICER (CONT'D)

Could be barking up the wrong tree.
Or he's a stubborn little fucker.

Robinson glares. *Perhaps showing concern for Dinh?* Then --

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Cut the air. We're done with
foreplay. Plug him in, start at
10,000 volts.

Or not.

INT. METRO NORTH TRAIN (MOVING) - NEW HAVEN LINE - AFTERNOON

Lights off in the train cabin. Jay stares out the window at
the Connecticut countryside passing by. Lost in thought.

He replays the night before in his mind. Wondering just what
he's capable of, depending on who's giving the orders.

He opens his bag to grab a book -- his Skull & Bones
flashcards fall out.

He scans the names, their apparitions once again manifesting:

TAYLOR

Richard Taylor. General,
Confederate Army.

HARRISON

George L. Harrison. Chair of the
secret committee which organized
the atomic bombing of Japan.

RUSSELL

Samuel Russell. Built the world's
largest opium smuggling operation.

Jay closes his eyes, dispelling them.

INT. JAY'S PARENTS' HOME - BRONX - EARLY EVENING

An Ideology Meeting, led by Bert and Sophie.

10 middle-aged lefties -- black and white, men and women --
on folding chairs, stuffed into the tiny apartment, getting
by on instant coffee and bundt cake.

The debate is reaching its crescendo.

BLACK MEMBER

It's just not a clarion call to *us*.
We need an *African* ideology.

BERT BUTLER

Splintering doesn't help our cause.

WHITE FEMALE MEMBER

Bigger issues. 1.5% of the federal
budget went to welfare programs
this year. That's like tossing 70
bucks at every *schnook* below the
poverty line. It's *bupkis*.

BLACK MEMBER

What should *SDS* do about it, Simma?

Jay walks in the front door. Disappointed by what he finds.

He receives a tacit acknowledgement from his father, but he
waits in the foyer. Refusing to enter till the meeting ends.

BERT BUTLER

SDS is gonna caucus itself out of
existence. And it's making its
members more *militant*, not radical--

SOPHIE BUTLER

Burning draft cards and avoiding
all forms of liberalism is no stand-
in for intellectual discourse--

BLACK MEMBER

How can you argue with success?
SDS doubles membership *every year*.

WHITE FEMALE MEMBER

We have a college student right
here, for Pete's sake. Ask *him*.

BLACK MEMBER

Amen. Young Butler, what say you?

They all turn to Jay, politically quarantined in the foyer.

JAY

About what exactly?

WHITE FEMALE MEMBER

Do you believe Students for a
Democratic Society adequately
represents your generation?

Jay's parents brace themselves. And sure enough...

JAY

I don't believe *anyone* represents
my entire generation. Least of all
a bunch of naive kids hopped up on
acid and anarchy.

Jay has embarrassed his parents in front of their cohorts.

Bert and Sophie are as ashamed of Jay, as he is of them.

BERT BUTLER

Let's call it a night, alright?
See you folks next Friday.

They all rise to get their coats and disperse.

Sophie kisses Jay forgivingly and exits to clean the kitchen.

Bert, exhausted, starts stacking chairs. Every time he bends
over, his back spasms. He curses and powers through it.

Jay approaches and starts to help.

JAY

Sorry I rained on your revolution.

His father ignores that.

JAY (CONT'D)

This may be my last Sabbath here
for a while. School obligations
are piling up.

Bert is silent. Doesn't make eye contact. And then --

BERT BUTLER

What the hell are they putting in
your head up at that elitist
brainwashing factory? That meeting
was about securing your *future*.
Why can't you see that?

Jay keeps his head down, clearly struggling with himself.

JAY

On the train down, I was
remembering when I was a kid. And
how upset you got when Stalin's
atrocities started coming to light.

BERT BUTLER

What the hell does that have to do--

JAY

I'd never seen you so *heartbroken*.
Not even when Grandma died. The
Soviets were gonna end the
oppression of workers everywhere.

Off Bert, pulled back into that memory, growing angry...

JAY (CONT'D)

But you couldn't reconcile that
with reality. Stalin was a butcher--

BERT BUTLER

Just say what you mean, Jacob.

JAY

We have different ideas about how
to secure my future. Both involve
compromise.

(then)

Do you ever think about...how much
compromise is *too much*?

Jay is desperately craving practical guidance. Wisdom.

He looks to Bert, wishing so badly he was the type of dad who
could provide it. But Bert is all passion and principle.

BERT BUTLER

Why don't you start coming to our meetings? You may find answers--

JAY

Dad, those answers aren't the kind that are gonna help me--

BERT BUTLER

Course they are. You need to plant your flag in the world--

JAY

That's exactly what I'm trying to do! But in a way that actually makes a *difference*.

BERT BUTLER

On the *sailing* team? With your buddies with the blue blazers and buzz cuts? Do they know *how* you learned to sail? By teaching rich kids up at Camp Ashokan during your summer job? Or would that stench up your air of superiority?

JAY

I am *not* gonna be a man who comes home every night, smelling like the second-hand *junk* he spent all day professionally sorting.

Bert stops folding chairs. Looks at his son.

BERT BUTLER

You think I'm a loser, is that it?

JAY

I didn't say that--

BERT BUTLER

You didn't have to.

They both turn to find Sophie, who's entered at the sound of the yelling. She silently stares at Jay. He looks away.

Bert walks out. Sophie follows him, leaving Jay on his own.

INT. VANDERBILT HALL - GLORIA'S DORM ROOM - EARLY EVENING

Gloria sits by the window, half-dressed for her date with Oliver, scanning the Law School Facebook.

She finds Oliver's photo. Runs a finger over his face.
 Runs another up her own thigh.
 She gazes out the window, and for the first time realizes...
Her room overlooks Yale's CALHOUN COLLEGE.

WOMAN (O.S.)

I'm sorry, can I borrow it again?

Michelle stands in the door. The women's rooms are adjacent.

MICHELLE

I'll find mine, soon as I unpack.

Gloria, interrupted, nods and Michelle grabs her hair dryer.

GLORIA

You think it's a coincidence my
 room overlooks a dorm named for one
 of slavery's biggest defenders?

Michelle considers that.

MICHELLE

I think it stops being a
*coincidence...*the moment you choose
 to get pissed off about it.

Michelle smiles at Gloria, takes the hair dryer and goes.

INT. YALE DAILY NEWS - YORK STREET - EARLY EVENING

Michelle stands before the preppy EDITOR (22) of the nation's
 oldest college paper.

MICHELLE

I don't see what's wrong with it.

EDITOR

For one thing, you're bragging
 about theft and arson. If you
 think burning photos makes you a
 revolutionary...it doesn't.

Michelle is growing angrier by the second.

EDITOR (CONT'D)

(begrudgingly)

The irony is, your writing's
 actually quite...exceptional.

(then)

(MORE)

EDITOR (CONT'D)

You're just wasting it on the wrong ideas.

MICHELLE

That's really not for you to judg--

EDITOR

Look, you wanna challenge President Brewster to a duel, be my guest. But you're sure as hell not using my paper as your dagger.

MICHELLE

The paper belongs to all of us.

He pats her on the head like he's petting a dog.

EDITOR

Let's see if this coed thing even sticks, before you go staking a claim to everything in sight.

MICHELLE

I want to appeal to the editorial board.

EDITOR

That's your prerogative. Just submit a request. To me.
(off her look)
Don't worry -- I'll make sure it gets to the right place.

Michelle glares at him, then turns and walks out.

INT. MICHELLE'S DORM ROOM - LATER

Michelle's at her desk, still enraged, writing something.

SANDY

Just send that letter to Brewster. He's the intended recipient, right?

MICHELLE

Everyone needs to know how unprepared Yale is for us.

SANDY

I think the door to "everyone" was just slammed in your face.
(beat)
Come on, we'll be late for the concert.

Sandy grabs their coats. Under Michelle's Didion essays.

10 NUDE POSTURE PHOTOS fall out of the book.

SANDY (CONT'D)

What the...?

Sandy sees *her own photo*, along with Michelle's and 8 others.

SANDY (CONT'D)

You *kept* these? You kept *mine*?

MICHELLE

And mine. I'm delivering them with this letter.

SANDY

Delivering them where?

MICHELLE

The New York Times.

Michelle beams with resolve. Sandy is mortified.

SANDY

Why the hell do you need *my* photo?

Michelle is silent. And Sandy realizes --

SANDY (CONT'D)

Because nobody'll shed a tear over an exploitative photo of you, a girl who looks like Jane Fucking Fonda. It needs to sit next to a photo of someone who looks like *me*.

MICHELLE

Sandy, I promise, this will pay off in the long run. We have to stick with it, even if there's some pain and embarrassment along the way--

SANDY

Pain and embarrassment for some, glory and admiration for others?

MICHELLE

I walked into a fucking horror movie at that pool! If I don't speak up, some *other* girl will end up in it too. Don't you get that?

Sandy considers that. She grabs the photo of herself.

SANDY

Speak up, say whatever you want, to whomever you want. Just don't speak on my behalf. I don't trust a crusader who can't distinguish between the people she's defending and the people she's destroying.

Sandy rips her pic to shreds, and heads for the concert solo.

EXT. GREENWICH, CT - EVENING

A taxi pulls up and Gloria gets out. She checks the address Oliver gave her. It's the right address, but Gloria's surprised to be staring up at a COLONIAL MANSION.

She shakes it off, and carries a tray of homemade macaroni towards the front door, excited to meet Oliver's family.

She knocks. A Latino SERVANT opens the door.

INT. GREENWICH MANSION - NEXT

The massive space is impeccably decorated. The smell of money wafts over this crowded COCKTAIL FUNDRAISER.

A sea of white in black tie. Gloria scans the room, confused. She spots:

A wunderkind of American music.

A celebrated fashion photographer.

Last year's Best Director winner.

Then she sees 10 Black Panthers, sporting Afros, turtlenecks, and berets. Most of them ARMED.

They're facing the wealthy whites in the living room.

Speaking for the Panthers -- John Cleaver.

Gloria blanches at seeing him.

JOHN

We don't say 'bail' anymore. We say 'ransom.' Black men imprisoned by white juries *must* be set free.

"Bravo!" "Hear, Hear!" from the tuxedos and gowns.

JOHN (CONT'D)

See, all we want is a fair shake at
the good life, same as you.

The Panthers are the romanticized darlings of the politico-cultural jet set...who treat them like an exotic zoo exhibit.

A white-haired luminary rises, sweeps his hand over the room.

WHITE HAired LUMINARY

When you walk into this house, you
must be infuriated. Why should we
have everything, and you nothing?

A few Panthers exchange looks. A dinner bell rings.

PALE-BLONDE WOMAN

Donations bell! Dig deep everyone!

WHITE HAired LUMINARY

All funds benefit the Free
Breakfast For Children Program, run
by these brave young men and women.

PALE-BLONDE WOMAN

Hoover won't even allow them
permits to feed the hungry.

FILM DIRECTOR

\$250!

CHOREOGRAPHER

\$350!

WUNDERKIND COMPOSER

The fee from my next performance of
Capriccio!

The donations become a parlor game among the elite crowd.
Martinis of guilt-relief, spiked with social consciousness.

Cleaver spots Gloria, glides over to her.

JOHN

I knew you couldn't leave us
behind, G. We're your people.
Embrace us. Me in particular.

He starts to put his hands on her, but Gloria shakes him off,
turns, and beelines for the door...

Where she bumps into Oliver.

OLIVER

Gloria. I'm so glad you made it.

GLORIA

Oliver, what the hell? You said I was meeting your *family*.

OLIVER

You are. These are all my brothers and sisters.

Gloria scoffs at that.

OLIVER (CONT'D)

Why not just stay and listen?

GLORIA

I did. My entire childhood. I heard it all. Nothing I heard impressed me.

OLIVER

Gloria, I know who your brother was. What the cops did to him was a fucking tragedy. But Freddy represented just one side of us. We're expanding, from self-defense to self-determination. Food banks, health clinics, education outreach--

GLORIA

Sounds like important work. Don't let me stand in your way.

Gloria pushes past him. At the door, she spots Nia.

Gloria hesitates, then decides to confront her sister --

GLORIA (CONT'D)

I never, *not once*, blamed you for Freddy's death. But that doesn't mean I want his life. So stop fucking with the life I *do* want.

NIA

Course you blame me. Just like Mom does. I recruited him. But this isn't about Freddy. This is about you. And how you think you replaced being black with being at Yale.

GLORIA

They're *not* mutually fucking exclusive.

NIA

No, they're not. But the only *reason* you're at Yale, is because those who came before you gave *their lives* to make it possible.

(then)

You don't get to stand on their shoulders without fear of fallin.

That socks Gloria in the gut. She turns and walks out.

INT. THE TOMB - EVENING

20 distinguished members of the Bones Alumni Trust in cigar-and-brandy mode. More power and ego than Nixon's White House. And several of the same faces.

SECRETARY NICHOLSON

With Mellon, Chambers, Lewis, that leaves us one spot. Any legacies left in contention?

MR. KEATING

Michaels. How are his test scores?

A Young Alum grabs transcripts and hands them to Keating.

YOUNG ALUM

Here are the student files the Dean's Office slipped to us.

SECRETARY NICHOLSON

Let's make our selection, Senator.
(only half in jest)
The world waits with baited breath.

MUSIC UP -- 'ALL ALONG THE WATCHTOWER' sung by JIMI HENDRIX.

EXT. CHURCH STREET - EVENING

Spencer, who we met in Robinson's class, hails a checker cab.

Soon as he's in, the cab TAKES OFF LIKE A SHOT.

SPENCER

Hey! What the fuck man, slow down!

A previously unseen PASSENGER in the front seat -- Charlie -- turns around and faces Spencer.

Charlie's wearing a WHITE MASK with protruding TRUNK.

BONESMAN (CHARLIE)
Accept...or reject?

As the car accelerates, quickly reaching 80mph, Spencer's terrified lips...curl with delight.

Tap night has begun.

EXT. YALE BOWL - SAME TIME

Nick lays on the 50 yard line in the empty stadium.

Natural grass, no lights, slingshot goal posts. Nick's teammates smoke joints, fawn over him. He laps it up.

FOUR BONESMEN, including Tucker, in hooded black robes, emerge from the tunnel, and move in sync down the field.

RED SMOKE billows from their LANTERN, until the sky around them is a DENSE RED FOG. They approach Nick.

We see Nick's friends all wanting what he's about to get.

Nick grins a giant grin.

INT. FOUR-STAR RESTAURANT - SAME TIME

Kirk sits across from a gorgeous, MONEYED GIRL in pearls.

A waiter brings out a SILVER TRAY.

The waiter lifts the cover. Expecting a lobster, Kirk is astonished to find --

A SCROLL. The wax seal emblazoned with a SKULL & CROSSBONES.

FOUR BONESMEN emerge from the kitchen. Kirk's eyes light up.

INT. STERLING LIBRARY - READING ROOM - SAME TIME

A cavernous room with stained glass windows. More a cathedral than a library.

Tables packed with students hunched over thick texts.

Jay and Warren are lost in their studies.

THE LIGHTS GO OUT.

12 candles pop up in a perimeter.

A 20-foot skull & crossbones is PROJECTED with candlelight and shadows over the majestic double doors.

FOUR BONESMEN in masks materialize from the shadows --

Closing in on Jay.

Jay is overwhelmed, as they tap him and lead him away.

He turns to glance back at Warren, who's realizing he's been passed over. Warren can't even *pretend* to be happy for Jay.

Off Jay...taking it in. And all that it means.

END MUSIC

EXT. THE TOMB - MORNING

Jay hesitantly walks up High Street towards the fortress. He arrives, takes a breath. His hand hesitates. Then knocks.

It's PULLED OPEN just a crack, by an unseen figure.

JAY

Vita ad mortem. Ossa ad ossa.

He just stands there, silhouetted from the dark interior... until the door is opened wide.

INT. FOYER - THE TOMB - CONTINUOUS

As soon as he enters, a HOOD is violently thrown on his head.

INT. THE TOMB - MUD ROOM - NEXT

Jay's DRAGGED into the next room, his feet grazing the floor.

The hood is removed. All Jay can make out is FIREFLIES dancing round the room...

We slowly realize that the fireflies are dozens of LIT CIGARETTES, waved around by alumni known as "The Patriarchs."

25 torches light up in sync, revealing a cavernous room.

Jay scans the walls, lavishly adorned with swords and steel.

Faded black & white photos -- Class of 1832, 1865, 1932...

VOICES
 (chanting in unison)
 Pares autem hangman mors. Diabolus
 pares mors.

Several men, in hooded black-and-red robes over their suits, carry A COFFIN into the center of the room.

15 others, including Jay, Spencer, Nick, and Kirk, all kneel.

UNCLE TOBY (O.S.)
 You will not betray the sanctity of
 The Temple to barbarians.

A distinguished, 60-something patriarch in a hooded gold robe, assuming the role of leader -- or "UNCLE TOBY" -- steps to the front, carrying a tall staff.

UNCLE TOBY (CONT'D)
 Initiate Butler. Rise and remove
 your clothes.

Jay hesitantly does so.

UNCLE TOBY (CONT'D)
 Inhabit the vessel.

Jay lays down in the coffin.

UNCLE TOBY (CONT'D)
 Unmask yourself, ab initio.

Jay takes a moment. Then begins.

JAY
 Sometimes I lay awake, thinking
 about how I'd describe myself to a
 stranger. To you all, in fact.

And we realize, we've caught up to our first scene.

INT. YALE LAW SCHOOL - DAY

Judge Link at his lectern, starting class. He scans the room and stops at the seat Gloria sat in. *It's empty.*

Which suits him just fine.

JUDGE LINK
 Mr. Kanter, please recite for us
 the facts of Tinker V. Des Moines.

STUDENT (KANTER)

Students were suspended for wearing black armbands to school as an act of defiance against the war.

Link's attention is drawn to the classroom door...

As Gloria walks in. Her head held high.

Link's eyes follow her all the way to the same seat she took last time. Gloria sits and makes herself comfortable.

Even though she doesn't belong there.

Her own act of defiance.

INT. MICHELLE'S DORM ROOM - DAY

Michelle sits, staring at her letter and her posture photo.

Then she looks across the room, where we see that Sandy's stuff is GONE. Moved to another dorm room.

Off Michelle, her first friendship at Yale now the first casualty of her crusade...

INT. MILITARY CAMPUS - NON-DESCRIPT ROOM - DAY

Robinson is back at the military base, meeting with the same four CIA Officers. They wait until he's settled.

CIA OFFICER

Dinh still hasn't said dick.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

So why am I here?

The Officer flashes the "Blen Suk Sol" note.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON (CONT'D)

You figured out who his Vietnamese contact is?

The Officers exchange a look.

SENIOR OFFICER

It's not a who. It's a what. And it's not Vietnamese.

Robinson stares at the note. His mind races.

The letters on the note begin REARRANGING themselves into different combinations. *Until the anagram is broken.*

B-L-E-N S-U-K S-O-L has become *S-K-U-L-L B-O-N-E-S*

A shiver rushes up Robinson's spine.

SENIOR OFFICER (CONT'D)

You were right.

Robinson nods, vindicated. But so wishes he'd been wrong.

CIA OFFICER

We're trying to unscramble the phone number too. Matching it against every living Bones alumnus.

SENIOR OFFICER

We have no idea what their angle is, but the accumulation of wealth and power inside that nasty little fucking cabal...it's unrivaled in the history of mankind.

CIA OFFICER

Even if the intel is credible, it's an inch deep.

(then)

We need a deep-cover asset.

SENIOR OFFICER

How the fuck do we get an agent inside a secret fucking society?

Robinson lets them stew for a moment, before sharing:

PROFESSOR ROBINSON

Relax, Gentlemen. As usual, I'm already one big step ahead of you.

INT. THE TOMB - MUD ROOM

TIGHT ON JAY --

JAY

Like my past, my future is a series of choices already made *for* me.

BLACK.

END OF PILOT