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RUTHERFORD FALLS

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FADE IN:

EXT. STREET - EDGE OF TOWN - DAWN

The misty rolling hills and dense forest of Upstate New York are ridiculously pretty. Just stupid pretty. We CRANE DOWN to find an empty patch of winding road. Then, in the foreground, a gleaming bronze head. We drink in the gravitas of this brave face as... a bird shits on its cheek.

We PULL OUT to REVEAL: It's a huge 20-foot statue of a man holding books and a quill pen. Covered in a green patina, the statue has been here for a remarkably long time. It sits in the center of the road, at the end of a very sharp turn. In the distance, signs marked 'CAUTION!' warn drivers about this inadvertent roundabout, nestled in a blind spot.

We see the statue in its entirety and start to hear something... an engine... getting louder... and --

CRASH!

A 2009 Ford Mustang CRUNCHES into the statue's pedestal! JOEY, (20s, fratty Filipino) crawls out of the driver's side. Forehead bleeding, he surveys the damage.

JOEY

Fuuuuuuuuuuh! Gah. This is... no!

He makes a run for it. Beat. He runs back.

JOEY (CONT'D)

Damn it, damn it, damn it...

He collects empty beer cans from the car, sprints to the woods, trips and falls! The beer cans go flying! Now in a ditch, he full on 'Nancy Kerrigan' cries in pain. His crying turns to vomiting (we don't see it). We WHIP PAN RIGHT to REVEAL: An OLD TIMER (60s) in a pickup truck, creeping to a stop, having seen the whole thing. He dials 911.

OLD TIMER

Sheriff, it's Sam... Can't complain, about to go to Costco, buy a gazebo...
Hmm? Oh! I'm in front of Big Larry.
It's happened again.

TITLE SEQUENCE: A SPLIT-SCREEN. On one side, a sheet of blank parchment fills up with the Rutherford family tree -- endless sprawling branches of Mayflower-descended family units. As it grows, we see IMAGES of those families flourishing and growing richer in the New World. They quickly go from fur traders to lumberjacks to titans of industry.

(CONTINUED)

On the other side, something you never see: IMAGES of Native Americans (the MINISHONKA TRIBE) in PRESENT DAY, living their daily lives in and around Rutherford Falls: playing lacrosse, a smiling family at Red Lobster, an old couple at a powwow, etc. These images move back in time. We see 2004 Minishonka with emo haircuts, then 1990s Minishonka holding tiny spades and breaking ground on a casino...

The two sides combine at the show's inflection point: when our two leads meet as children, before the complications of adult life take hold. NINE-YEAR-OLD NATHAN RUTHERFORD offers NINE-YEAR-OLD REAGAN GEORGE a weirdly formal handshake. She takes his hand. **END OF TITLE SEQUENCE**

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS HERITAGE MUSEUM - MORNING (D-1)

We start on a beautiful glass museum case displaying the (now complete) Rutherford family tree and other antique objects.

NATHAN (O.S.)

A wise man once said, "Bravery is nothing without honor. And legacy can only be nourished by merit."

We MOVE TO: NATHAN RUTHERFORD (late 30s, earnest as hell) who speaks behind a podium.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

That wise man... was me.
(humble, explaining)
I was positive I was quoting someone else, so I googled it. Turns out, nope. Only me. My name is Nathan Rutherford. And it is my great honor to welcome you to the Rutherford Falls Heritage Museum -- a monument to American ingenuity, history, and accomplishment. Now, before we begin, does anyone need to go potty?

REVEAL: this speech is being given to a class of second graders. The kids shake their heads 'no'.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(fake serious)
Okay, gonna hold you to that. Follow me...

As he exits left, Nathan's assistant BOBBIE SANTOS (15, gay, super driven, had two side businesses by the age of 10) pushes the podium to the right.

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS MUSEUM - ANOTHER ROOM

Behind Nathan are various PHOTOS and DRAWINGS of RUTHERFORDS throughout history.

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN

Legacy is everything. It's a shock wave sent through the ages, guiding our destinies. It's why we revere the Kennedys, the Bushes, the Rutherfords.

(faux confused)

Wait, who was that last one? Well, long before those famous families slid into power, there was this man.

Bobbie draws a curtain to reveal a WALL-SIZED PHOTO of the BIG LARRY STATUE.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

He traveled here from across the Atlantic. He cleared dense forests with his bare hands, withstood unforgiving winters, befriended his Native American counterparts, and tamed our town of Rutherford Falls into existence. His name was Lawrence Rutherford, and he's the reason we're all standing here today. And to honor this great man...

(points to picture of statue)

'Big Larry' was erected on the very spot where, in 1638, he brokered a "fair and honest deal" with the Minishonka tribe to establish our town. Cast in bronze, it stands at twenty feet tall.

(sharing a secret)

Now, I'm the last Rutherford to remain in our fine town. See the resemblance?

Nathan strikes a pose similar to the Big Larry statue. The children's teacher, MS. FISH (30s, thirsty, puts it all out there), matches his enthusiasm.

MS. FISH

I definitely see it! In the jaw. It's downright eerie.

NATHAN

Very good! The Rutherford jawline is so consistent, it was actually used in a biology textbook in the 1800s.

MS. FISH

Ooh! Maybe we can use it in class.

NATHAN

Sadly, the book is no longer in use. It contained some outdated theories about the width between one's eyes and whether...

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN (CONT'D)
(laughing it off)
...it made you a witch. Let's keep it
moving, lots more to see!

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS MUSEUM - EXHIBITIONS (D-1)

They all surround a leather chair, Nathan is mid-speech.

NATHAN
So President McKinley sat in *that* chair
and said...
(as McKinley)
"Mr. Rutherford, I will not discuss one
peat ash tariff, until I have a slice of
your Catherine's rhubarb pie. It's the
talk of Capitol Hill."
(amazed)
Can you imagine?

The kids don't get it. Unfazed, Nathan lays it on thick.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Now, McKinley died two days later.

STUDENT 1
Because of the pie?

NATHAN
No. But we have reason to believe this
might be the last chair he ever sat in.

STUDENT 2
Can I sit in it?

NATHAN
You can, but there's a good chance Ol'
McKinley's ghost is already sitting
there...

Nathan pats the chair and the lights flicker. The kids go
bananas, but we catch Bobbie covertly flicking the lights.

INT. RUNNING THUNDER CASINO FLOOR/ CULTURAL CENTER - DAY

REAGAN GEORGE (late 30s, smart, over-thinks/quick to bail
when challenged) is making an impassioned speech of her own.

REAGAN
The history of Indigenous people is the
greatest story never told. So I
consider it a great honor to serve as
director of our Cultural Center.
Finally, we as Minishonka have a place to
teach the public who we really are!

(CONTINUED)

REVEAL: Reagan alone in a one-room exhibit space, adjacent to the bustling Running Thunder Casino floor (a giant glass wall/entrance gives it a fishbowl effect). Unlike Nathan's museum, her cultural center is lacking in presentation and, well, everything. It has a few objects (pottery, a woven basket, a wampum belt, etc.) displayed on waist high 'cube pedestals', but casino customers mostly pay it no mind.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

But there's more to be done! Which is why I'm asking that we 'gather our chips' and go 'all in' on a major budgetary increase. So that the next time you hear 'Jackpot!' it's--

(bailing to herself)

No, Jesus, no.

Reagan sighs, then grabs her phone and texts. (We see the exchange and their contact photos on the screen) REAGAN: "Nathan, I'm freaking out." Immediate three bubbles. NATHAN: "Get over here. I'll rush the tour and we can do another practice run." REAGAN: You're the best!!! She smiles and gathers her stuff, as a TIPSY OLD GAMBLER enters.

TIPSY OLD GAMBLER

I just won 800 bucks! Can you believe it?

REAGAN

Uh, congrats, sir that's gr-- wait, stop!

The Tippy Gambler grabs a woven basket from a pedestal.

TIPSY OLD GAMBLER

How much? I wanna buy something for my Rita! She's gonna fill this with seashells! We take a lot of walks.

REAGAN

(reaches for basket)

It's beautiful you two have an active hobby at your age, but that's actually hundreds of years old and not for sale!

Reagan tries to gently pry the old man's fingers off the basket without damaging it.

TIPSY OLD GAMBLER

Ooh, I love it when there's a story! Seriously, name your price.

REAGAN

This isn't a sales technique because this isn't a gift shop!

(CONTINUED)

Just then, they're interrupted by a GAMBLING WOMAN.

GAMBLING WOMAN

Do y'all sell shot glasses?

REAGAN

I'm sure they do, ma'am. At the gift shop, near the front entrance. This is the cultural center, totally different. Also we're closing.

(grabs basket)

So I will take this. And you two will go gamble away your 401Ks!

Reagan shoos them out.

MAN (O.S.)

Do I need to take off?

REVEAL: A man has been sitting on the floor charging his cell phone the entire time.

REAGAN

Yeah, dude. Obviously.

INT. RUNNING THUNDER CASINO FLOOR/ CULTURAL CENTER - LATER

Reagan locks up. She takes a beat to really look at her sad cultural center. We HEAR one of the many SEX AND THE CITY SLOT MACHINES that flank both sides of the cultural center.

SLOT MACHINE CARRIE BRADSHAW (O.S.)

"I couldn't help but wonder, what if we can have it all?!"

REAGAN

Or, can I just have one thing, Carrie?
I'd settle for one thing.

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS MUSEUM - THEATER - LATER

The kids watch a homemade museum video. It features Nathan dressed in old timey clothing, playing Lawrence Sr. He sits at a desk writing with a quill pen, then looks into camera.

LAWRENCE SR. (ON VIDEO)

The town looks to be running very smoothly. I only wish I could see what Rutherford Falls will be like in the future. Wouldn't that be something...

The screen cross dissolves to townspeople holding hands and dancing around Big Larry in celebration. CHYRON: Founder's Day 2099 AD. We see one of the townspeople is an alien.

(CONTINUED)

ANGLE ON: Reagan, who finds Nathan in the dark theater. They have a whisper convo.

NATHAN

Hi! We're almost done.

REAGAN

Nice. You didn't do that BS about McKinley and the chair, right?

NATHAN

Come on, that pie story is verbatim from my great-grandfather. One hundred percent true!

REAGAN

Mckinley's ghost, tho?

NATHAN

(wry smile)

So I sprinkle a little sugar... it helps them get the importance of the chair.

REAGAN

You really can't help yourself.

NATHAN

I really cannot.

They chuckle. We REVEAL Ms. Fish watching them, jealous.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

I'm excited to do another run-through.

REAGAN

Eh, let's just grab lunch. I'm pretty sure I'm gonna cancel my presentation.

NATHAN

No, you're not.

REAGAN

I definitely am though.

NATHAN

Reagan, you've been practicing for months. You're ready, girl, you just--
(gets an idea)
Hold on, okay?

She nods. We ANGLE ON: Everyone watching the end of the video. On screen Nathan, as Lawrence, is now a ghost. (While everything is in color, he's a grainy blue, a la the holograms in *Star Wars*).

(CONTINUED)

LAWRENCE GHOST (ON VIDEO)
The future of Rutherford Falls...
(hushed)
...is glorious!

He gives an approving nod to their celebration and strolls off. As his image disappears, a crudely CGI'd spaceship zips across frame. The End. Bobbie hits the lights.

NATHAN
Okay! This concludes our tour. Please follow Bobbie to the cafe for complimentary astronaut ice cream.

BOBBIE
(calls to the children)
Single file line, don't make me say it again.

Bobbie and the kids cross off, but Ms. Fish approaches them.

MS. FISH
Nathan, thank you for making history come alive. And just awakening a lot of things, in me. And the children.

NATHAN
Nice of you to say.
(awkward silence, then)
Well, better go grab some ice cream before it's all scooped up.

MS. FISH
(laughs too hard, then sexy)
Oh, I intend to enjoy every bite.

She unwraps her ice cream and tries to seductively eat it, but it's super dry and she ends up coughing a gust of dusty ice cream. Nathan and Reagan dodge back to avoid the cloud.

NATHAN/REAGAN
Are you okay? / It's dehydrated.

MS. FISH
(coughing)
I'm fine. I'm getting it back. I can get it back.

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS MUSEUM - BACK ROOM HALLWAY

Reagan walks with Nathan.

REAGAN
You need to ask out Ms. Fish, before she kills herself trying to seduce you.

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN

Yeah...I don't think so. We're operating on two completely different frequencies. I mean, she's...
(whispers)
...from Tallahassee.

Nathan gives her a look like this explains it all.

REAGAN

What's wrong with Tallahassee?

NATHAN

There are alligators everywhere. Even at the grocery store. The angry ones walk on two legs. That doesn't terrify you?

REAGAN

(sweetly)
No more than dying alone.

NATHAN

I'm just not sure she really... 'gets' it. You know? Like, people either get it or they don't. So with Ms. Fish, it's best to keep it professional.

REAGAN

Understood. Wait, so, if she doesn't 'get it', what kind of person does?

NATHAN

Well I don't have like an official list, but... you, obviously. Nelson Mandela, George Clooney, Teddy Roosevelt, your uncle Ernie, Adele, and a bunch of others.

REAGAN

I'm in pretty great company.

NATHAN

That's cause you 'get it'.

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS MUSEUM - FABRICATION WORKSHOP

Nathan's workshop has a very warm vibe: huge work bench, high-end printer, and hundreds of bins/drawers filled with every craft, notion, and tool you could imagine. Nathan mounts professional-looking signs of charts and figures. One, titled "Proposed Expansion of the Running Thunder Cultural Center," features photos of Minishonka art and people. He lovingly cuts and binds them to foam core boards.

(CONTINUED)

REAGAN

You sure you have time for this?
You said prepping for Founders Day was
making your hair fall out.

NATHAN

It always grows back. And this is
important. By tomorrow you could be on
your way to having a real museum space.

Nervous, Reagan takes a handkerchief from the pocket of a
nearby colonial mannequin and dabs her neck.

REAGAN

Jesus, why did I even set this up?
Terry's gonna say no. Then I won't be
able to deny how crappy my job is. I
should cancel. Denial is better than
rejection.

NATHAN

No. Look, when you go into Terry's
office, you will be the smartest person
in that room.

REAGAN

...Terry will also be in the room.

NATHAN

I know he's intimidating, but sometimes,
even when it's scary, you can't take no
for an answer. You have to plant your
feet and say, "This is what I want, and
if you'd take a minute to think about it,
you'd see it's the only way to go." And
then they'll see.

Reagan takes this in. Nathan holds up one of his signs.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

And these will show Terry you really mean
business. Proper signage is the
strongest arrow in one's quiver.

REAGAN

They are so nice.

NATHAN

Same foam core people in Congress use.
Comes from Maryland. Can you imagine?

REAGAN

(calming down)
Well, thank you.

(CONTINUED)

Nathan sits at his work bench, like it's a desk.

NATHAN

Now, let's run through it one more time.
I'll play Terry.

(in character)

"Come in, Reagan. I'm Terry Tarbell, I
run the casino. I'm very scary and
inscrutable and loom large in your life."

REAGAN

Nathan...

NATHAN

"So much so, your stress dreams are
always us at Chuck E. Cheese and I'm
very disappointed you haven't won more
tickets."

REAGAN

Never should have told you that.

NATHAN

"What do you have to present to me?"

Nathan gives her a look like, "You can do this."

REAGAN

(breathes, confident)

Terry, I've worked at the casino for four
years and the time has come--

Reagan is interrupted by Nathan's phone ringing. She groans.

NATHAN

One sec. But that was great!

(answers)

Hello?

INT. RUTHERFORD DAILY EAGLE OFFICES - INTERCUT AS NEEDED

Reporter CORBIN HAYES sits at his desk.

CORBIN HAYES

Nathan. Corbin Hayes with the Eagle.

NATHAN

Purple Hayes! How's it going, bud?

CORBIN HAYES

You know. Ramping up Founder's Day
coverage. But I'm calling to request a
quote in response to Mayor Chisenhall's
decision to move Big Larry.

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN

Umm... I'm sorry, what?!

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Nathan and Bobbie barge into the office of MAYOR PAULA CHISENHALL (40s, black, formidable).

NATHAN

You cannot move Big Larry, Paula!

PAULA

(dry)

Hi, Nathan, come on in.

NATHAN

We've been over this. Lawrence Rutherford chose that spot to found this town. The position was verified by triangulating off known landmarks referenced in the original deal document with the Minishonka. It's history -- and you can't just change history.

BOBBIE

Yeah Paula! Ugh!

PAULA CHISENHALL

It's a question of public safety.

NATHAN

I agree! Been saying it for years, which is why it's time to implement my plan -- which as you know, already has support from the historical society and numerous small business owners.

PAULA CHISENHALL

Nathan, we've been over this --

NATHAN

We use our powers of eminent domain to construct a new road from the highway into town, bypassing the current one. Then, we call our friends at the National Parks Service, so Big Larry can finally receive historical landmark designation --

PAULA CHISENHALL

We aren't doing any of that!

BOBBIE

Because you won't dare to dream!

(CONTINUED)

PAULA CHISENHALL

Because it'll cost nine million dollars.
And redrawing the roads as you propose
will ruin Frank Mayweather's apple
orchard and Ronnie Yamamoto's adult
bookstore.

NATHAN

Well, what's the option? Pick up the
most important object for a hundred miles
in any direction and toss it aside like
garbage? You wouldn't do that to the
Statue of Liberty!

(then)

And by the way, colleague to colleague, I
can't believe you'd pull a stunt like
this a week before Founders Day.

PAULA CHISENHALL

Did I make a very sweet Filipino kid
crash into that statue?

BOBBIE

We don't know your dirty K Street tactics.

NATHAN

Paula, your family has been in this town
almost as long as mine, and I respect
your position as a Chisenhall.

PAULA CHISENHALL

And the Mayor.

NATHAN

So let's settle this in a way that would
make your Grandpa George and my Grandpa
Conrad proud.

PAULA CHISENHALL

What are you talking about? What are you
ever talking about?!

NATHAN

I'm saying, if you won't accept my
proposal, then let's go old school: crack
open a bottle of scotch and refuse to
leave the table until we've hashed this
out.

BOBBIE

I can go buy scotch. It's no problem.
No one can tell how old Filipinos are.

Nathan gives her a look like "Should we, maybe?"

(CONTINUED)

PAULA CHISENHALL

Nathan, I'm sober and you know that.
Also, it's not 1835. And it's about time
you wrapped your head around that.

INT. RUNNING THUNDER CASINO - CONTINUOUS

Reagan rushes through the casino floor struggling to carry the foam core signs. As she makes her way to the elevator, WAYNE (30s, Native, salty) and SALLY (20s, Native, even saltier) cross by, pushing a cart of complimentary sodas.

WAYNE

Ooh, did you finish your science project?

SALLY

No she's got a meeting with boss man.
The air's pretty thin on the top floor.
Don't choke!

REAGAN

Great to have the support of my
community...

Sally makes a choking gesture as she and Wayne cackle away.

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR'S OFFICE - DAY

Nathan, Paula, and Bobbie continue their debate.

NATHAN

I feel like I'm in the Twilight Zone -- I
mean, where would Big Larry be moved to?

Paula's a little caught, she hadn't really thought that far.

PAULA CHISENHALL

Well, any number of... A public park,
like Mercy Hill.

Nathan and Bobbie both offer a dismissive chuckle.

NATHAN

People come from all over to get their
photo taken with Big Larry. You really
think they'll want to do that where John
Bickerstaff was found murdered in 1994?!

Bobbie slow claps to punctuate what a terrible idea that is.

BOBBIE

Brava, Paula. You've ruined this town.

(CONTINUED)

PAULA

Nathan, I've accepted that your being
this town's little mascot--

Mascot?

NATHAN

BOBBIE

How dare you?!

PAULA CHISENHALL

It means you get to be a complete pain in
my ass. But try to remember that you
have no real power here. The town
council will vote in three months.
You're welcome to plead your case then.

NATHAN

Oh, am I welcome to do that? Am I? Duh.
Because yea, I will.

INT. TOWN HALL - LOBBY HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Nathan and Bobbie storm out, livid.

NATHAN

This is a classic squabble. Chisenhalls
and Rutherfords have been locking horns
for 200 years. Something tells me she's
still sore that statue is of Lawrence
Rutherford, and not Cornwallis Chisenhall
-- if you know what I mean.

BOBBIE

(beat)

Should I see if they validate parking?

NATHAN

Yes.

Bobbie crosses off. Nathan looks worried.

INT. RUNNING THUNDER CASINO - TERRY TARBELL'S OFFICE

Reagan stands (with her signage on easels) and presents to
her boss TERRY TARBELL (50s, super confident, CEO of the
casino, thinks he could be a judge on Shark Tank).

REAGAN

My dream has always been to showcase the
art and innovation of our people. My hope
with the cultural center is that between
the black jack and buffets, we can offer
visitors a real Indigenous education.

Terry says nothing. Reagan gets nervous, but tries to cover.
She uses her notes to wick away sweat from her face.

(CONTINUED)

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Sorry. I get sweaty when I'm really confident.

(then, back into it)

Unfortunately, seventy percent of those visiting the cultural center confuse it with the gift shop. And another twenty percent only come in to charge their phones. But a budget increase could change that. Because really, what's the point of generating all this money if we don't put it back into the tribe?

TERRY TARBELL

Last year we put two million towards language preservation, early childcare education, and the women's shelter. Are you suggesting we cut those budgets for your project?

REAGAN

Cool, yeah, no, yeah we don't wanna... we wouldn't wanna...

TERRY TARBELL

What's this museum expansion going to cost anyway?

REAGAN

Um, high figure: Three hundred and fifty thousand. But if we cut some corners? Three hundred and fifty thousand, I'm sorry, I can't cut corners.

TERRY TARBELL

There's just no way we could ever do that. It's too much money. And for that reason, I'm out.

REAGAN

Is that... Shark Tan--

TERRY TARBELL

But it took real guts to come up here. And I do love your signage. Top notch.

(thinks)

You seem like a very smart girl. I'm guessing lots of college -- not Ivy League, but so close it drives you crazy?

REAGAN

(sighs)

Northwestern.

(CONTINUED)

TERRY TARBELL

See that's great! Because I've been working on this exciting venture. And I'll need people like you on my team.

Terry gets up, and as he talks, opens a safe.

TERRY TARBELL (CONT'D)

(conspiratorial)

Now, loose lips here, but if you can hold on, we're close to making some big moves.

He takes a box from the safe and hands it to her. Reagan opens it. Inside is a FOLDER with the words "Operation: Running Lightning" printed on the front, in Comic Sans font. She opens the folder -- it's EMPTY.

REAGAN

Is... there a little more?

TERRY TARBELL

It's all I can share right now. But trust me -- "Running Lightning" is a very bold initiative. It will soon change the lives of all Minishonka people.

REAGAN

I appreciate this whole, 'Tony Stark Mentoring' vibe you're giving off, but, well, sometimes in life...

Reagan plants her feet. We think she's going to stick up for herself as Nathan has suggested, but she bails.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

I just want to help the tribe. And it'd be one thing if I was a school teacher or something that made an impact, but--

(deep breath)

When are you starting this "bold initiative?"

TERRY TARBELL

When the stars align, when the trees dance to the sacred harmonies of the wind and the rivers--

REAGAN

Terry! I'm not some white tourist. Talking like that doesn't work on me.

TERRY TARBELL

Three to five years.

INT. RUNNING THUNDER CASINO - ELEVATOR

Alone, Reagan tries to process her disappointment. She looks at the foam core posters with their hopeful slogans and photos. PRE LAP: The Misfits "I Turned Into a Martian."

INT. RUTHERFORD MUSEUM - CURATORIAL/EXHIBITIONS - LATER

The song blasts from a large grey 1980s boombox. Trying to 'craft' his frustrations away, Nathan constructs a diorama of the Rutherford Falls General Store: painting, gluing, cutting etc. He presses his X-ACTO knife too hard and accidentally cuts a chunk out of his delicate model.

NATHAN

Fuck!

He turns off the music. Enraged, he grabs a tiny fur trapper figurine and snaps its head off, then immediately regrets it.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

(to figurine)

I'm very sorry, noted fur trapper Pierre
Du Pont.

Bobbie enters with a cell phone.

BOBBIE

I have your brother.

Nathan makes 'gimme' hands, then grabs the phone to speak with LAWRENCE (40s, content family man. Nathan calls him "Dozen" or "DUZ").

NATHAN

Duz, I'm in a knife fight with a
Chisenhall and I need your help!

INT. SUBURBAN NEW JERSEY HOME - SAME TIME

Duz talks to his brother and serves pancakes to his two tween DAUGHTERS (MADISON and MACKENZIE, both in lacrosse jerseys).

DUZ

Hey, man, you sound pretty high-tone.

NATHAN

Go to your pantry -- there's a crack in
the molding behind the spice rack.
There, you will find a key to a safety
deposit box--

(CONTINUED)

DUZ

What? There's not a--

(checks)

-- oh Jesus Christ, Nate, what is this?

MADISON

Dad! Cursing!

Duz mouths "Sorry" to his daughter.

NATHAN

I've hidden important family heirlooms and documents in all of our homes, for safe keeping. Their location is on a "need-to-know" basis.

DUZ

If you pull some National Treasure shit in my kitchen, I need to know.

MADISON/MACKENZIE

Dad!

DUZ

Sorry! It's also rude to eavesdrop!

(flustered, into phone)

What is going on?

NATHAN

I just need some documents of Dad's to thwart Mayor Paula. She's trying to poison the town by moving Big Larry.

DUZ

(here we go again)

Was there another car accident?

NATHAN

I don't think looking at it through that lens is helpful.

DUZ

I'm hearing yes, okay, I know this stuff means a lot to you, and I respect that, but I'm getting worried. Staying in that small town is giving you tunnel vision, man. Take a beat. Or maybe point this enthusiasm somewhere that'll benefit you.

NATHAN

If they move that statue, they'll change our family's story, redefine who we are.

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What happens if they keep doing it? In the town our family built from scratch?

Duz doesn't have an answer.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Paula already has a head start on getting the town's support, but we have history on our side. And I'm prepared to dig that history up and air out for the people to see. Let our legacy can speak for itself.

DUZ

Okay... I would not do that. People already think Old Mayflower families are weird, usually because we are.

NATHAN

Not ours. We're super normal. We're the Reese Witherspoon of Mayflower families!
(a little caught)
You get what I'm doing here, right?

DUZ

Of course. And I'm with you, all I'm saying is, our family history is... tricky. You start turning over rocks, you might not like what you find underneath.

NATHAN

Duz, you are the elder Rutherford, you carry the name of Lawrence Sr. down twelve generations. I called you because you are fair and wise. Tell me what to do and I'll do it.

DUZ

I think you should let them move the statue.

NATHAN

(instantly)
I cannot do that.
(a beat)
But, hey, Madison and Mackenzie have their game today right? Tell Maddy to watch her left side. And Mackenzie shouldn't be afraid to put her shoulder into it more on face offs.
(explaining)
I watched the game you posted to the stream.

(CONTINUED)

DUZ

See? Enthusiasm pointed elsewhere. I'll tell them. Take care, man.

Nathan thinks for a beat. Should he let this go? Instead, he texts Reagan for back up: Betty's in 15?" Immediate three dots. REAGAN: "Leaving now!"

INT. BETTY'S DINER - NIGHT

Nathan and Reagan sit in Nathan's regular booth, both tipsy.

NATHAN

The whole reason Paula even ran for Mayor was to erase the Rutherfords from this town's identity!

REAGAN

I know! But it's like the people in charge are always trying to kill your dreams with their language programs and their women's shelters!

NATHAN

Exactly!

(then)

Don't totally get that, those both seem super important, but agreed! Paula's a dream killer!

REAGAN

But, here's the thing... Paula don't know you!

NATHAN

Paula don't know! She don't know!

(then)

And hey, technically, Terry didn't say no. So your dreams aren't really dead, they're more, in a coma.

REAGAN

Somehow that's sadder.

NATHAN

He's gonna come around! What you're pitching is just too damned cool to pass up. It's not just cool, its meaningful.

Reagan smiles, grateful for his pumping her up.

REAGAN

So what are you gonna do?

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN

I'm gonna get this town on my side and fight for my family's legacy. I'm going to ensure that long after I'm dead, people will still know our name! What are you gonna do?!

REAGAN

(equally amped)

I'm gonna wait three to five years for Terry to do something he didn't totally specify!

(then)

And until then, I'm gonna to help you protect Big Larry.

NATHAN

Really? That means a lot, because to be honest, today has been weirdly lacking in people who get it.

It's Reagan's turn to pump up her best friend.

REAGAN

Everyone here thinks it's dumb to dream big, but they're just scared. You're different. There's nothing you've ever put your mind to that you haven't accomplished, especially when it's on behalf of your family.

(off his scoff)

When we were kids, we always talked about opening a museum. And by the time I'd earned two masters and came home, you already had a museum!

Hearing this out loud kinda bums Reagan out.

NATHAN

Well, let's do this. Let's sway a dang town!

They drink. We RACK FOCUS to find Ms. Fish, by herself, watching Nathan longingly. On this, we begin a MONTAGE...

INT. COLLEGE BUILDING - OFFICES

PROFESSOR HERMAN DIXON (60s, polished) sits across from Nathan and Reagan.

REAGAN

Professor, tell Nathan what you said on the phone.

(CONTINUED)

HERMAN DIXON

There's precedent that the removal of historical landmarks can create unforeseen issues, a ripple effect if you will. It can impact civic pride, hurt surrounding property values, cause structural damages during removal...

NATHAN

That's great! I mean, it's terrible, but very useful to us.

INT. VFW - AFTERNOON

Nathan speaks to some ELDERLY VETERANS.

NATHAN

The Mayor wants to change our town. But change is bad. Why? Because it makes things different!

Nearby, Reagan watches, mouthing along to Nathan's speech. She watches the crowd to gauge their enthusiasm.

INT. BETTY'S DINER - MORNING

Reagan and Bobbie pass out slices of cake and Nathan stumps.

NATHAN

I say no. No, no, no! No more change! We must defend our American history.

In a booth, DEBBIE (60s, biker vibe) whoops a little too loud.

DEBBIE

That's what I'm talking about! Let's take this country back!

Reagan, Bobbie, and Nathan share a look.

NATHAN

(being polite)
Um... Love that enthusiasm, Debbie!

Reagan scrunches her face, is Nathan agreeing with Debbie? She locks eyes with Bobbie who shrugs.

INT. TOWNSQUARE - AFTERNOON

Nathan and Reagan speak with reporter Corbin Hayes.

NATHAN

Sometimes you have to draw a line in the sand and say enough is enough.

(CONTINUED)

REAGAN

Nathan and his constituents have submitted a formal proposal to the Mayor that's fallen on deaf ears.

NATHAN

We shouldn't have to sacrifice our community's history or safety due to government incompetence. The ball's in her court.

INT. CITY HALL - MAYOR'S OFFICE - LATER

On her desktop computer, Mayor Paula reads the headline: "Town Calls On Mayor To Act!" Stressed, she pulls a pack of cigarettes from a drawer and lights up.

INT. MINISHONKA SENIOR CENTER - DAY

Nathan and Reagan sit with a bunch of OLD MINISHONKA GRANNIES. They all sew a beautiful star quilt.

NATHAN

That statue symbolizes centuries of friendship between our two sovereign nations! We can never give that up.

The Grannies nod. Reagan tries to chat up RAVONDA (60s).

REAGAN

This star quilt's a work of art. Would you ever consider donating one to my cultural center--

RAVONDA

Sshhhhh! He's talking!

All of the Grannies stare Reagan down, then turn back to Nathan. They are with him.

INT. SKATE PARK - SUNSET

Reagan watches Nathan speak to a group of BURNT OUT SKATERS. She spots Joey, (The fratty Filipino kid from the car wreck) wearing a 'halo brace', still very banged up. He pops a prescription pill and watches his friends skate, depressed he can't join. Reagan looks on, sympathetic.

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS MUSEUM - EXHIBITIONS - EARLY EVENING

Nathan speaks at a podium to a crowd of eager supporters (made from each group he'd previously spoken to).

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN

(points)

Betty Kruner, I love your diner. Haven't changed the menu in thirty years, but why should you? Why risk ruining what's already great? Well, Big Larry's already great. And he should stay the same, just like everything and everyone in this beautiful town. Change is bad! Now who's with me?!

Nathan locks eyes with Debbie, sitting in the audience and clapping. He hesitates, then...

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Are you ready to take our town back!?

Reagan frantically looks over her copy of his speech. Nathan's gone way off book, in fact he's gone too far, but the audience erupts in applause. He's tapped into a real part of the town that fears change.

INT. RUNNING THUNDER CASINO - BUFFET - LATER

Reagan (wearing headphones) tries to work on a PRESS RELEASE for Nathan's project, but it's clear she's struggling. Wayne and Sally, who work nearby, get her attention.

WAYNE

They're closing down the Japanese section, if you want sushi you better go now.

REAGAN

(pulls off head phones)

I will never want that.

SALLY

(re: laptop)

What's up? I know Terry didn't give you money for a fancy museum.

(to Wayne)

My cousin heard her crying in the bathroom after her meeting.

REAGAN

It's something for Nathan. But, yeah, no fancy museum for me. Apparently you can earn two degrees and work crazy hard and it's like it doesn't even matter.

Beat. Sally and Wayne bust up laughing. Reagan is not amused.

(CONTINUED)

WAYNE

What? It's funny!

(like Reagan)

"Ooh, I work hard and read books, that automatically means I should succeed!"

(then)

When has that ever been true for Indian people?

REAGAN

I mean, historically... I guess, never.

SALLY

Go finish your homework. I'm sure Nathan really needs more help keeping what he has.

REAGAN

Uh, we help each other. He made all the signs for my presentation.

SALLY

See, Hanging around that Wapáju's got your head messed up. Believing this shit's a fair fight.

WAYNE

Like you're Emma Stone and all you gotta do is prove yourself to a evil book club.

SALLY

Pshh, you ain't Emma Stone.

REAGAN

I never said I was! You don't know what you're talking about. There are many stumbling blocks in starting a museum.

SALLY

Naw, naw, you just call up your rich hoarder grandpa, and be like...

(impersonating a rich person)

"Oh grand-papa, may I have all the Indian artifacts you stole, forth with?!"

WAYNE

(as rich Grandpa)

"Oh yes! And here is a trust fund to help you even more! Start your museum and make my thievery look noble. Cheerio and pass the caviar!"

(then)

Well, you can't do that, but you get me.

(CONTINUED)

Sally and Wayne leave Reagan with thoughts of this imbalance.

INT. RUTHERFORD FALLS MUSEUM - EXHIBITIONS - LATER

Nathan and Reagan make press kits.

NATHAN

Hey, did you have a chance to read my script for the viral video?

REAGAN

Yeah, it was very moving, not sure how you'll get Gary Sinise...

NATHAN

Bobbie's in talks with his people.

REAGAN

Nathan, I need to tell you something.

NATHAN

Sure, shoot.

REAGAN

Okay, well... sometimes, sometimes we're strong enough to withstand a big wave. But holding firm *also* keeps us from moving with the tide. Which is basically swimming. And who doesn't like swimming?

NATHAN

(thinks)

My Aunt Martha was very afraid of the water. As a child, she fell off a riverboat and got caught in the propeller thing in the back --

REAGAN

I think you should move the statue.

NATHAN

Whoa, I thought you 'got' what we're doing here. How do you not? You always get it!

REAGAN

I do, I do, I'm just worried in the same way moving the statue could trigger unforeseen consequences, fighting so hard to keep things as they are, is already doing it. I mean, look at who this is stirring up. Debbie? She thinks feminists are waging a war on Father's Day.

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN

She's a little kooky.

Reagan looks around at the objects in Nathan's museum, how they're lovingly encased. Something builds up inside her.

REAGAN

You know, not everyone gets memorialized. Or gets to be in charge of their own histories. Your family is very lucky.

NATHAN

I know.

REAGAN

Okay, so, is moving this one item, really the end of the world?

(then)

The fact that you didn't immediately say no, means you might be taking this too far, dude!

NATHAN

I'm pausing because my closest allies can't see how moving Big Larry goes against who I am at my core!

REAGAN

Why?

NATHAN

Do you remember when I was ten and my parents took me and Duz to Grand Canyon and we went to the Four Corners Monument?

REAGAN

Of course I do, you talked about it for months. You presented your travelogue at the school assembly.

NATHAN

Well, when you stand on four states at once, people need to know. I felt so cool up there, until my dad ruined it, said "You know that's not the real spot, it's actually two thousand feet that way." I know it probably shouldn't have mattered, but it did. It made where I was standing less important. And I don't want that for my family.

Reagan takes this in.

(CONTINUED)

REAGAN

Nathan, you live in a world where you can convince people of things. You talk and they listen. I don't have that. But I'm telling you, moving Big Larry is what's right and if you'd take a minute to really think about it, you'd see it's the only way to go.

This gives Nathan pause, then he begrudgingly offers:

NATHAN

Sorta using my words against me, but that was really good, how you said that.

REAGAN

Felt good. Planting my feet helped.

NATHAN

Right? It's a power stance.

Nathan looks at his friend, and takes a deep breath.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

What exactly are you proposing?

REAGAN

We move the statue to your museum, orient Big Larry's hand so it gestures to the original spot. Then, you open a new exhibit: "Moving History: The Transition of Big Larry." We detail your decision to relocate, everything you went through.

NATHAN

I'm still amped from our fight, so I want to disagree, but that's a great idea.

REAGAN

You could even make a video about how you made this noble gesture for our town. And you'd finally get to play yourself.

With that, she's got him.

NATHAN

We'll film it at dawn. When the statue is risen, the spirit of Big Larry will appear.

REAGAN

Yes! And he could shake hands with Nathan and say...
(old timey)

(CONTINUED)

REAGAN (CONT'D)

"Thank you son, for making a big sacrifice..."

NATHAN

"As big as the ones I made centuries ago."

REAGAN

(that's a bit much)
Wow. Yeah. Okay.

NATHAN

(realizing)
Man, I hope Gary Sinise isn't too bummed we have to cancel the viral video.

REAGAN

Bobbie will handle it.

She smiles, happy to help her friend see the light.

INT. CULTURAL CENTER - NEXT DAY

Reagan sits at her welcome desk. She types on a laptop, working on ideas for Nathan's new exhibit, "Moving History". A GUY IN CARGO SHORTS enters with his phone and charger.

CARGO SHORTS

Pit boss said you had outlets.

REAGAN

Next to the wampum belt.

She stops typing and looks up to think, a la Carrie Bradshaw on "Sex and the City".

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Hey! Pit boss didn't tell you it costs five dollars to charge your phone... for every twenty minutes?

CARGO SHORTS

What? No.

REAGAN

I's our policy. This isn't a charging station. It's a cultural center.

Annoyed, but desperate, Cargo Shorts gives Reagan cash. She puts it in the cultural center's donation box and smiles.

REAGAN (CONT'D)

Hey, while you're waiting, would you like to learn the history of that wampum belt?

(CONTINUED)

CARGO SHORTS

No!

REAGAN

Fair, that's fair. Your time starts now.

Determined, she closes Nathan's doc and opens her own: Action Plan to Raise Capital for Cultural Center Expansion. She smiles. We hear a swell of patriotic music...

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - MORNING - DAYS LATER

It's Founder's Day. A huge celebration takes place a few hundred feet from Big Larry, with a small stage for speeches and local talent -- Middle school baton twirlers, elderly spoon players, a church choir, Native powwow dancers (including a ten year old hoop dancer, which is just a license to print money). There's also booths with food, carnival games, Big Larry memorabilia, 4-H farm animals etc.

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - SIDE OF STAGE - LATER

In front of a large crowd, Bobbie tests the microphones.

BOBBIE

Check one two. Harmonize my harmonies
with Hal Hartley. Harmonize my harmonies
with Hal Hartley.

ANGLE ON: Nathan, in a sash, stands with Paula and other pillars of the community.

PAULA CHISENHALL

Nathan, I want to thank you for agreeing
to support moving the statue. Even
though, as I've said, you really don't
have any power in this decision.

NATHAN

But I kind of do, when you really think
about it, right?

PAULA CHISENHALL

Sure.

Nathan offers Paula "thank you prayer" hands.

EXT. EDGE OF TOWN - SMALL STAGE

Nathan steps to the mic. He spots Reagan and gives her a nod, then begins a speech to the townspeople.

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN

You might not know this, but our town wasn't always going to be called Rutherford Falls. Yep, Old Lawrence Senior changed his mind six times before he settled on the name. He was dead set on calling it Catsville, after his fiance Catherine, but people began to worry about the word 'cat' having satanic connotations. So he changed his mind. And in essence, changing ones mind is actually very Rutherfordian. That is why, after careful consideration, I've decided to support moving Big Larry.

The crowd reacts. "What?!" "Why?!" etc.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

It's okay, it's okay. Because as a nice silver lining we're developing a new exhibit that will--

TOWNIE

(calls out)

Good for you, Nathan! I say we focus on fixing the problems that really matter.

The comment stings Nathan slightly. He chuckles, but adds...

NATHAN

Well, Big Larry matters.

TOWNIE'S WIFE

More than the opioid crisis?

NATHAN

Apples and oranges, Carla.

Next a YOUNGER TOWNIE raises her hands.

NATHAN (CONT'D)

Not really a Q & A, but go ahead.

YOUNGER TOWNIE

That statue is so banged up from all the car crashes. If we're moving him anyway, let's get something better.

YOUNGER TOWNIE'S FRIEND

Oooh, this one time, I went to Kansas to confront a guy who catfished me, and his town had the largest ball of twine. In the world.

(CONTINUED)

Everyone oohs over this, impressed.

NATHAN
(lying)
That's barely impressive...

ANGLE ON: side of stage, Reagan and Paula watch Nathan.

PAULA CHISENHALL
Is he okay?

REAGAN
Yeah, he's fine.
(then, whispering)
Okay buddy, let's go... wrap it up...

NATHAN
There's no need to pitch replacements!
Our options are: Big Larry stays or he
moves, but either way, we already have
something awesome the town's known for...

Just then, RAYANNE, a bookish townswoman raises her hand.

RAYANNE
I have something to say.

NATHAN
Rayanne, do not start.

In the nineteen-fifty-one, a woman named
Juanita Córdova went into labor on her
way to Albany--

RAYANNE
(barrelling through)
She couldn't wait, and gave
birth to a daughter in
Rutherford Falls. That
little girl would become TV
superstar Lynda Carter.

NATHAN
I mean it Rayanne! I will
not have this argument again!
No -- this isn't relevant --

RAYANNE
Wonder Woman was born in our town!

YOUNGER TOWNIE
Well we have to do that?!
RANDO
That's awesome!

This causes a huge stir, with many ad libbing agreement that
a statue of Wonder Woman trumps Big Larry.

NATHAN
We're not putting up a statue of Wonder
Woman! Paula, back me up here!

(CONTINUED)

PAULA CHISENHALL
(enjoying this a little)
I respect the voices of my constituents.

TOWNIE
I say we chase this momentum! In a
hundred years who'll even care about Big
Larry?

TOWNIE 3
I don't care about him right now!

Everyone laughs and cross-talks, but those words make Nathan
snap.

NATHAN
SHUT UP!!! SHUT! UP! Lawrence Rutherford
is the reason this town exists! He's the
reason YOU ALL EXIST!

ANGLE ON: In the crowd, A MINISHONKA MAN shoots Terry
Tarbell, a "Say what now?" look. Terry shrugs.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
He is our Adam and Eve! Our Tigris and
Euphrates! And this statue honors him.
And its location on my family's land --
on my land!

We PUSH IN on Terry, who's wheels are turning.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
Well, it signifies from whence we came.
And if you guys can't 'get' that, then
frankly, I owe you all an apology.

People are a little thrown by this. Reagan sees her friend
calm down and is hoping it's almost over.

NATHAN (CONT'D)
As a Rutherford, it's my sworn duty to
make you get it. And clearly I've
failed. So not only are we never ever
never moving Big Larry. I will now double
my efforts to show you why it's important
it stays right there. So that maybe
someday you *will* get it or maybe your
kids will, lest they flounder in a cess
pool of historical illiteracy!

CRASH!!! Just then, another car crashes into the statue.

(CONTINUED)

NATHAN (CONT'D)

God Dammit!

(then trying to cover)

Hey, there's barely any damage. That doesn't count! Fender benders shouldn't count!

ANGLE ON: Paula and Reagan.

PAULA CHISENHALL

You better go get your boy.

Reagan runs to Nathan and tries to take him from the podium.

REAGAN

Okay, buddy. Let's leave 'em wanting more.

NATHAN

No! No! I'm not done explaining to these people why they're wrong!

REAGAN

Bobbie, why don't we bring up the next act?

BOBBIE

Or call an ambulance.

REAGAN

Better, better idea, let's do that!

ANGLE ON: Terry, who stands in the crowd and watches Nathan's display with great interest. He smiles wide when he notices Reagan gently beckoning her friend off stage. As Nathan melts down, Terry dials his phone.

TERRY TARBELL

Gloria? Call an executive meeting immediately. Tell everyone we're launching Operation Running Lightning. Yes, today. Forget "three to five years" -- things have changed. It's time.

On this we...

FADE OUT: