

THIS COUNTRY

Written by

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FADE IN:

VARIOUS SHOTS of rural Ohio. Farms, rolling hills.

CHYRON: *In rural America today, studies show that young people feel more marginalized than ever. To explore this problem, Fox sent a documentary crew to spend time with some young people in a typical midwestern town.*

EXT. FLATCH TOWN STREET - DAY

SHRUB (20) and KELLY (21) sit on a bench and speak TO CAMERA. They both drink big blue Slurpees.

SHRUB

So this is where the South County bus stops.

KELLY

Once we saw this kid with a ferret on a leash get off. Not kidding.

SHRUB

The guy who drives the bus, Mister Fargas, he used to be my soccer coach. Said I wasn't gonna amount to anything. That I was "ill behaved" and I ran weird.

KELLY

Then they cancelled soccer and art at our school and now Fargas's driving a bus so y'know, who's the loser now.

Kelly stands up, excited.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Here it comes!

They put their Slurpees into the street. The bus rolls OVER the Slurpees, sending blue ice over the front wheels and onto the windshield.

SHRUB

Yes!

The doors open, people get off, unfazed. A beat and then the wipers go slowly once, twice across the windshield. Fargas has been through this before, clearly.

KELLY

[bleep]! He's gonna get us!

They run away. The bus sits there. From behind, we watch them sprint down the street. Shrub does run really weird. They are overjoyed.

SHRUB

Take that, Fargas!

TITLE CARD: **THIS COUNTRY**

EXT. VARIOUS FLATCH LOCATIONS - DAY

Homey shots of small-town Flatch are interspersed with talking heads of nice, normal Flatch locals (some you will meet again).

--Friendly looking people greet one another as they come in and out of the post office.

OLD GUY

Yep, I took that bus into town 45 years ago. Never left. Why would you?

--KIDS sell cookies at a bake sale outside the school.

--A YOUNG MOM hangs a row of tighty whiteys up to dry on a line outside a motor home.

SHERIFF'S DEPUTY

We don't really have "crime", per se. I mean, once a year some kid gets drunk and drives through a corn field.

JUNE

One year they actually wrote "hi mom" in the corn. Which is quite impressive for a drunkard if you ask me. Of course it was my son, so I might be biased.

--A DINER where TWO GUYS in trucker hats laugh with the young WAITRESS. Outside, BIG MANDY walks two huge dogs by the window.

CHERYL

Oh we definitely have some colorful characters here in Flatch, but that's part of it's charm.

Behind Cheryl, Kelly and Shrub lumber by, Kelly carrying Shrub piggyback. They laugh and scream. Cheryl turns around.

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Guys! We're filming here!

EXT. KELLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Kelly and Shrub speak TO CAMERA.

KELLY
Shrub isn't just my cousin, he's my
best friend.

CHYRON: *Kelly Mallet*

SHRUB
Tell 'em why.

CHYRON: *Lloyd "Shrub" Mallet*

KELLY
'Cuz he's the only person I can
share a bucket of Dunkin Munchkins
with.

SHRUB
Bingo.

KELLY
See I love the chocolate and the
butternut ones and hate the
cinnamon. But Shrub inhales those.

SHRUB
And the thing is, it's not cuz I
love the cinnamon ones so much, I
just feel sorry for them.

KELLY
Yeah.

SHRUB
Cuz they're always left.
(he shrugs)
I like the underdog.

Kelly nods solemnly to camera.

EXT. FLATCH UNITARIAN CHURCH - DAY

FATHER JOE (35) speaks TO CAMERA.

FATHER JOE
The church moved me here a year and
a half ago from Minneapolis.
(MORE)

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)

So yeah, a bit of a change. But I've really grown fond of the people. And Kelly and Shrub...look, it's not easy being a young adult these days. These kids need guidance. They call me "Father Joe," and you know--I do feel like their Dad sometimes. Proud...concerned. Anyway, I think they've made real progress.

INTERCUT:

EXT. FLATCH FIELD - DAY

Shrub and Kelly wrestle awkwardly. They swear at each other and we BLEEP this.

FATHER JOE (O.S.)

They're getting much better with their f-ing and jeff-ing. I think we had one, maybe two c-words last week, but really, great progress.

(listening to a producer
off screen)

Yeah. They are still banned from services. Sneaking in and playing "Fat Bottomed Girls" on the bells was not appreciated.

EXT. VILLAGE - DAY

Various shots of the village in full Fall splendor: pumpkin displays, leaf wreaths, scarecrows. A sign reads, "*Scarecrow Festival This Sunday!*"

CHYRON: *The scarecrow festival in Flatch dates back to the 1800s. Studies show that more than ever, young people long for tradition.*

SHRUB (O.C.)

Scarecrow festival is pretty much the biggest and best day of the year.

Shrub and Kelly walk through town.

KELLY

People make scarecrows and put them up all over town and everyone votes for the best--

SHRUB

You're looking at the winner. I got a killer design and prime location this year. Right on the green. The guy with that spot last year won. And his was pretty much just some used clothes and twine.

KELLY

Winner gets a hot air balloon ride.

SHRUB

And you're on the front page of the Flatch Patriot.

KELLY

It's so dumb.

SHRUB

Oh and you throwing a frying pan in the air isn't?

KELLY

A) The skillet toss is a real skill. B) There's a trophy.

SHRUB

Fine, I'll take my Nan on the balloon.

EXT. KELLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Kelly talks TO CAMERA.

KELLY

The skillet toss contest is where you take this five pound pan and throw it as far as you can. I think it's from when pioneer ladies would like throw things at Indians. Or their kids. I don't know, you can look it up. Anyway, my Dad won seven years in a row. But then he blew his knee out. Really opened up the field. I'm gonna win it back for him. We're super close my Dad and me. The gold skillet needs to come back to the Mallet family where it belongs.

INT. KELLY'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

Shrub is working on his scarecrow. It's clear he has put a lot of work and artistry into his scarecrow. Kelly has two cans of beans that she is using to do arm curls.

KELLY (CONT'D)

The throw is all in the wrist. You gotta build up the tendons and what not.

SHRUB

You're never beating Big Mandy.
(to camera)
She's won the last five years.

KELLY

How 'bout you just concentrate on your hay man, there.

Shrub carefully stuffs hay into an arm.

SHRUB

See most people, they just free-form the whole body. That's just amateur if you ask me. I made sure my scarecrow has the correct ratio of arm length to head span.

He holds up a well-drawn sketch and then some old sneakers.

SHRUB (CONT'D)

Also, real shoes. That's what we call a crowd-pleaser.

KELLY

I don't like crowds. They're not safe for me. See, I got enemies everywhere. Just like my Dad. Trumbull county, the Wyandot area...there's a VFW hall in Canton that has panic buttons under the bar. I walk in...people sound the alarm. Right?

Kelly turns to Shrub. He looks to camera and shrugs.

KELLY (CONT'D)

That's why I got my gang to protect me.

EXT. FLATCH STREET - DAY

Kelly walks with a motley group of 11-14 year olds.

SHRUB (O.S.)

Kelly has this group of seventh grade kids she hangs out with. And one freakishly big one from fifth. It's creepy. And honestly a little sad.

INT. KELLY'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

From UPSTAIRS, SUE yells...

SUE (O.S.)

KELLY?!

KELLY

WHAT?!

SUE

KELLY?!

KELLY

WHAT?!

SUE

DID YOU BUY MY BUNION CREAM?

KELLY

THEY WERE OUT!

SHRUB

What does your Mom need foot cream for when she doesn't even get out of bed?

SUE

SHUT UP, SHRUB! AND STOP FOOLING WITH THE CANNED GOODS!

Kelly looks up from the cans of beans she's been curling.

EXT. KELLY'S HOUSE - DAY

Kelly and Shrub talk to CAMERA.

KELLY

So his real name is "Lloyd".

SHRUB

After my Dad.

KELLY

But his Dad drank a lot of Busch beer so they started calling his Dad "Busch"--

SHRUB

--And so they started calling me "Shrub". For like, a small bush.

KELLY

But then they started calling his Dad "Cornny" short for "Unicorn" on account of this weird cyst thing he had on his forehead that stuck out like a horn.

SHRUB

But they still called me "Shrub" cuz there's no name for a little unicorn. Because even normal size unicorns don't exist.

KELLY

And that horn was like the least weird thing about his Dad.

SHRUB

Oh that's rich! Everyone knows your Dad's a peeping tom!

KELLY

That has never been proven!
(to camera)
It hasn't.

They are interrupted by BIG MANDY (40) who turns the corner pulling a wagon with her scarecrow in it and yelling at someone behind her.

BIG MANDY

[bleep] you, you [bleeping bleep]!

KELLY

Mandy, what's going on?

BIG MANDY

You know that blind guy who lives up the road?

SHRUB

Blind Bobby?

BIG MANDY
Just walked right into me. Almost
knocked off Colin's "scare fro".

CLOSE ON her scarecrow, who we now see is dressed as Colin
Kaepernick with a football jersey and a black "fro" wig.

KELLY
So you're doing the scarecrow
contest this year? No skillet toss?

BIG MANDY
Of course I'm doing skillet toss.
I'm in training right now. Colin's
filled with iron weights. Go ahead,
give a tug-a-lug.

Kelly reluctantly takes the wagon handle from Mandy and pulls
it. It hardly budes. Kelly looks concerned.

BIG MANDY (CONT'D)
You see that blind [bleep] you tell
him I'm gonna break his legs.

Big Mandy wheels off down the street.

KELLY
(whispering to camera)
Big Mandy's a psychopath.

From way down the street, Big Mandy turns around, yelling:

BIG MANDY
(menacingly)
Who's a psychopath?!

KELLY
Um...Blind Bobby!

BIG MANDY
[bleep] yeah, he is.

She turns and keeps walking.

KELLY
Seriously, such a weirdo.

Unbelievably, Mandy turns around again.

BIG MANDY
Who's a weirdo?!

KELLY

(beat)
Shrub!

BIG MANDY

No kidding!

And she walks off. Kelly mouths to camera, "freak".

EXT. TOWN GREEN - FESTIVAL

The green is festive and alive. People mill around apple bobbing games and carve-your-pumpkin tables. Two PILGRIMS make soup in a cauldron over an open fire. A woman sells hand-made soap surrounded by various scarecrows.

FATHER JOE

(to camera)
This is one of the things I love
about Flatch. They are really into
their festivals--

Behind him, Shrub and Kelly make faces.

KELLY

This guy! This guy is a legend!

SHRUB

Legend in the hizz-ous!

FATHER JOE

Okay you two, simmer down--

KELLY

Tell them about when we drank all
those cherry wine coolers!

SHRUB

Yeah, he had to take us to get our
stomachs pumped!

FATHER JOE

Okay that wasn't funny, it was very
scary--

KELLY

He loves golf!

FATHER JOE

I do. I do enjoy golf--

SHRUB

And Chris Pine! He pines for the
Pine!

FATHER JOE
That's not--

KELLY
[bleep] yeah, you do!

FATHER JOE
Kelly, that's a dollar in the
church box.

CHERYL (30s) walks by. She has a camera around her neck.
There's an awkward look between her and Joe.

CHERYL
Joe.

FATHER JOE
Cheryl.

SHRUB
Cheryl! Legend!

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

CHERYL speaks TO CAMERA.

CHERYL
I moved here with Joe when he got
the job. I was a reporter at the
Star Tribune. Then Joe broke up
with me. Said he needed "space". I
thought I would move back to the
city, but this place kinda grew on
me. And if I hadn't moved to Flatch
with him I would never have taken
over as editor of the Flatch
Patriot. Circulation 535. And
rising! So now he has God, and
apparently Tinder, and I have my
own newspaper! How cool is that?

Cheryl's smile fades and she looks a little lost as Shrub and
Kelly amble by behind her. We stay with Shrub and Kelly.
Kelly spots her dad MARCUS(40s) pushing a stroller and
talking to a friend (MATT).

KELLY
(to camera, excitedly)
Hey that's my Dad! DAD!

She rushes to him as he says goodbye to Matt, who walks off.

KELLY (CONT'D)

How you been, Dad?

MARCUS

Eh you know, busy with the baby.

KELLY

So guess what? I'm doing the skillet toss! Gonna win it back for us!

MARCUS

Big Mandy's not competing?

KELLY

No, she is--

MARCUS

Ooph. Good luck with that.

He starts to walk away.

KELLY

Hey! Maybe we could hang out one of these nights--

MARCUS

Yeah not a great time.

KELLY

Sure, yeah. You got the new baby...

MARCUS

I better get her back. Jessie will kick my ass--

He wheels away. Kelly watches him go, calling after him.

KELLY

Gonna bring the gold back to the Mallets!

For a second we can see she is shattered, then she remembers the camera and brightens up proudly...

KELLY (CONT'D)

That was my Dad!

EXT. VILLAGE GREEN - DAY

Shrub and Kelly show the crew around the festival.

SHRUB

That's where you get your voting sheet--and that's the plant stall, over there. Don't buy anything from her 'cuz they die in a week.

They pass another stall with a NEW AGE WOMAN selling soap.

KELLY

Alice makes her own soap but doesn't bathe and I call that irony.

They pass LEN (70s and cranky).

SHRUB

Len. Weird, mean old man.

Len shoots the middle finger at them. We pixilate it out. Shrub rolls her eyes to camera--see?

Kelly's eye is caught by a plain looking girl, BETH(18), across the green.

KELLY

Hey, Beth's back from cosmetology school. Guess they didn't teach her how to fix her own hair.

Shrub takes in Beth. He clearly has a crush on her.

SHRUB

She's beautiful.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Shrub and Kelly talk to camera.

KELLY

He has a massive crush on Beth. She's dumb as lint and has the personality of a diaper wipe. Problem is, there are like no people in this town to have crushes on.

SHRUB

She is objectively foxy. Also, I did Match and it put me with her. The next closest girl was in Indiana.

Back to Kelly and Shrub at the festival.

SHRUB (CONT'D)
She's gonna be wicked impressed
with my big win.

JUMP CUT Shrub indicates a scarecrow with rubber glove hands.

SHRUB (CONT'D)
This is just lazy. If you can't be
bothered to make real hands then
you have no business being here.

He shows the camera a limp scarecrow.

SHRUB (CONT'D)
Technically not even a scarecrow
'cuz there's no hay in it. Just a
rag on a stick.

JUMP CUT Shrub is now with a very generic scarecrow.

SHRUB (CONT'D)
I mean, I get it but it's not
making me feel anything.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Joe speaks TO CAMERA.

FATHER JOE
Shrub really is super talented. He
has the soul of an artist. And the
body...of an artist with a mineral
deficiency.

EXT. GREEN - DAY

Kelly runs up to Shrub.

KELLY
It took me forever to register.
They made me sign this long thing
saying I wouldn't use special chalk
on my hands.

SHRUB
You mean like your Dad did when he
was disqualified and then banned?

KELLY
That was never proven!
(to camera)
He blew out his knee.

Shrub looks to camera, subtly shakes his head "no". From a STALL, MICKEY yells to them.

MICKEY
Hey! Hey Shrub!

They both roll their eyes.

JUMP CUT to Mickey (20), who mans a booth to raise money for "Fireworks for the Flatch Fourth!" It is decorated with real fireworks.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
No donation is too big or too small.

SHRUB
Dude, the fourth of July is like eight months away.

KELLY
Yeah I don't have any cash on me--

SHRUB
And I hate fireworks.

MICKEY
Everyone likes the Flatch fireworks, my bro.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Shrub and Kelly talk TO CAMERA.

SHRUB
Mickey and me were born on the same day at the same hospital so ever since we were babies he thinks we're best friends. Calls me his "bro".

KELLY
You gotta feel sorry for him. He got dropped on his head when he was born 'cuz he came out super wet. And like, what is he going to do with his life except work at the fireworks store out on route 124 for the rest of his life?

SHRUB
Sad.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Back to Shrub and Kelly at Mickey's stall.

MICKEY
 (to Shrub)
 Wanna come over later and Fortnite?

SHRUB
 Yeah, no.

INT. MICKEY'S LIVINGROOM - DAY

Mickey and Shrub enthusiastically play fortnite.

SHRUB (O.S.)
 We're not friends...

EXT. THE FESTIVAL - DAY

Shrub talks to camera as Mickey sits at his booth in BG.

SHRUB
 ...He's just the only person I know
 with a working playstation.

MICKEY
 (waving)
 Hey, Bro!

BACK AT THE BOOTH - MOMENTS LATER

MICKEY
 If you don't have cash you can
 donate in crypto currency--

Shrub and Kelly look to camera--see? What a weirdo...

SHRUB
 Yeah Mickey, we will totally pay
 you in made-up money.

KELLY
 (mouthing to camera)
 So sad.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Mickey talks TO CAMERA from his stall.

MICKEY

I started trading bit coin a year ago and I've made like a thousand dollars. Minus the money I spent on bunting for my stall. And the fifty I put aside for Shrub's birthday present. It's an iguana. Don't tell my bro.

EXT. GREEN - DAY

TOWNSPEOPLE circle a refrigerator box painted as a scarecrow. A man's feet stick out below. Everyone is laughing. Shrub clocks this from a few feet away. The box talks like a robot.

BOX VOICE

Beep. Beep. I have come to steal your crows. Not crows feet! You are safe, June!

JUNE (spry 80) and everyone else laughs.

JUNE

Oh that's hilarious!

Shrub walks up.

SHRUB

That's not a scarecrow, it's just a talking box!

BOX VOICE

Candy apples do not compute.

Everyone laughs.

SHRUB

(exasperated)

Why does the scarecrow have a robot voice?!

EXT. TOWN DUMP - DAY

Kelly talks TO CAMERA. Behind her, her "gang" moves old crap around.

KELLY

Shrub can get really competitive. Like once we had to do a school walkathon and he was obsessed with raising the most money, so he stole our Nan's ATM card and took out like 200 dollars.

(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)

Which meant that she couldn't get her teeth done.

(to a kid)

Levi, does that look like a regulation skillet course? Yeah, didn't think so!

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Kelly walks by NADINE PETERSON(21) manning the historical society table. Next to her is an old wooden latrine with ropes around it.

NADINE

Kelly! Have you considered joining the historical society? For 25 dollars you can preserve Flatch's great past and secure it's future.

KELLY

No, Nadine, I have not considered joining. Because I am not 75.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Kelly talks TO CAMERA.

KELLY

Guess how old Nadine is? Seriously. Guess. My age. She married this guy whose Dad owns a car dealership and she has a kid and she acts all fancy and old because she has an above-ground pool. Also, Flatch has like no real history. I mean, she and I have history. I once saw her throw up sour gummy worms on the 8th grade field trip to Indian Village so yeah, can't un-see that.

EXT. THE LATRINE - DAY

Nadine talks TO CAMERA.

NADINE

I know it's all "cool" to move away after high school, but I love it here in Flatch. I can make a real difference in our small hamlet. I consider Colonel Robert Flatch my personal mentor. He was just 25 when he founded this town in 1810.

(MORE)

NADINE (CONT'D)

Unfortunately, he died four years later from influenza. But that could have happened in a big city, too. Anyway, Flatch isn't just a great place to raise kids, it's also very historically significant. Colonel Flatch got lost one night with his regiment and ended up here. Where they built this latrine. It's my job to protect it because unfortunately at town events people like to use it as a port-a-potty.

EXT. GREEN - DAY

Shrub excitedly walks through the crowd.

SHRUB

Okay, almost there!

He stops in front of A BIG TEDDY BEAR in a straw hat. June stands nearby.

SHRUB (CONT'D)

This is my spot!

JUNE

Oh I'm sorry Shrub but I was given this area--

Off Shrub, confused...

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Shrub sits across from Father Joe in the organizing tent.

SHRUB

I signed up for that spot with Mrs. Wicks months ago!

FATHER JOE

I'm sorry, Shrub, but that's not what the map says--

He indicates a big map with locations on it.

SHRUB

Beth has to see me win! And that's not even a scarecrow! It's a teddy bear in a hat!

ANGLE ON June's teddy bear. A crow sits on it's shoulder.

SHRUB (CONT'D)
Even the crows can see that!

FATHER JOE
(off map)
This shows you at Wiswall Farm--

SHRUB
There's no way in hell I'm going
there!

EXT. WISWALL FARM - DAY

Shrub sits on a fence outside of a farm that looks down on
the green. His scarecrow is erected behind him.

SHRUB
This is bull[bleep].

A PIG comes up and casually sniffs his shoe.

END ACT ONE

EXT. WISWALL FARM - DAY

Shrub talks TO CAMERA while in the background Kelly tosses her sneaker in a field, practicing for skillet toss.

SHRUB

You know how they release the Mcrib in like February and you get all excited and then they take it away like it never happened? That's how I feel. Betrayed.

Kelly whoops in triumph after a good throw.

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Shrub follows Kelly as she looks for something in the field.

SHRUB

Did you tell people to come vote for me? Does Beth know I'm here?

KELLY

Help me find my sneaker.

SHRUB

Your sneaker does not weigh as much as a skillet! There's like no comparison!

KELLY

Yes I told people to come but look--

She points down to the green to a crowd around the robot scarecrow.

KELLY (CONT'D)

They love the robot scarecrow--

SHRUB

There's no such thing as a robot scarecrow! There are no crows in space!!

Kelly pulls out her phone.

KELLY

Check it out. I got a video of him twerking! It's insane!

Shrub takes her phone and watches the video.

SHRUB
Oh yeah, look at that. That's
awesome.

He then HURLS the phone into the field.

KELLY
You [bleep]ing [bleep]!

EXT. FARM - DAY

Kelly talks TO CAMERA.

KELLY
Father Joe has been working with
Shrub on his anger issues. He made
him take this on-line course but
then Shrub sent a bunch of middle
finger emojis to the teacher so
that was that.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Shrub walks through the festival carrying his scarecrow. He
passes the robot scarecrow.

ROBOT SCARECROW
(robot voice)
Prepare to lose, alien!

SHRUB
[bleep] you.

EXT. TOWN GREEN - DAY

Shrub gets to the teddy bear and looks around. He sees LEVI.

SHRUB
Levi, you seen June?

LEVI
She went home to feed her feral
cat.

Shrub quickly moves the teddy bear and puts his scarecrow up.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Shrub talks TO CAMERA.

SHRUB

Sometimes you have to take what's rightfully yours. And that might mean throwing someone under the bus.

EXT. CHURCH - DAY

Father Joe talks TO CAMERA

FATHER JOE

He's not being literal. I mean, yes, last summer he and Kelly put a penny under the wheels of the Dayton bus, you know, kids having some fun, and unfortunately the penny flew up and hit Bobby Stearns in the eye.

(beat)

Despite what you may hear, Bobby was already blind.

INT. CHERYL'S NEWSPAPER OFFICE - DAY

Cheryl shuffles through old copies of the Patriot as she speaks TO CAMERA.

CHERYL

I was the first one on the scene. Well, the only one, so...
(finding the paper)
Yep. Here it is.

She holds up a POLICE BLOTTER section with the headline, **CENTS AND NON-SENSIBILITY** and smiles proudly.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Turns out I'm pretty good with headlines.

The camera catches a PHOTO of her and Joe on her desk. She notices this and quickly flips it over, sheepish.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Shrub and the robot box sit across from Father Joe.

FATHER JOE
Shrub, did you swear at the box?

SHRUB
I absolutely did not.

ROBOT SCARECROW
(still doing robot voice)
Must go. Must get back to planet
winning.

SHRUB
This is not even a scarecrow and
also that voice is annoying.

ROBOT SCARECROW
Ha. Ha.

FATHER JOE
He's right. Paul, could you use
your real voice?

ROBOT SCARECROW
Who is Paul?

June walks up.

JUNE
Father, someone took Teddy crow!

Off Father Joe, eyeing Shrub.

EXT. WISWALL FARM - DAY

Shrub is back at farm with his scarecrow. Behind him, Kelly
is still in the field, looking for her phone as she swears.

CHYRON: *Young people spend over a third of their day on their
phones. For the youth in rural communities, cell phones are a
vital link to the outside world.*

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Kelly HEARS a faint ringing in the field and follows it. Down
a shoe, she limps as she runs. Success, she finds her phone.

KELLY
(answering the phone)
Hello?
(then)
Levi? What?? Now?!

EXT. THE FARM - DAY

Kelly rushes past Shrub and hopes on her old BMX bike.

KELLY
They moved skillet toss time up!

SHRUB
Why?

KELLY
They have new entrants! [bleep] me!

Kelly bikes off, her shoe still off one foot.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Kelly stands at the sign-up desk, manned by June.

KELLY
June, who just signed up?

NADINE (O.C.)
It was I.

Kelly turns to see Nadine. She laughs, relieved.

KELLY
Oh my God. I thought it was someone
who could beat me.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Shrub talks TO CAMERA.

SHRUB
Nadine beats Kelly at EVERYTHING.
Second grade it was Little Miss
Flatch. In fourth grade she won the
pie eating contest. AGAINST KELLY!
In eighth grade Kelly asked Dylan
Peterson to the school dance and he
married Nadine. I mean, not in
eighth grade. Cuz that would be
massively illegal.

EXT. A FARM - DAY

Kelly talks TO CAMERA.

KELLY

Dylan was my first kiss. It was fifth grade. I'm pretty sure it was his, too, cuz he kinda pecked at me like a bird.

(beat)

It was pretty awesome.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Back to Nadine and Kelly.

NADINE

If you had a job, maybe winning a contest wouldn't matter so much.

KELLY

I have a job. I'm an influencer.

NADINE

Who exactly are you influencing?

Kelly points to her rag-tag "gang" one by one.

KELLY

Levi, Nathan S, Nathan G...for starters--

DYLAN PETERSON approaches Nadine and Kelly. He carries a baby in a baby bjorn and is generally quite handsome and perfect. It's clear Kelly still likes Dylan.

DYLAN

Somebody's ready for their lunch.

NADINE

Dylan, I told you I left you a lean cuisine on the counter.

DYLAN

I meant the baby.

(to Kelly)

Hey Kelly, good luck today!

KELLY

Thanks. Good luck to you too.

Dylan looks puzzled. Kelly is embarrassed.

NADINE

(to Dylan)

Here, give me Chantal.

She takes the baby and goes into the latrine.

KELLY

Is she breast feeding in the
latrine?

DYLAN

Last night she did it on the stair
master.

KELLY

Wow.

DYLAN

Yeah.

EXT. FARM - DAY

Shrub stands next to his scarecrow and hands out small
plastic bags to a few townspeople.

CHYRON: *with mounting job loss in rural communities, young
people are learning to be entrepreneurial.*

SHRUB

Go ahead, pick as many potatoes as
you want.

People walk into the farm, showing Shrub their voting forms
as they do. He stops an OLDER MAN.

SHRUB (CONT'D)

You filled out your voting form?
"Shrub Mallet first place," right?

The man shows a form to Shrub, and Shrub hands him a bag.

Suddenly TOWNSPEOPLE, including Len, start running back out
of the farm, chased by an angry MR WISWALL.

EXT. TOWN GREEN - DAY

Father Joe now sits across from Shrub and Mr. Wiswall (60s).

FATHER JOE

You gave away Mister Wiswall's
potatoes?

SHRUB

People just went in and took them.

MR. WISWALL

And he sold my pig for fifty bucks.

SHRUB

Lester gave me the money and then the pig just followed him to his car.

FATHER JOE

I'm gonna need you to apologize to Mister Wiswall.

SHRUB

Here's an idea--how about you apologize to me first?! Cuz you're the one who gave me the wrong, crappy location--

MR. WISWALL

You calling my farm crap?! I run a pristine venture out there and then you and your people come in there and muck it all up. Look at this, Father!

He holds up a sneaker.

MR. WISWALL (CONT'D)

Right in the middle of my field!

SHRUB

Okay well, I have no idea who's that is.

Kelly runs up and grabs the sneaker.

KELLY

Yes!

FATHER JOE

Shrub, apologize. Now.

SHRUB

Sorry, Wiswall.
(to Father Joe)
You [bleep]ing happy now?

FATHER JOE

That's it, you're disqualified.

Shrub stands up and claps Wiswall on the back sarcastically.

SHRUB

Well done, Wiswall!

(beat)

And you should thank me for getting
rid of that pig! That thing crapped
everywhere!

He storms off with his scarecrow.

END ACT TWO

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Shrub fireman-carries his scarecrow through the festival as Kelly tries to keep up.

SHRUB

I'm fine. Why would I not be fine.
It's just a dumb festival, who
cares?

KELLY

You were totally robbed.

SHRUB

It's just I spent three months
making this...spent all my money
getting orchard grass so my hay
wouldn't get mites...

He stops, seeing Beth. He's tongue-tied.

SHRUB (CONT'D)

Hey, Beth--

But then Mickey runs up behind him.

MICKEY

Hey my Bro, let me help you--

He grabs the scarecrow and inadvertently pulls off a leg.
Shrub is horrified. He snatches the leg from Mickey.

SHRUB

Are you kidding me?!

Shrub is mortified in front of Beth. He speed-walks away as Mickey calls after--

MICKEY

See you tonight! Party at my place!

SHRUB

Not coming over!

Shrub and Kelly pass Len.

LEN

Those potatoes had worms!

KELLY

Screw you, they were free!

SHRUB

You know what? This whole town has
it out for me.

KELLY

(to camera)

See? Mallets have enemies
everywhere.

In the BG, Cheryl speaks into a bull horn.

CHERYL

Five minutes to skillet toss!

KELLY

Well I'm gonna show them.

SHRUB

Put on your other shoe.

KELLY

Copy that.

EXT. GREEN - EARLY EVE

We see Father Joe on long lens looking around. He stops June.

FATHER JOE

June, have you seen Shrub anywhere?

JUNE

I'm afraid I haven't. Is something
wrong?

FATHER JOE

There was a mix up. I found Mrs.
Wicks and she told me that she had
given Shrub your location. She
wrote it on the back of her pill
prescription. And then forgot to
take her pills.

JUNE

Oh dear. Not again.

Cheryl comes up to Joe.

CHERYL

Could you please change your Tinder
profile pic from the one I took of
you. That's just cruel.

FATHER JOE
You're on Tinder?

CHERYL
Yes Joe, I'm single now, too.

FATHER JOE
(realizing)
Wait. Were you the picture of the
siamese cat in the overalls that
swiped right on me?

CHERYL
(beat)
No.

EXT. TOWN PARK - DAY

Cheryl sits on a bench and speaks TO CAMERA.

CHERYL
Oh yeah. Being single in a small
town definitely has it's
challenges. But here's what's good--
none of the two restaurants in
Flatch stay open past 8 so if it's
a bad date, it's over really early.
And then I can come here and just
sit and look at the sunset on the
hills. It's so quiet and oddly
calming.

OFF CAMERA we HEAR CHURCH BELLS ringing to the tune of...

CHERYL (CONT'D)
Is that..."Stairway To Heaven"?

EXT. GREEN - EARLY EVE

Big Mandy holds the skillet as Kelly stretches behind her.

CHERYL
Furthest straight toss wins. Any
trash talk during the throw will be
considered an audible and will be
grounds for disqualification.

EXT. FESTIVAL - DAY

Kelly talks TO CAMERA.

KELLY

Sure yeah I'd like my Dad to see me win. But I know he's with me in spirit. He's super busy these days. He has the girlfriend and a new baby and also I don't think he's really allowed to be around crowds since the "upskirt photo" incident.

EXT. GREEN - EARLY EVE

A crowd watches as Mandy lines up, does two full twirls and LAUNCHES her skillet. The crowd "oohs". It's a very long toss. June puts a flag in the ground where it landed and reports to Cheryl, who announces...

CHERYL

Thirty two feet, two inches.

On Kelly as she turns to camera, looking concerned.

CHERYL (CONT'D)

Kelly Mallet next up!

Kelly takes the skillet...approaches the line. In the crowd she sees Dylan. He smiles and mouths "good luck". Suddenly shy, she mouths "thanks".

She pulls her arm back, ready to launch the skillet...when she sees...HER DAD WATCHING. Her concentration thrown, she doesn't turn her body back around before the skillet is LAUNCHED and it FLIES SIDEWAYS INTO THE CROWD beaming Marcus's friend MATT in the leg, who DROPS. The CROWD reacts and everyone runs over to check on the guy.

KELLY

[bleep].

FATHER JOE

Can we get the EMS?! EMS!

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Shrub talks TO CAMERA.

SHRUB

So the guy Kelly knee capped? Best friends with her Dad. They started a construction company together. Bad optics as they say.

EXT. GREEN - EVENING

As the crowd tends to the guy, Kelly rushes to Father Joe.

KELLY
Is he dead?!

In the foreground, Nadine approaches Cheryl.

NADINE
Skillet, please.

CHERYL
Nadine, this isn't time for--

But Nadine grabs the skillet and LAUNCHES it. It goes...and goes...well past Mandy's flag.

NADINE
YES!!

But no one is paying attention except Mandy, who acknowledges with a nod and...

MANDY
Respect.

EXT. TOWN - DAY

Kelly and Shrub talk TO CAMERA.

KELLY
Yes okay, Nadine "won".

SHRUB
But no one saw it so whatever.

KELLY
Hardly counts.

EXT. TOWN GREEN - EVENING

Father Joe hands out trophies.

FATHER JOE
Skillet toss win goes to Nadine
Peterson--

Nadine goes up to accept the "golden skillet".

NADINE
 (to Father Joe)
 May I say a few words?

FATHER JOE
 No.

ANGLE ON: Kelly watching. She is approached by her Dad.

DAD
 Quite a throw.

KELLY
 Didn't mean to take out Matt--

DAD
 Hell, don't apologize. Did me a favor. Guy tried to feel up Jessie last week at The Reef. If you hadn't pegged him I woulda.

KELLY
 Yeah?

DAD
 Enemies everywhere. That's my lot.
 (then)
 You got a good arm.

KELLY
 (beaming)
 Got it from you, Dad.

DAD
 But your aim is for [bleep].

He turns and wheels off with the baby. Kelly is so proud.

KELLY
 See ya, Pops!

ANGLE BACK ON Father Joe.

FATHER JOE
 Before we get to the official scarecrow results I would like to give a special award to someone whose creativity was head and shoulders above them all.
 (looking around)
 Has anyone seen Shrub Mallet?

In the BG we catch Shrub grabbing a burning log from under the pilgrim's cauldron.

He SETS FIRE to a scarecrow by Mickey's card table. He lights the teddy bear on fire too.

EXT GREEN - EVE - LATER

Scarecrows are ablaze as Father Joe tries to put them out with the cauldron of "soup". Cheryl takes photos, hip-checking the documentary camera as she does.

FATHER JOE (CONT'D)
Someone call the fire department!

The fire catches onto the bunting of Mickey's fireworks table, and the FIREWORKS GO UP! Bursting into the air. Townspeople all stop to admire them.

PEOPLE
Oooh! Ahhh!

FATHER JOE
People! Focus!

The camera crew catches Len slipping into the latrine.

INT KELLY'S BEDROOM - DAY

Kelly talks TO CAMERA.

KELLY
So people gave a ton of money after that for the fourth of July fireworks. I mean, they were pretty impressive.

Shrub rushes in with a copy of the Flatch Patriot.

SHRUB
Hot off the presses!

He opens it up and shows Kelly...

SHRUB (CONT'D)
Read it and weep! Beth is gonna want me so bad now!

KELLY
I'm not sure she can read.
(reading)
"Local man fires up festival".
Good for you!

SHRUB
I mean, it's not the front page--

KELLY

The police blotter's always page three. You'll get to the front soon.

SHRUB

Yeah.

KELLY

Where's Nadine's win?

SHRUB

Page five. Under "home care aides available."

KELLY

Yes!

They high five. Shrub looks to camera.

SHRUB

Winners.

END OF SHOW