

ACT ONE

EXT. BOGNER BACKYARD - DUSK

A nice, upper-middle class backyard. The Bogner family, LARRY 44, NANCY 39, JULIA 14, CALEB 11, and WILL 5, are outside having dinner on their new patio furniture.

LARRY (V.O.)  
We're the Bogners. Just an average  
American Family...

Larry claps his hands. Their new outdoor fire pit roars to life.

LARRY (V.O.)  
...or maybe a little above average.

Larry looks impressed with himself.

LARRY (V.O.)  
My name is Larry. I don't like to  
brag, but I am a senior management  
executive at the 27th most  
prestigious shopping mall developer  
in the country.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL - DAY

A brand new shopping mall is being opened. A crowd has gathered to watch the ribbon cutting ceremony. The dignitaries stand at the ribbon, waiting awkwardly.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL PARKING LOT - DAY

Larry pulls up hurriedly in his car.

LARRY (V.O.)  
I have an exciting job with  
multiple responsibilities.

Larry jumps out of his car, carrying the GIANT SCISSORS for cutting the ribbon. Obviously late, he starts running as fast as he can to where the ceremony is. Suddenly he TRIPS AND FALLS OUT OF FRAME.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Larry stands shirtless in an examining room. One of the huge blades of the giant scissors is sticking through the fat of his love handle.

DOCTOR  
(EXAMINING WOUND) What were you  
doing?

LARRY  
(SLIGHTLY ASHAMED) Running with  
scissors.

LARRY (V.O.)  
We live in the beautiful suburb of  
Lowland Heights.

EXT. LOWLAND HEIGHTS - MAIN STREET - DAY

We see the bustling town village with shops and restaurants.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Again, I don't like to brag, but in  
a recent survey, Lowland Heights  
was cited as one of the top 2,000  
places to live in America.

EXT. BOGNER'S STREET - EVENING

It's just starting to get dark on the beautiful tree lined street  
where the Bogners live. Larry and Nancy stand on the front porch  
of their house.

LARRY (V.O.)  
I won't lie to you. There are some  
people in our community who are  
status conscious...

Suddenly the Christmas lights on the house to the right of the  
Bogners pop on. They're very tasteful. Then the Christmas  
lights on the left go on. They're also very understated and  
pretty.

LARRY (V.O.)  
...competitive even.

Larry throws a switch. Suddenly the Bogners' Christmas lights go  
on - Baam! They're blinding. It's like the Vegas strip.

LARRY (V.O.)  
But we try to stay above that.

Larry and Nancy high five each other. The camera moves in on  
Nancy.

LARRY (V.O.)  
 My wife Nancy is a rock. She's the  
 glue that holds us together. She's  
 like a glue rock.

INT. BOGNER HOME - BEDROOM - NIGHT

While Larry sleeps, Nancy is up, reading a book with great interest.

LARRY (V.O.)  
 The woman is a voracious reader -  
 always keeping herself up on the  
 very latest in parenting.

We see the title of the book: "Yes! Your Children Can Be Perfect!".

EXT. SCHOOL - DAY

Nancy and the kids are in the minivan.

LARRY (V.O.)  
 See, growing up, her family didn't  
 have a glue rock. And she's not  
 about to let that happen to us.

She pulls up in front of the school. The kids get out. Nancy calls to them.

NANCY  
 Stand up straight. Remember,  
 studies show that tall people are  
 happier.

EXT. LOWLAND HEIGHTS VILLAGE - DAY

Julia is riding her bike through the village.

LARRY (V.O.)  
 My daughter Julia is 14. She's  
 beautiful, smart and very well  
 liked.

A bunch of cool girls are sitting in front of the local Starbucks, smoking, hanging out. Julia rides by on her bike trying to look cool.

JULIA  
 Hey guys, what's up?

Julia is not watching where she's going. She rides into a low tree branch and gets CLOTHESLINED RIGHT OFF HER BIKE.

INT. BOGNER HOME - DAY

Caleb is playing a Grand Theft Auto type video game with a couple of friends on the big screen TV.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Caleb is 12. What a kid. He's  
just like me when I was 12 years  
old.

A friend stops Caleb.

FRIEND  
Wait! If you bang the hooker  
before you kill the cop you get  
bonus points.

CALEB  
Sweet!

INT. KINDERGARTEN CLASSROOM - DAY

A classroom full of 5 year olds, one of whom is Will.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Our youngest, Will, is 5. He's a  
very sensitive boy. He feels  
things on a deep level.

Will comes up to the teacher.

WILL  
I have to go potty.

TEACHER  
Go ahead, Will.

WILL  
I don't want to fall in and drown.

TEACHER  
You won't.

Will stares at the teacher. Finally...

TEACHER  
Alright. Here you go.

The Teacher hands Will a LIFE VEST. Will puts the vest on and pulls the red tabs. The vest INFLATES. Will then exits for the bathroom, feeling safer.

INT. BOGNER HOME - EVENING

Larry is reading the paper. Will is playing with some toys on the floor, wearing a deflated vest.

LARRY (V.O.)  
The main thing is we're a family,  
and we love each other very much.

Julia and Caleb cross through the room, screaming.

JULIA  
Stop taking my bras to school to  
show your friends, you freak!

CALEB  
Shut up, Julia! You don't even  
need a bra!

The two storm off, slamming doors behind them. Uncomfortable with the tension, Will pulls the red tabs on his vest. It inflates.

Larry and Nancy share an "aren't they cute?" look.

BLACK OUT.

ACT TWO

EXT. BOGNER HOME - DAY BREAK

The sun rises on the Bogner home.

INT. BOGNER HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - MORNING

Larry sits up in bed and breathes in the day.

LARRY (V.O.)  
You know, there's nothing like  
waking up in your own home.

INT. BOGNER KITCHEN - MORNING

Larry sits at the breakfast table with Julia and Will.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Surrounded by people you made.

Nancy comes over with hot pancakes and serves them.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Of course I didn't make my wife.  
But I can "make it" with my wife.

Larry smiles at Nancy, remembering.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Every Sunday. After Desperate  
Housewives. (THEN) Which is nice.

Nancy smiles back and tweaks his ear playfully.

NANCY  
So you think this Mr. Pratt likes  
you?

LARRY  
(CONFIDENT) Does Sally Struthers  
like starving African kids?

LARRY (V.O.)  
Things at work were good.

INT. BULLPEN - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Most of the company has assembled and is listening to a tough, no-nonsense, Alec Baldwin type - NICK PRATT, address the group.

LARRY (V.O.)  
The partners had recently brought  
in a new guy to run our division.

PRATT  
...one of the first things I'm  
going to do is institute a  
department wide efficiency  
review...

LARRY (V.O.)  
I could tell immediately that he  
and I were simpatico.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Pratt is peeing at a urinal. Larry enters.

LARRY  
Mr. Pratt! Larry Bogner. It's  
good to meet you.

Larry walks over and holds out his hand.

PRATT  
Uh, you too.

Mr. Pratt awkwardly "switches hands" so that he can shake.

LARRY

I couldn't agree with you more about the efficiency thing. I have always believed that efficiency is one of the best ways to get things done.

LARRY (V.O.)

Of course, as with any change, there are going to be people who feel threatened and scared.

INT. OFFICE COFFEE AREA - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Several people are gathered in the coffee area, talking, concerned about the changes.

LARRY (V.O.)

But people like that just need a little reassurance.

Larry pours a cup of coffee for a very short man, ROY.

LARRY

Don't worry, Roy. They can't fire you. You're a midget.

ROY

I'm not a midget.

LARRY

(CONFUSED) What are you talking about?

INT. BOGNER KITCHEN - MORNING - **PRESENT**

Back at breakfast.

LARRY

I'm predicting big things for Larry Bogner.

NANCY

Well, Larry Bogner deserves big things.

Nancy kisses him on the head, then goes back to the stove. Larry looks around.

LARRY

Where's Caleb?

JULIA

Probably still sleeping.

NANCY

That's good. Extra sleep  
regenerates brain cells. (THEN)  
Although, one of the habits of  
highly successful people is rising  
early. (CALLING UPSTAIRS) Caleb!!

INT. CALEB'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Caleb is alone in his room.

CALEB

(CALLING BACK DOWN) Coming!

Caleb returns his attention to what he was doing. Through his window he's watching AMY ADELMAN, the 17 year old incredibly hot girl that lives next door.

Caleb has an unobstructed view of Amy's bedroom window as she gets out of bed in just her t-shirt and panties and does a big stretch. She then walks into the bathroom.

Unfortunately for Caleb, there is one TREE BRANCH that partially obscures his view of the bathroom window. It blocks everything from the TOP OF AMY'S BREASTS TO THE BOTTOM OF HER TORSO.

Caleb watches in awe as Amy takes off her shirt and drops her panties. But because of the tree, all of the good parts are hidden.

CALEB

Stupid trees.

INT. BOGNER KITCHEN - MORNING

Nancy sits next to Will at the breakfast table talking to him.

NANCY

But Sweetie, it's your birthday.  
Don't you want all your friends to  
come over and celebrate with you?

Will shakes his head "no". Caleb enters.

CALEB

He probably doesn't want a party  
'cause of what happened last year.

EXT. BOGNER BACKYARD - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

A bunch of kids are gathered around a pinata. One is blindfolded with the stick. He takes a huge swing at the pinata, misses, and WHACKS WILL RIGHT IN THE HEAD. Will drops like a stone.



INT. BOGNER KITCHEN - MORNING - **PRESENT**

NANCY

We're not having a pinata this year. We're having a bouncy house.

LARRY

(TO WILL) A nice simple one. It's very safe.

Will shakes his head "no".

LARRY

Will, you're my son. I want you to have a great party. I want your friends to come. And have fun. And love you for it.

NANCY

Plus, we just spent 45 hundred dollars on new patio furniture and a fire pit.

JULIA

Guys, he doesn't want one.

NANCY

Honey, he's 5 years old. He doesn't know what he wants. It's our job as parents to tell him what he wants. And he wants people to come over and admire our new patio furniture.

LARRY

And fire pit.

Larry turns to the window and claps. Outside the fire pit ignites.

LARRY

I love that.

INT. SCHOOL AUDITORIUM - DAY

A school assembly is in progress. The principle is speaking. Julia sits in the audience, in an aisle seat. Julia stretches, sticking her foot into the aisle, unaware that MINDY BLUM, 14, a heavysset, bespectacled nerd is approaching. Mindy trips over Julia's foot and GOES DOWN HARD. The entire assembly sees it, and starts laughing. Julia is horrified until the COOL GIRLS, sitting three rows up, look back at Julia and give her the nod of approval.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY

Julia is eating lunch with her best friend, BETH.

BETH

You want to see a movie Saturday night?

JULIA

Sure.

Several cool girls, led by BRITTANY JANE SANDERS approach.

BRITTANY JANE

Hey, Julia.

They sit down.

COOL GIRL #2

We thought it was so cool the way you humiliated that gross Mindy Blum today.

BRITTANY JANE

You totally made her cry. That was so awesome.

JULIA

Um... Thanks.

CUT TO:

A CLOSE UP: of an architectural model of a strip mall, complete with tiny people and tiny trees. A hand is moving the people and trees around, trying out different possibilities.

PULL BACK to reveal we are in...

INT. LARRY'S CUBICLE - DAY

It's Larry who's rearranging the tiny figures.

LARRY (V.O.)

I suppose if you were a starving child in Africa, you might look at me and think "why does he spend so much time at work when he could be eating?" But the truth is, I find my job very nourishing.

The EFFICIENCY EXPERT sticks his head in the cubicle.

EFFICIENCY EXPERT

Hi. I'm the efficiency expert.

LARRY  
 Larry Bogner - Special Projects.  
 (SHAKING HANDS) I'm sort of an  
 efficiency buff myself.

INT. LARRY'S CUBICLE - LATER

Larry sits with the EFFICIENCY EXPERT.

LARRY  
 Also, by relocating my printer I no  
 longer have to roll over in my  
 chair to reach it. I've cut out at  
 least 4 seconds of round-trip  
 rolling per document. If I  
 generate 500 documents a week, over  
 the course of a year, I've created  
 an extra day. Basically, by moving  
 my printer, I've been able to bend  
 the space-time continuum. (THEN)  
 Which is nice.

The phone rings.

LARRY  
 Excuse me.

Larry puts on his telephone headset.

LARRY  
 (TO EXPERT, RE: HEADSET) Hands  
 free. Can still work. Efficient.

Larry hits the answer button.

LARRY  
 You got Bogner. I'm listening. (TO  
 EXPERT, COVERING MOUTHPIECE) A lot  
 of people can hear, but how many  
 people actually listen?

SPLIT SCREEN WITH: Nancy at home.

NANCY  
 Larry. It's me.

LARRY  
 How are you, sir?

NANCY  
 Are you with someone?

LARRY  
 Always busy, Bill. You know that.

NANCY

The school called. Caleb failed another test. They want us to come in right away.

LARRY

I'll meet you there.

Larry hangs up and takes off his headset.

LARRY

(TO EXPERT) Sorry, Neal. New mall location they want me to eyeball.

Larry gets up and starts putting on his jacket.

LARRY

No one wants to make a move without me. You know why? 'Cause I'm efficient.

Larry slaps the expert on the shoulder.

LARRY

(WINKING) Bending time.

Larry exits.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Larry and Nancy are there with Caleb, the SCHOOL PRINCIPAL, and the SCHOOL PSYCHIATRIST.

PRINCIPAL

Look, we all appreciate that Caleb has learning issues...

NANCY

As did Einstein. You know, he couldn't even speak until he was five - but when he finally did...  
WOW.

PRINCIPAL

Look, Caleb is clearly intelligent. We've just got to find some way to help him with his ADD.

PSYCHIATRIST

Did you guys ever try cutting out sugar?

INT. BOGNER BATHROOM - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

The family is sleeping. Caleb sneaks into the bathroom, then sneakily lifts the cover off the toilet tank.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Yeah. That didn't seem to make  
much of a difference.

Caleb removes a Ziploc bag full of Hostess cupcakes and fruit pies. He breathes a big sigh of relief.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - **PRESENT**

PSYCHIATRIST  
How about meditation?

INT. BOGNER HOME - CALEB'S ROOM - DAY

Caleb sits cross legged on the floor opposite a HOT MEDITATION TEACHER.

NANCY (V.O.)  
That also didn't help.

HOT MEDITATION TEACHER  
(EYES CLOSED) Now visualize a  
serene, natural setting - like the  
ocean.

The teacher is wearing a tight leotard top. Caleb is staring at her breasts in awe.

CALEB  
How 'bout mountains?

HOT MEDITATION TEACHER  
Okay.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY - **PRESENT**

PSYCHIATRIST  
And acupuncture...?

INT. ACUPUNCTURE OFFICE - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Nancy and Larry are in the waiting room with Will. Caleb comes running out of one of the treatment rooms followed by an ACUPUNCTURIST. His face is covered in needles. He looks like the guy from Hellraiser.

CALEB  
For the love of God, make him  
stop!!!

Terrified, Will yanks down on the tabs on his life vest, inflating it.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY - **PRESENT**

LARRY

We don't like to talk about that.

PRINCIPAL

Well, we just need to keep trying new things.

CALEB

I think what would really help me is more morning light.

They all turn to Caleb.

PSYCHIATRIST

Morning light?

CALEB

Yeah. See, there's this tree...

EXT. BOGNER HOME - AFTERNOON

Caleb is outside with his parents, pointing to a tree.

CALEB

It's that one! That big branch right there!

We see he's pointing to the branch that was blocking his view of naked Amy Adelman earlier.

NANCY

(UNCOMFORTABLE) That tree is on the Adelman's property.

LARRY (V.O.)

Our neighbors, the Adelmans are the premier family in Lowland Heights. Everyone is always trying to get in good with them. But to us, they're just the family next door.

LARRY

If we ask them to trim their tree, they might not like us anymore.

CALEB

(POINTING) Here they come.

Larry looks up and sees GLEN AND MARY ADELMAN driving towards them in a silver Lexus. Their son NICKY, 5, is in the back.

LARRY  
(ENOUGH ALREADY) Oh c'mon! Is that  
a new car?

The Adelmans pull up next to the Bogners and chat through the windows. They are the most friendly, non-competitive, down to earth family ever.

GLEN  
Hey there, Bogners.

NANCY  
Hello, Glen. Mary. Is that little  
Nicky in the back? (THEN, FEIGNING  
SPONTANEITY) Oh, by the way, did  
you get the invitation to Will's  
birthday party?

MARY  
Yes. Thank you. We're just trying  
to work out some scheduling.

LARRY  
(TO GLEN) New car, huh?

GLEN  
My lease was up. I had to get  
something.

LARRY  
I just bought a new car too.

CALEB  
You did?

LARRY  
Yeah, buddy. I was gonna surprise  
you.

GLEN  
What did you get, Larry?

LARRY  
The new Jag.

CALEB  
Sweet.

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. BOGNER KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

NANCY

Honey, I'd love a new Jaguar, but we're still trying to pay off the patio furniture.

LARRY

It's okay. Things are going great at work.

NANCY

But a Jaguar is 60 thousand dollars.

LARRY

Only for chumps.

EXT. HYUNDAI DEALERSHIP - LATE AFTERNOON

Establishing shot.

INT. HYUNDAI DEALERSHIP - LATE AFTERNOON

Larry is with a salesman.

LARRY

(POINTING) I'll take the one that looks like a Jag.

EXT. JAGUAR DEALERSHIP - LATE AFTERNOON

Establishing shot.

INT. JAGUAR DEALERSHIP - LATE AFTERNOON

Larry is with a salesman. He points to the Jaguar HOOD ORNAMENT.

LARRY

How much for just this little guy right here?

SALESMAN

What?

Larry then points to the rear plaque on another car.

LARRY

And one of these, too.



INT. BOGNER HOME - EVENING

Nancy is on the cordless phone looking out the window in the upstairs bedroom. She sees Glen and Mary Adelman walk out their front door.

NANCY  
(INTO PHONE) Now! Go!

EXT. BOGNER'S STREET - EVENING

Larry is around the corner sitting in his new "Jaguar". He hangs up his cell phone and drives around the corner - just in time to be seen by the Adelmans. He pulls over to say hello.

GLEN  
Wow. Larry, it's beautiful.

LARRY  
(RE: HOOD ORNAMENT) It's a Jaguar.

INT. LARRY'S CUBICLE - MORNING

Larry comes into work.

LARRY (V.O.)  
The next day, the results of our efficiency evaluations were distributed.

Larry finds a large manila envelope on his chair. He opens the envelope and reads.

LARRY (V.O.)  
After careful review, my position had been deemed, "totally unnecessary".

Larry stares at the letter, baffled.

LARRY  
Unnecessary? I'm bending time!

BLACK OUT.

ACT THREE

INT. BOGNER KITCHEN - DAY

Larry and Nancy are talking. Nancy is very upset.

NANCY  
Totally unnecessary?

LARRY

I have a determination meeting tomorrow morning with Mr. Pratt to discuss it.

NANCY

Oh God, you're gonna get fired.

LARRY

No one has said that.

NANCY

It's called a "determination" meeting, Larry. The word "termination" is in the name of the meeting. It's "termination" plus a "de". Like, "you're terminated... duh!"

Larry grimaces.

NANCY

Larry, we're barely covering the minimum payments on our 7 maxed out credit cards. We just bought patio furniture and a quasi-Jaguar. If we go one month without a paycheck, we're gonna default on the mortgage. We'll lose the house. We'll be the laughing stock of Lowland Heights. (THEN) Oh, Cindy Sherman would just loooooove that.

LARRY

I'm letting us down, aren't I? I swore I'd never do that.

NANCY

We can't go back to Slocum Pointe. We worked so hard to get here.

LARRY

(WITH RESOLVE) We're not going back to Slocum Pointe. I'll figure out some way to fix this.

NANCY

I grew up poor, Larry. We used to get things at the goodwill, and then have a yard sale and sell them for a profit. I don't want that kind of life for our kids. I want them to have the best of everything.

LARRY

They will.

Larry opens a cupboard and takes down a jar of flour.

LARRY

Now I've got to get back to the office. I told them I was touring the new Wetzels Pretzels plant.

Larry flicks some flour onto his suit.

NANCY

Promise me everything is going to be okay.

LARRY

I promise.

Larry gives her a reassuring kiss and heads for the door. Nancy follows.

NANCY

And you'll speak to the school about the Adelman's tree?

LARRY

I've got a call set for this afternoon.

As she passes the foyer table, Nancy picks up an invitation.

NANCY

Oh, and here's more good news. (RE: INVITATION) The Shaws are having a party for Gregory on Saturday.

LARRY

Saturday? That's Will's day.

NANCY

(UPSET) I know. Larry, if kids don't show up for Will's party, he could start hating birthdays. That could lead to a whole Peter Pan Complex. (CONFUSED) Or is it Peter Rabbit Syndrome? No, that's where they're afraid of wolves.

LARRY

Honey, they're the Shaws. (EXITING) Just go over there and push 'em off our date.

EXT. THE SHAW'S HOUSE - DAY

Establishing shot of a nice home.

LARRY (V.O.)  
The Shaws are perfectly nice  
people. They're just, you know,  
beneath us.

INT. THE SHAW'S HOUSE - DAY

Nancy is talking to Mrs. Shaw. She's holding the Shaw's invitation.

NANCY  
...So we were hoping maybe you  
could have Gregory's party the  
following weekend.

MRS. SHAW  
Why don't you move Will's party?

NANCY  
Under the circumstances, that just  
doesn't seem... you know...  
appropriate.

MRS. SHAW  
Really? 'Cause I heard Larry is  
getting fired and you're moving  
back to Slocum Pointe.

Nancy's eyes widen in horror.

EXT. SCHOOL OUTDOOR AREA - DAY

Julia sits with the cool girls. Brittany Jane is standing,  
wearing A VERY SHORT SKIRT.

BRITTANY JANE  
(RE: BELOW SKIRT) Are my panties  
showing?

EVERYONE  
No.

BRITTANY JANE  
Damn.

Brittany Jane pulls her skirt up a little higher. Julia is  
suddenly self-conscious of her long skirt.

BRITTANY JANE  
So, Julia. What are you doing  
Saturday night?

JULIA  
Me? Oh, um, nothing.

From a distance, Beth is watching, hurt.

INT. LARRY'S CUBICLE / SCHOOL PSYCHIATRISTS OFFICE - DAY

A split screen phone conversation between Larry and the School  
Psychiatrist.

LARRY  
It's our neighbor's tree. So I  
just want to be sure you think it's  
absolutely necessary.

PSYCHIATRIST  
Look, Larry. No one knows why all  
these kids are so screw... (THEN,  
CATCHING HIMSELF) ...special. If  
Caleb has an instinct about morning  
light, I think we should honor  
that.

EXT. BOGNER HOME / ADELMAN HOME - EARLY EVENING

Larry and Nancy are walking over to the Adelmans. Caleb follows.

NANCY  
Did Mr. Pratt say anything to you  
at all?

LARRY  
The meeting's tomorrow, Nancy.  
Don't worry. I'll handle it.

NANCY  
So, I spoke to the Shaws. They  
won't budge off the date.

LARRY  
What?! They're the Shaws.

NANCY  
Apparently they heard about your  
work situation.

LARRY  
Sons of bitches, they're making a  
run at us!

NANCY

And get this. I snuck a peek at her party planning memo. They're renting a bouncy castle.

LARRY

A castle?

NANCY

They must've heard we were going with a regular house.

They arrive at the Adelmans' front door.

LARRY

Alright, hold on. I can only handle one thing at a time.

Larry rings the doorbell, then turns to Caleb.

LARRY

(TO CALEB) Remember, you're depressed. Not stupid.

Amy answers the door, still in her Catholic school girl uniform. She looks very sexy.

LARRY

Hi, Amy.

AMY

Oh, hello Mr. and Mrs. Bogner. Hey, Caleb. How ya doin'?

CALEB

(MESMERIZED BY HER) Good. I like your knees.

This seems like an odd thing to say.

AMY

(TO PARENTS, RE: CALEB) Is he okay?

LARRY

He's a little depressed.

NANCY

Are your parents home?

EXT. BOGNER HOME / ADELMAN HOME - EARLY EVENING

Larry, Nancy and Caleb stand with Glen and Mary. Glen is pointing to the branch in question.

GLEN  
 (POINTING) You mean that branch  
 right there?

LARRY  
 Morning light is extremely  
 important to Caleb.

NANCY  
 He's like Van Gogh. Who knows, if  
 Van Gogh had better morning light  
 maybe he wouldn't have hacked off  
 his ear. Speaking of which, I'm  
 trying to get a head count for  
 Will's party Saturday. Should I  
 include Nicky?

MARY  
 I'm not sure yet. The truth is,  
 the Shaws are having a party at the  
 same time.

NANCY  
 (PRETENDING SHE'S NEVER HEARD OF  
 THEM) The Shaws. The Shaws.

MARY  
 (REMINDING) Their son Gregory is in  
 class with the boys.

NANCY  
 Hmm. Not ringing a bell.

MARY  
 Anyway, Nicky's been invited to  
 both parties. We're letting him  
 decide.

Larry and Nancy share a look.

NANCY  
 Oh, that's... nice.

GLEN  
 Look, Larry, about our tree.  
 Obviously I don't want it getting  
 in the way of Caleb's happiness...

CALEB  
 Dude, it is so in the way.

GLEN

...but I just don't understand. If the sun rises over there (POINTING) and sets over there (POINTING)... How is that branch (COMPLETELY DIFFERENT DIRECTION) affecting Caleb's morning light?

The Bogners are stumped. They turn to Caleb. Caleb is also stumped. He just shrugs, sheepishly.

INT. BOGNER HOME - DEN - EVENING

Larry is busy working at his laptop. We can't see what's on his screen.

LARRY (V.O.)

With our house, reputation, and everything else on the line, I had to make sure I was completely prepared for my determination meeting the next day. My strategy was to attack the word "totally". But first, I had some other business to take care of.

Nancy enters.

NANCY

You realize that's why we haven't gotten any RSVP's. Everyone's waiting to see which party Nicky Adelman goes to. He's the most popular kid in the class. He's the lynch pin.

LARRY

Take a look at this.

Nancy comes over to view the laptop screen.

LARRY

It's a bouncy village. An entire medieval hamlet you can inflate in your own backyard. The Shaws are gonna crap themselves.

NANCY

Honey, it's 1500 dollars for the day. Can we really afford that?



LARRY

We don't have to afford it. This is America. (CLICKING TO NEW SITE) We'll just open a new credit card.

Larry starts typing in his credit information.

LARRY

I just want Will to be happy. And popular. And successful later in life.

INT. BOGNER DINING ROOM - EVENING

The Bogners are having dinner.

JULIA

So, Brittany Jane invited me to her party on Saturday.

NANCY

(IMPRESSED) Brittany Jane Sanders?

LARRY

Kyle and Susan's daughter?

NANCY

She's very popular. Good work, honey. I'm so proud of you.

LARRY

We both are.

WILL

Mom I don't want a birthday party.

NANCY

You just think you don't.

JULIA

(TO CALEB, WHO'S STARING) What?

CALEB

I can't believe you're going to Brittany Jane's party.

NANCY

Your sister is moving up in the world.

CALEB

Actually, from what I hear about those parties, it's more about going down than up.

Just then the phone rings. Nancy gets up to get it.

LARRY

What are you talking about, Caleb?

Nancy answers the phone.

NANCY

Hello?

We SPLIT SCREEN WITH: BETH'S MOTHER. (Beth is Julia's best friend from the cafeteria scene). Beth's mother is on the phone. Beth watches on, uncomfortably.

LARRY (V.O.)

Apparently parties have changed since I was 14.

BETH'S MOTHER

I understand Julia's not going to the movies with Beth this Saturday.

NANCY

Yeah, I'm sorry. Something came up.

BETH'S MOTHER

Well, that's why I'm calling. I wanted to make sure you knew what happened at Brittany Jane's parties.

Nancy continues to listen as Beth's Mother speaks. A look of astonishment and horror comes over her face.

LARRY (V.O.)

You know how we had the bases? First base. Second base. Third base. Well, apparently these days kids come up to the plate for the first time and just stick the bat right in their mouths.

INT. BOGNER HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - EVENING

Larry and Nancy talk to Julia.

NANCY

So you knew that sort of thing happened there?

JULIA

I wasn't going to do anything. I was just going to hang out.

LARRY  
You're not going, and that's final.

JULIA  
Ughhhh!

Julia goes into her room and slams her door. Caleb has been watching from the stairs.

CALEB  
When I'm 14, can I go?

LARRY  
Absolutely not!

Larry checks to make sure Nancy's not looking, then nods a surreptitious "Yes, of course" to his son.

INT. LARRY AND NANCY'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Larry is working on the laptop, preparing for his meeting. Nancy is getting ready for bed.

NANCY  
I was 18 before I even heard of that.

LARRY  
(LYING) Me too.

NANCY  
Are we gonna have to watch her now every time she goes out?

LARRY  
I guess so.

NANCY  
Maybe we should get her braces. All that sharp metal. That'd keep the boys away.

LARRY  
(KNOWINGLY) No it wouldn't. Unless maybe you electrified them. (THEN) Actually, that would probably just make her even more popular.

NANCY  
It's hard being a parent. I don't care how much you read.

Larry turns off his computer, finished.

LARRY  
Okay. I'm ready for tomorrow.

EXT. BOGNER HOME - MORNING

The sun rises on the Bogner home.

LARRY (V.O.)  
The next day, tomorrow came.

INT. CALEB'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Caleb is alone in his room trying to watch Amy next door undress in the bathroom, but the branch is still blocking the good parts. Caleb sticks a broomstick out the window, holding the bristle end. A mirror is duct-taped to the far end. He tries to see Amy. It's tantalizingly close, but not good enough.

CALEB  
There is no God.

EXT. KINDERGARTEN PLAYGROUND - MORNING

Young kids are playing in the sandbox and on the jungle gym before school starts.

LARRY (V.O.)  
Nancy took the kids to school...

We see Nancy with Will at the edge of the playground. She's watching Nicky who's playing with some other kid at the jungle gym.

NANCY  
This is really important, Will.  
Tell him you're going to have a  
bouncy village at your party -  
which is a lot better than a  
castle.

Will looks uncomfortable. The kid with Nicky walks away.

NANCY  
Okay, here's your chance. Don't  
blow it. Now go! Go! Go!

Nancy pushes Will out into the playground. As instructed, Will walks over to Nicky. Nicky looks up. They two stare at each other. The pressure's too much for Will. He grabs Nicky and BITES HIM ON THE SHOULDER. Nancy watches, horrified.

INT. PRATT'S OFFICE - DAY

Larry is in the office with Pratt.

LARRY (V.O.)  
And I had my determination meeting  
with Mr. Pratt.

Larry hands Mr. Pratt a stack of papers.

LARRY  
Here's a list of everything I've  
accomplished for the company these  
past 8 years. (THEN, PASSING ONE  
LAST PAGE) And this is the Oxford  
English Dictionary's definition of  
the word "totally".

Pratt pushes the papers aside without even looking at them.

PRATT  
Larry, this meeting isn't about the  
past. This division is trying to  
make a fresh start, and  
unfortunately...

Just then Pratt's SECRETARY comes through the intercom.

SECRETARY (ON INTERCOM)  
Sir, your son's on the line.

PRATT  
(TO LARRY) One second. (THEN, INTO  
PHONE) Hey, Mitchell.

Larry looks around the office and sees a picture of MITCHELL  
PRATT. He's a geeky looking 14 year old.

PRATT  
(STILL INTO PHONE) I'm sorry you  
feel that way... Look, why don't we  
talk about this tonight... Okay,  
bye.

Pratt hangs up.

LARRY  
(RE: PICTURES) Good looking kid.

PRATT  
He's been miserable since we moved  
here. He cries at night. Says he  
wants to go home. He doesn't have  
any friends.

LARRY  
Been there.

PRATT

He loves pop music from the 70's, so I bought tickets for the Captain and Tennille reunion concert. I thought I'd take him Saturday. But now he says he doesn't want to go. I guess it's not cool to go to a Captain and Tennille concert with your dad.

LARRY

Raising kids is hard. I've got a daughter his age who... (THEN, GETS AN IDEA) Wait a minute. Julia's plans for Saturday night just got cancelled. Why doesn't Mitchell take her to the show?

PRATT

You mean, like a date?

LARRY

Sure. Why not?

Pratt pauses to consider this. Then,

PRATT

(SUSPICIOUS) You got a picture?

BLACK OUT.

#### ACT FOUR

INT. BOGNER HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON

Larry and Nancy are talking to Julia, similar to the earlier scene.

LARRY (V.O.)

Julia had never been on a blind date before, so naturally she was a little nervous.

JULIA

No way! Uh-uh! I'm not going to a Captain Kangaroo concert with some loser nerd named Mitchell.

LARRY

He's not a loser nerd. He's my boss's son.

NANCY

Sweetie, your father's career is at a critical juncture right now. This is very important to the whole family.

JULIA

So you're pimping me out.

LARRY

(HORRIFIED) Oh, God no!

NANCY

That's a terrible thing to say!

LARRY

We're not pimping you out!

LARRY (V.O.)

Of course we were pimping her out, but we couldn't tell Julia that. It would make her feel like a prostitute - and that's not the kind of parents we are.

LARRY

Julia, you're doing this, and that's final!

JULIA

Ughhh!

As before, Julia goes into her room and slams the door.

NANCY

(TO LARRY) Do you think we push them too hard?

LARRY

What do you mean?

NANCY

Well, like the time we gave them self defense training, and then to test them, we hired those fake kidnapppers...

EXT. STREET - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

The Bogner kids are walking down the street together when all of a sudden a van screeches to a stop next to them. The door slides open and two guys in ski masks jump out. They throw black hoods over the kids' heads and hustle them into the van. Will manages to inflate his vest just as the door slams and the van takes off.

INT. BOGNER HOME - UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATE AFTERNOON - **PRESENT**

Back on Larry and Nancy.

LARRY

No. I think that was a positive experience.

NOTE: The next 3 scenes have a montage feel.

EXT. THE ADELMAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Larry and Nancy walk up to the front door of the Adelmans' house.

LARRY (V.O.)

You know, as a parent, you do everything you possibly can to help your children.

Larry and Nancy leave a glossy single page BROCHURE of the MEDIEVAL BOUNCY VILLAGE on the welcome mat. On the brochure is a sticky note that reads: "HOPE NICKY'S SHOULDER IS FEELING BETTER." And another that reads: "FYI - WE'LL HAVE THIS AT WILL'S PARTY!"

INT. BOGNER HOME - EVENING

MITCHELL has come to pick up Julia for their date. Larry and Nancy see them off.

LARRY (V.O.)

And as a family, everyone does what they can to take care of each other.

Julia doesn't look happy. She leaves with Mitchell.

INT. BOGNER HOME - LATE NIGHT

The same night, hours later. Larry and Nancy are in the living room reading, waiting up.

LARRY (V.O.)

That's what it means to be a family.

Julia comes home. They get up to greet her.

LARRY

Hi, sweetheart.

NANCY

How did it go?



JULIA

Fine.

LARRY

Good fine? Or just fine?

JULIA

(HONEST) Good fine.

LARRY

Julia...

Larry steps over to Julia and takes her into his arms. He gives her a gentle kiss on the forehead.

LARRY

Thank you.

JULIA

It wasn't that bad, dad.

Julia heads off to bed.

LARRY (V.O.)

And in the end, all you can really do is just hope for the best.

Larry and Nancy share a look.

NANCY

What do you think?

LARRY

I guess we'll find out on Monday.

EXT. BOGNER BACKYARD - MORNING

It's Sunday morning. Larry is setting up for the party. A huge, still uninflated structure has been spread out covering most of the yard. Will is watching.

LARRY

You know Will, in medieval times it took thousands of men decades to build a village. Your father is about to do it alone, in less than 4 minutes. How does that make you feel?

Will pulls his preserver cords. It inflates.

LARRY  
Sweetie, sweetie, it's fine. It's  
just a party. You're gonna have  
fun.

Nancy comes up.

NANCY  
We still haven't heard from any of  
the kids.

LARRY  
If we build it, they will come. It  
says that in the Bible, Nancy.  
Have faith.

Suddenly, someone shouts from behind the driveway gate.

ANGRY VOICE  
Bogner!!

LARRY  
Who's that?!

It's Pratt, behind the gate. He looks PISSED.

PRATT  
It's me. Pratt. I need to talk to  
you, Bogner. Pronto!!!

Larry and Nancy share a concerned look. Larry doesn't know what  
to do. He flips on the air compressor for the bouncy village.

LARRY  
(YELLING OVER THE NOISE) I can't  
hear you, Mr. Pratt! The motor's  
on! I'll meet you 'round front!!!

Larry runs into the house, panicked.

INT. BOGNER HOME - CONTINUOUS

Larry screams up the stairs, frantic.

LARRY  
Julia! (THEN LOUDER) Julia!!!

Julia comes out of the kitchen.

JULIA  
What?

Nancy joins them, worried.

LARRY

Mitchell's dad is here. He's very angry. What happened last night?

JULIA

Nothing. I went with Mitchell to the Captain Kangaroo show.

LARRY

It was the Captain and Tennille!

JULIA

(BUSTED) I thought you said Captain Kanga... (THEN, COVERING POORLY) Right, Captain and O'Neil. That's what it was.

NANCY

Oh, God.

LARRY

Julia, listen to me. Ever since you were a baby I've taught you honesty is the Bogner way. Now this is the moment it all comes down to. I need you to tell me the truth about last night. The truth, Julia. Without the truth, there's no way daddy can lie his way out of this.

JULIA

Fine. Mitchell and I never went to the concert. I took him to Brittany Jane's party instead.

NANCY

Oh God, we're going back to Slocum Pointe.

LARRY

What happened there?

JULIA

I don't know. He disappeared upstairs for awhile.

LARRY

And?

PRATT (o.s.)

(FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR) Larry!

JULIA  
I don't know. I didn't go up.

NANCY  
Oh, God.

PRATT (o.s.)  
(FROM OUTSIDE THE DOOR) Larry!

LARRY  
Coming!

Larry goes to the door and steels himself. He then opens the door and walks outside.

EXT. BOGNER HOME - CONTINUOUS

LARRY  
Mr. Pratt. What a treat to see you on the weekend.

PRATT  
We need to talk, Larry.

LARRY  
Look, Mr. Pratt...

PRATT  
I don't know what you did, but I've never seen Mitchell so happy in his life. He says he loves it here. Never wants to go back to his old home. He and I are even going camping next weekend.

LARRY  
That's... great.

PRATT  
You are a facilitator, Larry. You get things done. And as long as I'm in charge, you've got a job, my friend. I just had to come over here and tell you that in person.

Pratt grabs Larry by the shoulders and pulls him into a forceful hug.

LARRY  
Thank you Mr. Pratt.

Nancy, who is watching from the doorway, sees something.

NANCY  
(POINTING) Larry, look.

Larry looks over to the street. Sure enough, little Nicky Adelman is walking up the path to their house carrying a present. He's followed by a large group of kids his age, and their parents behind them. Nicky and the kids reach the front door.

NICKY  
Good morning, Mr. Bogner. Mrs.  
Bogner.

LARRY  
Hello, Nicky. Kids. Come on in.  
Will is in the back.

The kids enter the house, leaving the parents in front.

NANCY  
(TO PARENTS) Please everyone.  
Let's go to the patio and sit on  
the furniture there.

The parents enter and head to the back. Larry turns to Pratt.

LARRY  
Excuse me, Mr. Pratt. It's my  
son's birthday.

Larry also enters.

EXT. BOGNER BACKYARD - DAY

Larry walks out into his backyard. It's paradise. The medieval village is fully inflated. Kids are jumping around, having fun. Nancy is with the parents. They are all milling around the patio furniture, admiring it. Nancy sees Larry and comes over to him, beaming.

NANCY  
We did it, Larry.

LARRY  
Yes we did.

Larry sees one happy kid standing on the fire pit grill. He's jumping up and down with joy.

LARRY  
Uh-oh.

Larry bolts towards the kid. The kid starts clapping with delight. His claps ignite the fire pit. Flames roar up just as Larry grabs him and pulls him off. Just in time.

LARRY

No clapping on the fire pit.

EXT. BOGNER HOME / ADELMAN HOME - MORNING

Caleb has hooked a rope up around the tree branch he hates so much. He tries to yank the branch off, but the branch is stubborn.

CALEB

(DETERMINED) You're coming down, bitch.

Caleb pulls even harder. Finally the branch snaps and goes flying over Caleb's head right into the overhead POWER LINES - ripping the power lines out of the Bogner home.

CALEB

Uh-oh.

EXT. BOGNER BACKYARD - DAY

Suddenly, the electricity goes out. The giant compressor goes silent and almost immediately the bouncy village begins to wilt.

LARRY

What the hell?

The bouncy village is caving in on itself. Children run screaming. Nancy comes over to Larry.

NANCY

What's going on?

LARRY

The electricity's out.

Larry heads inside to check the breakers just as Caleb comes out.

CALEB

(INNOCENT) What did you do, Dad?

By now, the village has completely collapsed. The children and parents look around, not sure what to do. Finally Nicky yells out.

NICKY

Let's go to the Shaws!

ALL OTHER KIDS

Yeah!

The kids and parents file out of the backyard. Pretty soon the backyard is empty except for a few Bogners and a deflated Medieval village.

Larry comes back outside. He spots Will standing alone looking confused and upset. He walks over to him.

LARRY

I'm sorry, Will. That didn't go quite like we planned.

WILL

Do I get to keep the presents?

Will points at a table full of wrapped gifts. Nancy comes over.

NANCY

Of course you do.

WILL

And no one's gonna hit me in the head with a stick?

LARRY

No.

WILL

(SMILING FOR FIRST TIME) I want a party like this every year!

Julia joins them.

JULIA

Mom, Cindy Sherman was so jealous of your patio furniture she was actually turning purple. I've never seen anyone so upset.

NANCY

(ECSTATIC) Yes!

Caleb comes over.

CALEB

Guys, I'm feeling really excited about the future. Particularly the mornings.

Larry puts his arms around Nancy and Julia.

LARRY

Well then, I'd say, "Mission Accomplished".

The family stands together, looking out at the remains of the party. The camera pulls back into a long CRANE SHOT. One family, together, happy.

LARRY (V.O.)

I suppose if you were a starving African child looking at our family, you might think, "Those people have everything." And you know what? You'd be right. You'd be right, little African child.

FADE TO BLACK.