THE KIDS ARE ALL RIGHT

by

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The humming stillness of an American suburb on a summer’s day: nannies push strollers, joggers jog, mailmen deliver, dogs are walked, kids shoot hoop in wide open driveways.

On a quiet, tree-lined street we pick up two young athletic-looking boys riding bikes. LASER ALLGOOD (15) and his friend, Clay (15).

Like bats out of hell they pass block after block of charming, evenly spaced houses until they round a corner and drop their bikes in front of a large ranch house.

They walk inside. We HEAR a baseball game on TV in another room.

Clay pounds on blue pills with a hammer, reducing them to powder. Laser watches.

LASER
I don’t know, dude.

Clay cuts the powder into lines with a school ID card.

CLAY
B minus in geometry, yo! This shits the bomb!

Clay rolls up a dollar bill and takes a snort. Then hands the rolled up bill to Laser.

CLAY (CONT’D)
Add it up, son.

Laser takes the bill, bends over and snorts a line.

Laser and Clay wrestle on the floor while Clay’s DAD watches a baseball game on TV. They bump into the couch. Clay’s dad looks back, menacing.
CLAY’S FATHER
Hey, ladies! Take it down a notch.

The boys keep wrestling, wired from the pills. Again, they
knock into the couch. Clay’s dad spins around, pissed.

CLAY’S FATHER (CONT’D)
What did I just say?!

The Dad grabs Clay, pulls him off of Laser and over the
couch. He gets his son in a headlock, forcing the boy’s face
into his big fat sweaty armpit. Both Dad and Clay enjoy the
brutal play. Clay laughs manically.

CLAY
Let me go!

CLAY’S FATHER
Don’t do the crime if you can’t do
the time.

CLAY
Dad, your pits smell like burnt
ass! Get off me!

As Laser observes this male-bonding between father and son,
we note a trace of longing on his face.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - GIRL’S BEDROOM - DAY

Part Oxford reading room, part teenage girl’s lair. On the
bed we see JONI ALLGOOD (18). It’s her room.

Sitting next to her on the bed is her best girl friend,
SASHA, (18). Sasha’s checking out Joni’s FACEBOOK PAGE.

Joni’s best guy friend, JAI (18) sits against the wall,
playing with the Allgood’s bulldog, BISCUIT.
SASHA
Oh my God, Joni, there are so many hotties in your class. You are so gonna hook up the first week.

JONI
Just cause you’re a 24 hour drive-thru doesn’t mean everyone else has to be...

SASHA
Hey, you worked your ass off! You deserve some hot jock sausage!

JAI
You know, Freud theorized that overtly sexual people are usually compensating for some deep narcissistic injury.

SASHA
Do you jack off to the DSM-four?

JAI
Quod erat demonstrandum.

SASHA
Whatever. Why don’t you guys just do it and get it over with?

Joni and Jai Blush. They’re both too scared to admit their crush on each other.

JONI
Why don’t you quit talking and save the air?

SASHA
What, I’m just asking.

JAI
Uh, maybe because we’re friends...

SASHA
Oh, really...?

Sasha turns to Joni like and agent provocateur.
A WOMAN idles in her Toyota Prius, looking for a street address. In the background we hear Eckhardt Tolle reading from his best-seller "The Power of Now."

This is JULES ALLGOOD (40’s) fair-skinned, attractive.

Jules stands next to LUIS (40’s), anxiously writing him a check as he eats a snow cone.

JULES
What about the smog inspection?

LUIS
It pass with flying color.
(beat)
This truck for you?
Jules hands him the check.

JULES
Yeah. I’m starting a landscaping business.

LUIS
(angling for a job)
Oh, I a garden too.

JULES
(ultra-sensitive)
It’s not gardening, actually. It’s landscape design.

LUIS
That’s nice. This you first business?

JULES
Yeah, it’s my...well, no, actually I had a business a few years ago importing Indonesian furniture, but it didn’t work out cause I had kids and I wasn’t totally focused on it. I mean, you have to be totally focused for a business to work and it’s just a better time for me now, you know what I mean?

Luis takes a bite of his snow cone, looks at the check.

LUIS
If you want my cousin can drop it for you.

INT. GYNECOLOGIST’S OFFICE - EXAM ROOM - DAY

An OB/GYN, DR NIC(OLE) ALLGOOD (late 40’s) gives a PREGNANT WOMAN an ultrasound.

PREGNANT WOMAN
You sure her head can get through?
NIC
That’s the plan!
(beat)
Listen, you’re gonna do great.
You’re at the beginning of an
incredible journey. And guess
what? It’s gonna fly by.

PREGNANT WOMAN
That’s what everyone tells me...

NIC
Trust me, it’s true. My daughter
just turned 18.

PREGNANT WOMAN
Congratulations. 18. Wow.

NIC
Wow and Pow! It feels like five
minutes ago she was a little
squishy pink creature I could hold
in one hand...you know?...
(getting vaklempt)
...with that delicious newborn baby
smell and those teeny tiny toes and
that fuzzy little peach butt...

Nic pulls herself back together, wipes the goo off the
woman’s belly.

NIC (CONT’D)
Okay, go ahead and get dressed.

Nic throws the gooey towel in the can and quickly exits.

9  OMITTED  9

10  EXT. HOUSE - ESTABLISHING - MAGIC HOUR  10
Nic pulls up into the driveway beside Jules’ “new” truck.

11  INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - DINING ROOM - EVENING  11
Nic enters. Drops her bag and heads for the table.
Hi guys. Sorry I’m late.

She kisses Jules.

Don’t worry. We just started.

As Nic sits...

Hey, whose truck is that?

Mine.

Yours?

For the business.

What business?...

(getting edgy)
The gardening?

(defensive)
Can we talk about it later?

Sure...

(strained)
Then)
Do we have any Cabernet left?

I didn’t look, honey.

Nic gets up and goes to the kitchen for wine. Laser’s cell phone RINGS. He answers it.

Hey, what’s up?

Jules puts her hand on Laser’s arm.

Laser, no phone calls at the table.
LASER
(into phone)
Lemme hit you back.
Laser hangs up. Nic re-enters with a large glass of red.

NIC
(sitting down)
Who was that?

LASER

Jules and Nic share a look. Jules starts making maternal windshield wiper strokes with her thumb on Laser’s arm.

JULES
Can I ask you something? What do you get from your relationship with Clay?

LASER
What do you mean, “get”?

Laser looks down at Jules’ thumb on his arm.

JULES
Do you feel like he’s the kind of person who will help you grow.

LASER
Mom, you’re windshield wiping me.

NIC
Hey, did you start on those thank-you notes for your birthday gifts?

JONI
Not yet. But I will...
NIC
Okay...I just think it’s easier to knock them out when it’s fresh.

JONI
Yeah, I know, I’ll do them tonight.

NIC
Great...I mean, you don’t want to have to start with an apology. You know? Then it’s embarrassing.

JULES
Okay, honey. She got it. Let it go.

NIC
Okay, I’ll let it go...
(then)
I mean, if it was up to you, our kids wouldn’t even write thank-you notes, they’d just send out good vibes.

Nic takes another swig of vino and smiles at Joni through increasingly plum-stained teeth.

NIC (CONT’D)
I can’t believe my baby’s 18.

JONI
Mom...

Joni mimes wiping her teeth. Embarrassed, Nic starts licking at her stained teeth.

INT. JONI’S BEDROOM – LATER THAT NIGHT

As Joni cranks out thank-you notes, Laser enters.
JONI
What?
Laser looks nervous.

LASER
Have you thought any more about, you know, making that call...?

JONI
Yeah. I don’t want to.

LASER
Okay...I was just wondering if you changed your mind.

JONI
I haven’t.

He starts to leave, but her answer bugs him. He turns back.

LASER
How can you not even be curious?

JONI
Sorry, Laser. I just don’t want to, okay? I’m leaving soon and I don’t want to deal with that right now.

(co-dependent leak)
And also, that could really hurt moms’ feelings...

LASER
God, why do you worry about them so much? They don’t even have to know about it!

JONI
Look, you can do it when you turn 18, okay?

LASER
I never ask you for anything.
Laser walks out of the room. Joni feels horrible.

INT. NIC AND JULES BEDROOM - THAT NIGHT

Nic and Jules lay in bed watching TV, unwinding from the day.

NIC
I just don’t understand why you bought the truck now.

JULES
Because if I’m starting this business I need something to haul my equipment in.

NIC
Okay. It just seems a little cart before the horse.

JULES
What does that mean?

NIC
Sweetie, you don’t even have any clients yet.

JULES
Well you’re the one who’s always telling me to “act as if!”

NIC
(back peddling)
That’s true. I do. You’re right.

The women settle back. Nic sees Jules feels bad.

NIC (CONT’D)
Look, I’m sorry. It’s good you bought the truck. Its proactive.

Nic caresses Jules’ arm, wanting to make it better.
Hey...

Jules doesn’t look at Nic. She keeps her eyes on the T.V.

Wanna watch a movie?

Jules perks up. Nic immediately regrets her suggestion.

A movie-movie?

Yeah. We haven’t done that in a while.

MINUTES LATER -- NIC AND JULES

are cozied up side-by-side facing the TV.

The volume is turned low on TWO NAKED MEN lying on a chaise long. One guy fellating the other.

We now only see Nic. Jules has slipped under the blanket, and is now between Nic’s legs. We see Nic trying to get into it, but having a hard time.

I don’t like the guys in this one. They’re too shaved.

Don’t focus on it.

How about the one with the biker gang?

We left it in Hawaii.

Jules wrestles with the blankets. Wants them out of her way.
NIC
(pulling them back up)
I’m cold, honey.

JULES
Sorry. I couldn’t breathe.

Jules wrangles the blankets, trying cover her partner. The transition is awkward and Jules gets caught in the top sheet. As Nic repositions herself, she leans on the VOLUME CONTROL BUTTON and suddenly the porn is blasting at full volume.

MAN IN MOVIE
Suck that fat cock mother-fucker...

NIC
Shit!! Where’s the remote?!

MAN IN MOVIE
I’m gonna fuck that tight ass!...

Jules and Nic both dive for the remote. It’s lost under the mass of bedding. Nic finally recovers it and hits mute.

NIC
Jesus Christ!

Nic flops back, traumatized.

NIC (CONT’D)
The whole neighborhood heard that!

JULES
No, they didn’t.

NIC
Well, that was a vibe kill.

Jules wants to keep it going.

JULES
Let it go, babe.

NIC
I don’t think I can.

JULES
Yes you can.

And with that Jules pulls out her toppy side and pushes Nic back onto the bed. She climbs on top of her and kisses her.
Joni’s in Nic’s home office, rummaging through a desk drawer. She pulls out a FOLDER and studies the cover. We see the words: "Pacific Cryo Clinic: Bringing your dreams to life."

Joni opens the file and looks at the documents within. CLOSE ON a PHOTO of a 4 YEAR-OLD BOY standing in a sandbox looking straight into a camera with a big, open grin.

MATCH CUT TO:

We see that boy, 35 years later, carrying a box of tomatoes and putting them in the back of a truck. This is PAUL, Joni and Laser’s biological father.
INT. PAUL’S RESTAURANT – “WYSIWYG” – DAY

Paul walks in carrying the box of tomatoes. He approaches TANYA, (30’s) the restaurant’s super sexy hostess.

PAUL
How you doing, foxy?

TANYA
Mm, flapjack, you’re smelling ripe.

PAUL
Oh, sorry...

TANYA
No, I like it. It’s earthy.
PAUL
What can I say. I’ve just been out there, you know...hoe-ing.
(looking at the seating chart)
How’s it looking tonight?

They stand close to each other, peering at the chart.

TANYA
Gonna be tight.

PAUL
Really...

Paul cell rings. He gives Tanya a hand squeeze and heads for the kitchen, answering.

PAUL (CONT’D)
Hello.

WOMAN’S VOICE
Hi, is this Paul Hatfield?

PAUL
It is. Who’s this?

WOMAN’S VOICE
My name is Wendy Minter. I’m calling from The Pacific Cryobank.

PAUL
Okay. What can I do for you?

WENDY
I just need to confirm that you donated sperm with us between 1991 and 1993.

At the mention of the word sperm, Paul goes pale.

PAUL
Yeah...I did...

INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Paul enters. The kitchen is humming with COOKS prepping for the dinner rush. He looks around for a quiet spot.
WENDY
As you know the Cryobank has a
confidentiality policy which
prohibits us from releasing your
identity without your consent.

A cook, MARGO, approaches Paul to speak with him. Paul nods:
"Can’t talk." Hands her the box of tomatoes.

PAUL
Uh-huh.

Paul heads to the back of the kitchen, searching for privacy.

INT. PANTRY – SAME

Paul moves into the pantry, finds the farthest corner.

WENDY (O.S.)
Well we’ve been contacted by a
young woman conceived using your
semen, and she’s asked if you’d be
open to having contact with her.

Paul’s speechless.

OMITTED

INT. TANYA’S HOUSE – BEDROOM – NIGHT

Paul and Tanya enjoy a hot, sweaty fuck.

LATER THAT NIGHT

Paul gets dressed while Tanya lays on her messy bed.
TANYA
You must of figured you’d get a
call at some point.

PAUL
Not really. I mean I was 19 when I
did it. It was so long ago...I
just figured no one actually used
my stuff.

Tanya moves closer to him, flirty.

TANYA
Why? I’d use it.

PAUL
(ignoring the innuendo)
This is so weird. I mean, a part
of me’s really curious...

TANYA
So what are you gonna do?

PAUL
I don’t know.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - DINING ROOM

Joni and Jules play scrabble at the table. Joni’s cell
rings. She grabs it off the counter and answers.
JONI

Hello?
Paul anxiously paces his overgrown back-yard on his cell phone. He picks weeds as he talks. **Conversation intercut.**

**PAUL**
Hi, I’m looking for Joni Allgood.

**JONI**
This is she...

**PAUL**
Hi. This is Paul...
(clearing his throat)
Uh, your donor...?

**JONI**
Oh! Hi...

Joni shoots up out of her chair and starts leaving the room to get some privacy away from her mom.

**PAUL**
Is this a good time to talk?

**JONI**
(flustered)
Yeah...

**JULES**
Where are you going? It’s your turn.

Joni doesn’t answer. She just walks out to her backyard.

**PAUL**
So...
(doesn’t know what to say)
How are you?

**JONI**
I’m good. How are you?

**PAUL**
I’m well, thanks.

Banal, awkward pause. Paul jumps in to fill the void.

**PAUL (CONT’D)**
So, Wendy at the Cryobank said you call--

Joni cuts in, nervous and businesslike.
JONI
Actually, my brother asked if I’d call you because I’m 18 and he’s only 15 which is too young to call-- anyway, he’d like to meet you...if you want to...
PAUL
(thrown)
Your brother?

JONI
Yeah. Well, technically my half-brother. Each of my moms had a kid, you know, with your sperm...

PAUL
No. I didn’t know.

JONI
Oh.

PAUL
Both of them?

JONI
Yeah.

PAUL
Like in two?

JONI
Uh huh. Like in gay.

PAUL
Good deal. I love lesbians.

Paul cringes at his lameness. Joni doesn’t know what to say.

INT. LASER’S ROOM – THAT NIGHT

Laser’s on his lap-top. Joni enters without knocking. Laser quickly shuts his lap-top, pissed at the intrusion.

LASER
What?!

Joni looks like she has big news.

EXT. POQUITO MAS, PARKING LOT – NEXT DAY

Joni and Laser get out of the car and head to the restaurant to meet Paul. They’re both clearly nervous.

JONI
I just don’t want you to have big expectations.
LASER
Will you quit saying that? I don’t have any expectations.
JONI
Okay. I’m just saying he
might be weird. I mean, he donated
sperm...

LASER
Well if he hadn’t done it, you
wouldn’t be here. So respect, yo!

INT. “POQUITO MAS” VENTURA BLVD – DAY
Paul sits alone at a table facing the entrance. He nervously
checks the door as customers enter.

MINUTES LATER–
Joni and Laser enter the restaurant. They look nervous too.

ANGLE ON PAUL
He studies them for a beat, sees them looking around.
Figures they must be “his kids.” They look in his direction,
spot him. He raises his hand, stands. They walk over.

The moment is rife. Paul holds out his hand to Joni.

PAUL
Joni. Hey. Nice to meet you.

JONI
Nice to meet you too.

Paul holds out a hand to Laser.

PAUL
And Laser, right?

LASER
Right.

PAUL
Very cool name.

LASER
Thanks.

PAUL
Thanks for making the trek all the
way over here.

No one knows what comes next.
PAUL (CONT’D)  
Cool, I got a table set up for us out here...  

Paul turns and leads them out to the outdoor dining area.  

EXT. OUTDOOR DINING AREA - MINUTES LATER  

They all sit eating. Paul can’t help but study their faces.  

PAUL  
Listen, feel free and ask me anything you want, okay?  
(off their stares)  
Or we can just hang out. That’s fine too. Whatever you guys want.  

LASER/JONI  
Okay.  

Paul presses on, trying to break the ice.  

PAUL  
Anything you want to ask me, Laser?  

LASER  
I...uh...I didn’t really have any specific questions...  

PAUL  
(helping him out)  
That’s fine. I’d love to know about you guys. What about you, Joni? What are you up to?  

JONI  
Uh, well, I just graduated high school. I’m starting college in the fall.  

PAUL  
Oh yeah? Congratulations.
LASER
Joni’s the brains in the family.
She won a National Merit * Scholarship.

PAUL
Shut the front door!

LASER
Yeah. And she got like an 800 on her Verbal SAT.

JONI
Okay, Laser...

LASER
What? I’m just saying you’re really smart.

JONI
No, I just work harder than you.

PAUL
Don’t stress it, Laze. School wasn’t my thing either and I turned out okay.

LASER
(re: his name)
Laser.

PAUL
I’m sorry. Laser.
(beat)
So tell me about you, Laser. What are you into?

Laser freezes. So his sister jumps in.
JONI
Laser’s an amazing athlete.

PAUL
Oh yeah?

LASER
Did you play any sports in school?

PAUL
I played a little basketball in junior high.

LASER
That’s it?

PAUL
Pretty much. The whole “team” thing got on my nerves, you know like, “Hey, let’s go kick some ass, man!” What about you?

LASER
I play some Soccer. Basketball. * Baseball. You know, team sports. *

Paul realizes he’s put his foot in his mouth.

PAUL
Hey, I wasn’t bagging teams in general. Teams are great. I’m just weird like that.

LASER
Yeah, I like teams.

We can tell Laser is growing frustrated at his inability to connect with Paul. Joni jumps in.

JONI
So this is your place? *

PAUL
Yeah, I’ve been working on it for a while. I also have this organic co-op farm down the road. We use a lot of the stuff we grow there for the restaurant. *
JONI (excited)
That’s so cool. I’m totally into buying local.

LASER (busting her)
You are?

JONI
Uh, yeah Laser! I’ve been like trying to get moms to buy local for forever.

PAUL
Actually, we’ve got little organic farm going next to the restaurant. A lot of our food comes from there.

JONI
Really? That’s so awesome.

Laser tries again to reconnect.

LASER
So, like, do you raise pigs and stuff?

PAUL
No. No pigs...
(beat)
But it’s a great spot. You guys should come check it out sometime.

JONI
Yeah...Definitely...

Excited, Joni turns to Laser. He seems uninterested.
The kids and Paul exit the restaurant. Paul walks to a classic BMW motorcycle. Lasers tries to hide his awe.

LASER
Is that yours?

PAUL
Yeah. You like motorcycles?

LASER
Yeah, but...our moms are kind of anti-motorcycle.

JONI
And by “kind of” he means they’d kill us if we ever rode one.

PAUL
That’s too bad. They’re fun.

Time to say goodbye. Again, no one knows the protocol here. After an awkward beat, Paul holds out his arms for hugs.

PAUL (CONT’D)
Well it was great to meet you guys.

He and Joni hug.

PAUL (CONT’D)
I hope this was okay.

JONI
Yeah...totally...thank you.

Now Paul and Laser share a somewhat awkward man-hug.

PAUL
Really nice to meet you, Laser.

LASER
Yeah.

They disengage to leave. Joni hesitates, awkward.

JONI
Can I take your picture?

PAUL
Yeah. Sure.

JONI

Thanks.

Joni closes her camera and gives a quick wave to Paul. She turns to go and Laser follows. Paul watches them walk away. He looks stirred up by the meeting.

INT. JONI’S CAR - DAY

Joni and Laser head back home.
JONI
I just never pictured him that way.
I just...I don’t know...He was so
cool and interesting. I can’t
believe that was him...He was so
nice, you know?...

LASER
I guess...

JONI
You guess?

LASER
Yeah...

JONI
God, Laser! You’re the one that
wanted to meet him so bad!

LASER
I know.

JONI
Well what did you think of him?

LASER
I don’t know. He seemed kind of
into himself.
Nic and Jules are cuddled up affectionately on the couch watching cable. They see Laser on his way out of the house.

JULES
Hey bug, come here. We’re watching “Locked Up Abroad: Uganda.”

LASER
I saw it. It was gnarly.

NIC
Where are you going?

LASER
Clay’s.

Jules and Nic shoot each other a concerned look.

NIC
Don’t be back late, okay?

LASER
I know.

JULES
Can I have a hug before you go?

LASER
Mom...
JULES
Just a quick one. Please!

LASER
Hug her. That’s what she’s there for.

Laser leaves. Nic hits mute on the TV, looks at Jules.

NIC
Ugh. Maybe we should just sit him down and ask him already.

JULES
What? “Are you and Clay fucking?”

NIC
“Exploring” is the word I’d use...

JULES
And what if he is “exploring?” This is the age for that. Why should we care?

NIC
We shouldn’t...
(then)
I just don’t understand why he’s exploring with that loser.

JULES
Look, we don’t even know what the deal is. We’re jumping to conclusions.

NIC
I feel like he has so much potential and he’s just wasting it.

Nic’s comment hits a nerve in Jules.

JULES
What are you trying to say?

NIC
What do you mean, what am I trying to say?

JULES
It feels like there’s some subtext here.
NIC
What are you talking about?

JULES
I don’t know: Like mother like son? Is that it? Both of us aimless, wandering in the darkness, “wasting our potential?”

Nic won’t go there.

NIC
Okay, honey, you’re on a whole other tangent and I have no idea what you’re talking about.

JULES
Well, maybe it hasn’t risen to the plane of consciousness for you yet.

NIC
Yeah. Maybe not.

Nic clicks the volume back on, freezing Jules out.

INT. PAUL’S RESTAURANT – AFTERNOON

Paul and Tanya sit at the bar, eating family-meal.

TANYA
So what were they like?

PAUL
Sweet. They were really good kids. The boy’s kind of a sensitive jock and the girl’s kind of innocent but whip-smart and super cute.

TANYA
Sounds like you connected.

PAUL
Yeah, we kinda did.

TANYA
Where’d you leave it?

PAUL
We didn’t really leave it anywhere.
Brooke, the sexy Wiccan volunteer, comes up to Paul bearing a basket of freshly-picked fruits.

BROOKE
Hey Paul.

Paul leans over the basket.

PAUL
Whatcha got? Oh cool. First strawberries of the season.

BROOKE
Don’t they look awesome? I thought you should have the first taste.

And with that, she smiles, hands him the basket and leaves.

TANYA
(mimicking Brooke)
“I thought you should have the first taste...of my pussy.”

Paul can’t help smiling at the nasty talk.

TANYA (CONT’D)
(switching gears)
Hey, you wanna hook up later?

PAUL
I don’t think I can tonight.

TANYA
(sensing a shift)
Alright, when’s good?

PAUL
Actually, this whole week’s kind of funky. Can we sort it later?

TANYA
(hurt; surprised)
Yeah. Alright.
INT. NIC AND JULES BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Clay rummages through the top drawer of Jules’ dresser. Laser stands behind him, uncomfortable.

Laser
Dude, I don’t think they smoke pot.

Clay
Hold up.

Clay freezes. CLOSE ON a row of sex toys including a fancy pink, Japanese “all-in-one” dildo and a few DVD’s.

Clay (CONT’D)
Whoa!

Clay turns on the dildo. It starts to gyrate.

Clay (CONT’D)
Yo, it’s alive!

Laser
Dude, put it back!!

Laughing, Clay throws the dildo back in the drawer. Then he grabs one of the DVDs and spins back around.

Clay
Dude, we’re watching this.

INT. LASER’S ROOM - DAY

Laser and Clay sit on the bed. They look at each other. Then Laser hits play.

ON SCREEN

We see a COP giving a young MAN a BLOW-JOB. Laser and Clay sit motionless, shocked, disgusted, riveted.

Clay
Think the whole thing’s like this?

Laser
Want me to fast-forward?

Clay doesn’t answer. They just keep watching.
Jules pulls her truck into the driveway, almost running over Laser’s bike.

Laser and Clay are still watching the porn...as Jules walks in the room.
JULES
Laser, you left your bike out...

Laser reflexively grabs for the remote. As he fumbles for it, Jules sees what they’re watching. She looks mortified.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE – KITCHEN – THAT EVENING

We enter a family conference already in progress.

Nic and Jules act calm but are inwardly mortified that their 15 year-old son found their porn.

NIC
Laser, your mom and I accept you and love you unconditionally? You know that, right?

LASER
Yeah.

NIC
And you know you can be open with us about anything.

LASER
Yeah, I know.

Jules steels herself for a frank discussion.

JULES
Laser, is there anything you want to talk about?

LASER
Like what?

NIC
Anything. Anything on your mind.

Laser cracks his knuckles.

LASER
Well there is something.

Nic and Jules share a look. “Here we go.”

LASER (CONT’D)
It’s more of a question, really.
NIC
That’s okay.

JULES
We won’t judge you.

Laser looks at his moms. Nic and Jules brace themselves.

LASER
Why do you guys watch gay man-porn?

Nic and Jules look at each other, thrown.

NIC
Well, first I have to say we rarely watch that movie--

Jules touches Nic’s arm.

JULES
Honey...

NIC
And secondly, I really don’t appreciate you snooping around our room. Was that Clay’s idea? I have to say again, I don’t like him. He seems untended...!

JULES
Honey, that’s not what he asked--

NIC
(snapping)
Fine. Do you want to answer his question?!

JULES
Well, sweetie, human sexuality is complicated. And sometimes, people’s desires can be...counter-intuitive...

(soldiering on)
For instance, since women’s sexual responsiveness is mostly internal, sometimes it’s exciting for us to see sexual responsiveness more, you know...

(beat)
...externalized.

Laser looks at them, still baffled.
JULES (CONT’D)
Like with a penis.

LASER
But like, wouldn’t you rather watch
two women doing it?

JULES
You would think that. But in most
of those movies, they’ve hired two
straight women to pretend and the
inauthenticity is just unbeara--

NIC
Okay, that’s enough! Laser, your
mom and I have a sense there’s some
other stuff going on in your life
and we just want to be let in.

LASER
What do you mean?

JULES
Are you having a relationship with
someone?

NIC
You could tell us, honey. We’d
understand and support you.

Laser looks confused. How did they find out about Paul?

LASER
I just met him once.

Nic and Jules share a worried look.

NIC
What do you mean once?

JULES
Did he find you on-line?!

LASER
What?!

NIC
Who did you meet once?

LASER
Paul! I met him with Joni.
NIC
Who’s Paul?!

JULES
Why was Joni there?!

LASER
She set it up.

NIC
Forget the set-up! Who is Paul?!

LASER
Our sperm donor.

Jules and Nic go white.

LASER (CONT’D)
Wait, did you guys think I was gay?!

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - LATER

Joni has been pulled into the family conference. Nic and Jules are trying to remain as calm as possible.

JULES
Look, guys, we understand why you’d be curious about your biological father. That’s totally natural.

NIC
But why didn’t you tell us?

JONI
Because we knew you’d be upset.

NIC
WE’RE NOT UPSET!!

Jules calms her riled-up partner.

JULES
Honey...
(to Joni; expressing her upset more calmly)
We just wish you’d have included us in your thinking. But what’s done is done. You met him, and now you guys can move on--
JONI (sheepish)
Actually...
(beat)
I want to see him again.

JULES
LASER
You do?!
You do?!

JONI (CONT'D)
(to Laser)
Yeah. I was gonna tell you.

NIC
Whoa! Whoa! No. No way.
(regaining dominance)
Nobody is seeing anyone until we meet him!

Joni looks at Laser. They knew this would happen.

INT. NIC AND JULES' BATHROOM - NIGHT
Nic and Jules do a post-mortem as they floss.

NIC
Yeah, I get it. He’s their biological father and all that crap but it still feels really shitty. Like we’re not enough or something, you know?

JULES
Of course I know. I don’t want to time-share our kids with someone. Especially when it’s Joni’s last summer home. No way.

When Jules leaves the room Nic pulls a clump of long, wet red hair out of the sink.

NIC
Jesus, Jules! The plumber was just here!

Nic throws the clump of hair in the trash.
NIC
(getting tactical)
Look, we need to be smart about this. If we act like grubby bitches, we’re just gonna make it worse.

JULES
I know...

NIC
Let’s just kill him with kindness and put it to bed.

JULES
I’m with you, honey.
(then)
We’re gonna get through this, okay?

Nic smiles. She loves when Jules shows confidence.

NIC
I love you, chicken.

The women bump fists. They have a plan.

JULES
I love you too, pony.
(MORE)
EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Paul rides slowly down the street, checking addresses. He pulls over and cuts his engine in front of the Allgood house.

OMITTED

INT/EXT. ALLGOOD FRONT DOOR - AFTERNOON

Paul rings the bell. Waits. The door opens and Nic and Jules are there smiling with “kill him with kindness” faces.

NIC
Paul! It is so great to meet you.
I’m Nic. This is Jules.

Paul shakes their hands.

PAUL
Hi, great to meet you too.

JULES
I hope the traffic wasn’t too bad.

PAUL
No, I’ve got my bike so...I just sort of weave through.

Nic clocks the motorcycle, stifles the impulse to judge.
NIC
Great. Well, come on in.

As they enter, Paul holds out a bottle of wine.

PAUL
This is for you. I don’t know if you guys like wine...

Nic takes it.

NIC
Are you kidding? We love it.
(checking the label)
And a Petit Syrah. What a treat!
Let me get some glasses.

Nic leaves Paul by the stairs with Jules. Little silence. Jules steals a look at him, unable to contain her curiosity.

PAUL
Beautiful house. How long you guys lived here?

JULES
Almost ten years. Wait, has it been that long?
(rambling nervously)
We moved right after Laser broke his leg, I remember that because we had a ramp for a while, so that would have been...ten, no, nine?
No, ten years this fall.

Paul nods, smiling at her nervousness.

PAUL
Okay.

Laser and Joni enter. Joni lights up when she sees Paul. Jules watches Paul hug her. Uncomfortable, she heads for THE KITCHEN --

Jules finds Nic’s pouring herself a sizable glass of wine.

JULES
You okay?
Jules feels her inner co-dependent swelling in her chest.

Jules
Go easy on the wine, hon. It’s day time.

Nic
Okay. And same goes for the micro-managing...

EXT. ALLGOOD PORCH – AFTERNOON

Everyone sits at the picnic table.

Jules
I hope the food’s okay. Joni told us you own a restaurant.

Paul
The food’s great. Can’t go wrong with salmon and corn.

Nic finishes a glass of wine as Jules takes note.

Nic
So Paul, did you always know you wanted to be in food-services industry?

Paul
Well, I always liked food.

Nic
No, I was asking because I remember reading in your file, back when we were looking for, you know, sperm, anyway, you said you were studying international relations.

Paul
Oh yeah. Wow, that was a long time ago. Yeah, I was considering it, but then I dropped out of school.

Joni
You dropped out of college?
PAUL
Yeah, it wasn’t my thing.

NIC
(squinching)
No? Why’s that?

PAUL
It just seemed like a massive waste of money after a while. I mean, I wasn’t “doing” anything. I was just sitting on my ass listening to people spout off ideas I could’ve just as easily learned reading a book.

Paul sees that his little rant may be alienating the moms.

PAUL (CONT’D)
I’m not saying higher learning uniformly sucks. I mean, college is great for some people. Joni, I’m sure you’re gonna love it. That’s just me. I’m just weird that way.
(beat)
Which is probably why I ended up in the food-services industry.

LASER
See what he did there, mom? You said “food-services industry,” then he said “food-services industry…”

NIC
Yeah, I got it, Laser. Thanks.
(a propos of nothing)
So, Paul, what about your social life?

PAUL
My social life?

NIC
You know, are you married, divorced, seeing anyone?

JONI
Mom!

NIC
What? We’re getting to know Paul.
PAUL
No, never been married or divorced.
I date a little, but I’m just kind
of focused on my work right now.

NIC
Oh.

Paul wants a break from the heat.

PAUL
So, how’d you guys meet?

Jules smiles, embarrassed. Nic jumps in.

NIC
We met at UCLA. I was a resident
in the ER and Jules had an
emergency.

JULES
My tongue went numb.

PAUL
Really?

THUD! We turn to see Laser, pounding his head on the table.

JULES
Laser, that’s not nice.

LASER
What’s not nice is subjecting your
kids to the same story 1000 times!

PAUL
(ignoring Laser)
What happened to your tongue?

JULES
I don’t know. I just lost all the
feeling in my face and tongue and I
thought I might gag and then, you
know...

PAUL
Choke? Die?...

JULES
Yeah...exactly...
NIC
Well it was pretty clear to me she was just having an anxiety attack and she’d be fine.

PAUL
So what’d you do for her?

NIC
Gave her a Vallium. Tried to get her to relax, talk, move her tongue around.

LASER
Mom, that’s gross!

JULES
(ignoring Laser, to Nic)
Actually, she started teasing me and that really helped.

NIC
I was trying to distract you.

JULES
I know. And it worked. You were really funny.

NIC
You were really pretty.

Nic reaches over and caresses Jules’ hand. Joni rolls her eyes, embarrassed.

JULES
So that’s it. My tongue started working again.

NIC
And we’ve been glued at the hip ever since.
That’s a great story.

Jules

(beaming)

We like it.

Laser and Joni share a look.

So Nic, I know you’re a doctor. How ‘bout you, Jules? What do you do?

Jules never likes this question.

Well, I, you know, I studied architecture in college...

Right...

But I’m not an architect. I mean I was on my way to becoming one. But I quit before the kids were born.

Well, that happens...

When they got a little older, I started a Balinese furniture import business...

Right on.

Yeah. But that didn’t work out.

Well, business aren’t easy--

Actually, I’m in the process of starting a new business.

Good for you. What kind?
JULES
Landscape design...
(because he can respond)
But not like a gardener! I mean, yes, there’s a gardening component to it, but the real work is to create unique, eco-friendly outdoor spaces that harmonize with the surrounding environment. Do you know what I mean?
PAUL
Absolutely.

In Nic’s mind, Jules is drowning in verbiage. So she jumps in to save her.

NIC
Hey Paul, did Joni tell you about her graduation speech?

PAUL
No, she didn’t.

NIC
It was incredible. So full of wisdom and hope... (turning to her Joni) Hon, go get it. I’m sure he’d love to hear it...

JONI
(blushing)
No, mom, I’m sure he wouldn’t...

NIC
Sure he would. Come on. Go get it...

JONI
(getting upset)
No, it’s okay...

NIC
Sweetie, don’t be embarrassed.

JONI
I’m not embarrassed! Jesus! Give it a rest already!

This outburst stuns Nic into silence. Her daughter has never spoken to her like this. Laser stands up.

LASER
I’ll get the ice-cream.

JONI
(standing up)
I’ll help you.

JULES
(softly)
Honey, that’s your forth glass.

NIC
Actually, it’s my third. But thanks for counting.

Paul turns to Jules, trying to revive the mood.

PAUL
Hey, I was just thinking. You know, I bought this place last year and the backyard’s a wreck. Would you be interested in working on it?

JULES
(insecure)
Oh, that’s okay.

PAUL
No, seriously. I don’t have time to work on it myself.

JULES
Thank you. That’s really sweet. Why don’t you think about it.

PAUL
Why? I just did.
(then)
I mean, if you’re not up for it that’s okay--

JULES
(jumping on it)
No! I am!
(getting excited)
I’m up for it!...

Jules smiles at Nic: “Isn’t this great? My first client.” Nic looks less than pleased.

EXT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - EVENING

Laser and Joni walk Paul out to his bike.

JONI
Sorry about them. They can be kind of intense.
Paul touches Joni’s arm, then reaches for Laser’s hand...

**PAUL**
Nah, I just think they were a little nervous.
(beat)
How ‘bout we hang out again sometime. Sans moms.

**JONI**
Yeah, that would be good.

**LASER**
What’s “sans moms”?

**JONI**
Without moms.

**LASER**
Oh.

**PAUL**
Alright, guys, this was nice...

Joni steps in and hugs Paul. Which takes him by surprise. She backs away, embarrassed by the gesture.

Paul turns to Laser and engages him in an awkward soul-brother hand-shake routine which ends with a forced point and snap. The lameness is lost on neither of them.

**PAUL (CONT’D)**
We’ll work on it.

**LASER**
Yeah, I don’t really do those.

**PAUL**
Okay then. See you later.

Paul gets on his bike and we cut to...

**INT. HARDWARE STORE – DAY**

Nic pushes a cart piled high with gardening supplies. Jules grabs a couple BAGS of fertilizer, throws them on top.

**NIC**
...I’m just saying, the plan was to limit his involvement--
JULES
You’re unbelievable. You’re all over me about getting clients, I finally get one and you’re--

NIC
He’s not just a client, Jules. He’s our sperm donor! Have you ever heard the phrase “Don’t Shit Where You Eat?”

JULES
Yes, and I think it’s disgusting.

The two separate, go down separate isles. When they rejoin, Nic is contrite.

NIC
I’m sorry. He just seemed sort of...self-satisfied to me.

Jules grabs the olive branch.

JULES
Yeah, he was working the whole “alternative” thing pretty hard.

NIC
(mimicking)
“I just need to get outside and “do” things, not sit on my ass and learn. But that’s just me. I’m weird that way.”

They both laugh. Nic’s funny sometimes.

EXT. PAUL’S HOUSE - ECHO PARK - DAY

Jules drives slowly up the hill looking for Paul’s address. She sees the house and pulls in the driveway next to an old truck and a motorcycle.

EXT. PAUL’S HOUSE - BACK YARD - DAY

Jules and Paul leaf through a LOOK-BOOK of design concepts.

JULES
...this is interesting, kind of a Secret Garden thing with trellises and topiary...

(clocking his face)

(MORE)
...or something more like this with a more Asian, minimal, rock garden feel. It’s up to you...

PAUL
What do you think?
Jules is staring at Paul.

Paul (Cont’d)
What?

Jules
Sorry, I just keep seeing my kids in your expressions...

Jules looks more intensely at Paul’s face.

Jules (Cont’d)
You and Laser have the same mouth.

Paul
You think so?

Jules
Yeah.

The observation strikes Paul. Suddenly, he’s feeling a kind of fast-tracked intimacy with Jules he hadn’t expected.
Laser cranks a forehand that whizzes past Jules.

LASER
20-3...match point.

NIC
So how’d it go today?

JULES
Great. We settled on a concept.

NIC
What is it?

JULES
It’s hard to explain. You have to kind of see the space to get it.

NIC
(to Laser)
Laser, did you write Pup-pup a Get Well card?
(off his silence)
Laser! What do I have to do?! I bought you a card. I left it on your desk. All you had to do was--

LASER
Mom, settle! I will...

NIC
Don’t tell me to settle, mister. And if it’s not in the mail by tomorrow morning, we’re not going to the Dodger game Saturday.

LASER
Whatever, I have other plans anyway.

NIC
What other plans?
(off his silence)
I’m asking you a quest--

LASER
I said I’d do something with Paul!
Laser serves a rocket, whizzing past a flailing Jules. He tosses the racquet on the table and leaves. Nic yells:

NIC
You used to be so cute!

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

We cut onto Paul and Laser, looking out at something. Laser is holding a DIGITAL VIDEO CAMERA.

PAUL
This may not be a good idea.

CLAY (O.S.)
Are you filming?!

We cut to Clay on a skateboard on the ledge of a brick wall. He’s preparing to ride the ledge, jump a dumpster and land his board on the ground.

PAUL
(to Laser)
He’s not gonna make it.
(calling to Clay)
Clay, you’re not gonna make it!

LASER
I think he may be right, dude.
Maybe this isn’t such a good idea.

CLAY
Will you quit being a man-gina and run the camera! I’m only doing this once so keep my shit in frame!

Laser sighs, then holds up the camera. Paul looks at Laser, wondering why he puts up with this guy.

VIDEO CAMERA’S POV: We watch as Clay psychs himself up with an assortment of deep breaths and head-slaps. Finally, he starts down the ledge. He starts his jump, catches air and hits the edge of the dumpster and falls.
We see him go into the dumpster and land with a nauseating THUD. Paul and Laser rush up and look over the edge.

PAUL/LASER
ARE YOU OKAY?!

There’s Clay, his arm bent at a disturbing angle, in agony.

CLAY
Did you get that?!

LASER
Seriously, dude, are you okay?

CLAY
I’m fucking fine! Fuck! Did you fucking get it?!

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE CLAY’S HOUSE - LATER

Paul and Laser walk over to Paul’s truck.

PAUL
Maybe next time we can hang out just you and me.

LASER
Clay’s cool. He’s just gets a little amped sometimes.

PAUL
That’s not amped. That’s being a dick.

LASER
He’s not a dick, that’s just his way.

PAUL
Okay...I just didn’t like the way he was talking to you.

LASER
(defensive)
Well, you don’t know him.

PAUL
(back-peddling)
You’re right...I don’t...

LASER
Hey, can I ask you a question?
Sure.

Why’d you donate sperm?

Well, it’s a lot more fun then donating blood.

Laser doesn’t laugh. Paul realizes he’s gonna have to give a “non-joke” answer.

I don’t know, I guess I thought, you know, if I can help somebody in need, somebody who wants a baby...

Laser’s not really buying that.

So you did it to help people?

It was a long time ago...

How much did you get paid?

Why do you want to know?

I’m just curious.

I don’t know, like 60 bucks a pop.

That’s it?

It was worth more back then. You know. With inflation...

They get in the truck. For some reason, these two can’t seem to get their vibes on track.
Jai and Joni and Sasha play Scrabble. Sasha checks out the photos of Paul on Joni’s phone.

SASHA
Hello? Donor Dad? Stone cold fox.

JAI
Must you take everything beautiful and make it dirty?

SASHA
I’m just saying. Spermster’s a hottie. Is he single?

JONI
Okay, first of all, ewww. Second, he’s a really good person and I’d prefer it if you didn’t taint him with your whore juice.

Sasha hops up, energized by the banter.

SASHA
Fair enough, hairy muff. I’m outta here. You love birds can split my letters...

Sasha splits and suddenly the room is thick with nervous tension.

JONI
You want to keep playing?

JAI
Sure.

As Jai incorporates Sasha’s tiles into his own, we see Joni gathering her nerve to make a move. Jai probably feels it but in his nervousness he can’t look at Joni.

JAI (CONT’D)
Sometimes I feel sorry for Sasha, you know...

JONI
Yeah...

Joni starts to move in, her face draws closer to Jai’s, inch by inch.
Somehow, deep down, Jai can sense her moving towards him which exhilarates and freaks the shit out of him at the same time. To the point where he lets slip...

JAI
It’s like she has to sexualize every experience, you know? It’s just sad...

That stops Joni in her tracks.

JONI
Yeah, it is. It’s really sad.

Jai’s sabotaged the mood and they both know it.
Jules walks in to find Nic in sexy satin man-PJ’s, sitting at the rim of a RUNNING BATH. There are candles burning.

JULES
Wow. What’s this?

NIC
Come here. Sit down.
Jules takes a seat beside her. Nic holds her hand.

NIC (CONT’D)
I’m sorry I’ve been such a bitch lately. I know I’m not being my highest self.

JULES
Yeah, well...

NIC
You’ve been really patient with me. I just want you to know that hasn’t gone unrecognized.

Nic gives her a long, sweet kiss. Jules is warming up.

NIC (CONT’D)
Get in.

CUT TO - JULES

In the tub, revelling in the warm bubbly water. Nic is sitting on the ledge, massaging her feet.

JULES
Oh god, chicken, that’s the spot.

NIC
How’s the water?

JULES
Perfect. You wanna come in?

NIC
In a bit. You enjoy it first.

Nic goes deeper with the massage. Jules’ eyes roll back.

NIC (CONT’D)
Oh, I forgot the lavender salts.

Nic starts to get up. Jules grabs her hand.

JULES
No, don’t stop...

NIC
No, I meant to put ‘em in....

Nic gets up and sashays to the door.
NIC (CONT’D)
Don’t move...

Nic exits. Jules sinks back, wishing Nic had stayed.

CUT TO JULES - MINUTES LATER

Still waiting. Getting impatient and upset.

JULES
Nic?!!

No response.

CUT TO THE KITCHEN --

Nic is on her cell with a patient, a glass of wine in her hand. Jules walks in wearing a bathrobe. Nic turns. Raises a finger and mouths: “Sorry…”

NIC
No, we’re planning on being here through Mid-August so...
   (beat)
   No, I promise, I’m not going anywhere.

Jules’ face drops; she turns and leaves.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - BATHROOM - MINUTE LATER

Jules unplugs the drain.

INT./EXT. PAUL’S HOUSE - DAY

Paul watches Jules work in his backyard. Luis hauls shrubs.
Paul and Jules stand at the kitchen table, looking over her sketch for the yard. Her eyes are puffy.

    PAUL
    You okay? You look kinda--

    JULES
    Like shit, right?

    PAUL
    I was gonna say tired.

    JULES
    I’m fine, I just had a little meltdown last night.

    PAUL
    About what?

    JULES
    Nothing. It was stupid. Look, I’m gonna go to the nursery in the morning so we should probably make sure you’re signed off on the Bougenvillea...

Jules looks over at a pan on the kitchen counter.

    JULES (CONT’D)
    What’s that?

    PAUL
    Strawberry rhubarb pie. Fresh from my garden.

Paul hands her a fork and she takes a big bite. Her eyes roll back in her head.

    PAUL (CONT’D)
    Good, huh?

    JULES
    Oh my god. That is criminal.

    PAUL
    Have more.

    JULES
    No, please, just take it away...
PAUL
You had one bite.

JULES
I have another you may as well just tape it to my ass cause that’s where it’ll end up.

PAUL
Hey now, don’t go negative on your ass.

Jules blushes at all this talk of her ass.

JULES
So...you’re good with the plants?
(off his silence)
Look, we don’t have to do that. We could do go in a totally different direction if you--

PAUL
No, I’m just thinking. Hang on.
(covers his eyes)
Yeah, I’m good with the plants.

JULES
Sorry. Sometimes I mistake silence for criticism.

PAUL
I wasn’t criticizing you.

JULES
No, I know...I just...
(beat)
Sometimes Nic can be a little critical, you know. She’s a perfectionist.

PAUL
That doesn’t mean you have to be negative.

Jules looks away. We HEAR a knock from the back.
LUIS (O.S.)
Excuse me, Senora? Hello?

Jules turns, sees Luis standing at the glass door.

JULES
What’s up?

LUIS
5 o’clock.

JULES
Yeah. Okay.

Jules wants Luis to leave her alone. But he’s not going.

LUIS
Same time tomorrow?

JULES
Yes! Same time!

Luis leaves. Jules turns back to Paul, laughs nervously.

JULES (CONT’D)
Okay. I’m gonna take off too...

PAUL
(in Luis’s accent)
Same time tomorrow?

Jules pushes Paul, laughing.

JULES
That’s mean.

Paul hands her a Tupperware with some of the pie in it.

PAUL
Here, take this...

JULES
No!

PAUL
Just give it to the kids.

JULES
Okay! God, you’re such a pusher!

Jules grabs the pie and gives him a kiss on the mouth, almost as a mistake. Before they know it, they’re making out.
Jules snaps back, freaked.

    JULES (CONT’D)
    Whoa. I’m sorry. That was...I
don’t know where that came from...

    PAUL
    (freaked himself)
    It’s okay...

    JULES
    Okay. I’m gonna go now...

Jules starts backing away, acting as if nothing happened.

    PAUL
    Jules...?

    JULES
    (overcompensating)
    ...but I shall return!

Jules bolts for the door, clutching her pie. Paul watches
her go, stunned by what just happened.

INT. NIC AND JULES BEDROOM - NIGHT

Nic’s in bed reading a magazine. Jules gets in bed,
paranoid. Nic puts her magazine down.

    NIC
    So how’d it go with Paul?

    JULES
    (jumpy)
    What do you mean?

    NIC
    I don’t know. Did you break
ground? Did you dig in? I don’t
know the terms.

    JULES
    No, we just talked...conceptually.

    NIC
    Oh, so it was less of a “doing”
day, huh? Was he okay with that?
JULES
You know, maybe we should lay off
the Paul digs a little.

NIC
Okay. You’re right.

Chastened, Nic looks back at her magazine. Jules rolls over.

JULES
And I also think we should start composting.
Sweating and dirty, Joni and Paul pull radishes from the ground. They’re in a zone together: talking, laughing, bonding.
Tanya watches them from a distance. She SEES Paul take off his sun-hat and put it on Joni’s head.

Joni’s cell rings. She looks. Rolls her eyes.

JONI
Ugh. Ignore.

Joni hits the ignore button, puts her cell away.

PAUL
Who’s that?

JONI
My mom, Nic. She’s making me insane.
PAUL
Why? What’s she doing?

JONI
She’s treating me like I’m 12. It’s like she doesn’t want to admit I’m an adult.

PAUL
She’s your mom. That’s her job.

JONI
What? To smother me to death?

PAUL
No. But if you want things it to be different, you’ve got to make that happen. That’s your job.

Beat.

PAUL (CONT’D)
Is Jules making you insane too?

JONI
Not as much. But she’s oppressive in her own special way.

PAUL
Yeah? How so?

JONI
She’s just too into “processing everyone’s feelings” and making sure everyone speaks their truth”.

PAUL
That’s not so terrible.

JONI
Yeah, but eventually you’ve got to turn off The Power of Now and get on with it, you know?
PAUL
Hey, cut your parents a break.
They did the worst they could.

JONI
Funny.

PAUL
What can I say? Your biological
father’s a funny man.

JONI
Which means I’m 50% funny.

PAUL
Maybe.

JONI
What do you mean, “maybe?”

PAUL
It’s a recessive gene.

Joni gives him a playful push.

EXT. URBAN FARM PARKING LOT - ECHO PARK - MAGIC HOUR
Paul and Joni walk to his motorcycle parked in the dirt lot
behind them. Paul grabs his helmet off the bike, hands it to
Joni.

PAUL
Here, put this on. I’ll take you
home.

JONI
Where’s your truck?

PAUL
Brook took it on a run.
(off Joni’s look)
I can call her if you want?

JONI
No, that’s okay.

Joni takes the helmet and puts it on.
Laser walks with Clay. Clay sports a homemade arm-cast for the skateboard mishap we witnessed earlier.
CLAY
That jump was cake, dude! I so could’ve made it.

LASER
You were like 20 feet short, dude! There was no way.

CLAY
Yeah, well if Paul wasn’t there I could have landed it. That guy creeps me out.

LASER
Whatever.

CLAY
He’s kind of a fag, dude. Tryin’ to act all like your dad and shit.

Laser doesn’t know how to respond so he ignores the comment. A stray DOG comes up to them. Laser stops to pet it.

LASER
Hey buddy. Good boy.

Laser sees the dog has no tags. He looks around for an owner. The dog nuzzles Laser for affection.

LASER (CONT’D)
I’ve seen this dog around. I wonder if he’s lost.

CLAY
Let’s pee on his head.

LASER
What?

Clay unzips his fly. It’s difficult with the plaster cast.

LASER (CONT’D)
Dude, don’t do that.

CLAY
Come on. Hold him...

Clay yanks the dog by his scruff.

LASER
Dude, Quit it!
CLAY
(mocking)
Duuude, quit it!

Suddenly, Laser gets it. His friend is the tool. He grabs the dog and smacks him to get him to run away.

LASER
Go! Run! Get out of here!

The dog TAKES OFF. Clay shoves Laser.

CLAY
Why are you such a fag?!

Laser shoves Clay back hard.

LASER
Why are you such a dick?!


EXT. ECHO PARK TO THE WEST SIDE - MAGIC HOUR

Paul takes Joni home on his motorcycle via Sunset Boulevard.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

The ladies sit in the living room watching TV.

JULES
Relax. She’ll get home when she gets home.

NIC
Quit telling me to relax!

They go back to watching TV. After a beat, we HEAR a motorcycle pull up.

NIC (CONT’D)
I don’t believe this...!
Paul and Joni climb off the bike. Nic storms out of the house to intercept them by the sidewalk.

NIC
Funny how someone conveniently forgot to tell me they were driving home on a motorcycle!

JONI
Mom...

NIC
You know how many people I’ve seen come into the hospital paralyzed from motorcycle accidents?!

PAUL
I’m a very safe rider...

NIC
That is so not the point I’m making! Joni knows this is something I’d never allow.

JONI
Mom, I’m 18 years old! I won’t even be living here in like next month!

NIC
Yeah, well, you’re living here now!

JONI
Yeah, well why don’t you get a jump on it and pretend like I’m not!

Joni storms off. Nic glowers at Paul.

NIC
She’s never talked to me like that.

PAUL
(trying to soften it)
You know, Nic. If you eased up on the restrictions, maybe there’d be less tension...

NIC
(marinated in sarcasm)
Really? You think so, Paul? Is that how it works?
Jules walks up to intervene.

JULES
What’s going on?

NIC
Oh, nothing. Paul’s just giving me child-rearing lessons.

PAUL
I was just saying--

NIC
Listen, when you’ve been a parent for 18 years, come talk to me!

PAUL
I was just making an observation.

NIC
Yeah, and I need your observations like I need a dick in my ass!

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE – JONI’S BEDROOM – LATER THAT NIGHT

Nic knocks on the door. Get’s no response.

NIC

Joni?

(silence)

I was just upset. You know how I feel about motorcycles.

Joni opens the door.

JONI

(patronizing)

I know how you feel about them.

But I’m an adult now and you have to respect that. Goodnight.

Joni closes the door on her.

OMITTED
INT. PAUL’S HOUSE - DAY

From his house, Paul watches Jules working on her knees in the garden.

CLOSE ON Jules’ thong peaking out of her jeans. Luis walks across Paul’s field of vision, interrupting his reverie.

INT. PAUL’S HOUSE - LATER

Jules steps tentatively into Paul’s house.

JULES

Paul?

Jules walks further into the house. She looks anxious. Paul opens his office door and sees Jules in the hall.

PAUL

Hey. What’s up?

JULES

Look, I’m sorry about last night. I’m really embarrassed.

PAUL

Don’t be. She’s the one who wigged out.

JULES

I know, she’s just going through a lot of stuff right now...

PAUL

Jules, it’s okay. You don’t have to defend her.

They stare at each other, unsure how to act.

JULES

And look, I just want you to know, about the other day, the kiss, that’s not something I...do.

PAUL

Yeah, I sensed that.

She takes a step toward him, feverish.
JULES
I just wanted to clear the air.

They stare at each other. It’s like watching two magnets.

PAUL
The air is clear.

Jules grabs Paul and starts smothering him with kisses.

It takes a second for Paul to get his bearings, but when he does, he starts kissing her back with equal fervor, pushing her up against the wall, wedging his hand between her legs.

JULES
Paul, I can’t!

PAUL
You don’t want to?!

JULES
No, I do! It’s just...
(urgent whisper)
I have a guy outside!

Overcome with lust, Jules wraps her legs around his waist and Paul walks her into...

HIS BEDROOM

Quick cuts of their awkward ravenous gropings. Somewhere between slapstick and animal. He pulls her hair back hard. She loves it. She pulls his hair back harder. He yelps. She pulls down his underwear. Her eyes widen. It’s been decades since she’s seen a hard cock in the flesh.

JULES
Oh. Well. Hel-lo!

Cut to them fucking. It’s gawky and passionate. Somewhere in the middle of it, Jules starts laughing.

PAUL
What?
Nothing.

Paul flips her on her hands and knees and they go at it some more.

She keeps laughing. Paul goes harder to make her stop. The paces grows quicker. They’re getting closer. And then...

LUIS (O.S.)
Hello? Excuse me, Senora Allgood?!

They stop mid-thrust.

JULES
You gotta be fucking kidding me!

She dislodges from Paul and starts dressing furiously.

INT./EXT. PAUL’S HOUSE – DAY

Jules runs out to meet Luis, waiting patiently at the door.

JULES
What’s up?

LUIS
Where do you want the stones?

JULES
(catching her breath)
The stones? Over by the fence.

Luis stares at his employer. She looks totally disheveled.
Jules starts feeling her hair, smoothing it into shape.

JULES (CONT’D)
(defensive)
What? I was using the bathroom.
(them)
Do you need to use the bathroom?

Luis stares at her feet. She looks down. She’s barefoot.

EXT. PUBLIC PARK – DAY

Paul and Laser shoot hoop. There’s a tense-ness to their patter. Laser takes the ball and steps to the top of the key and shoots. Drains it.
Laser steps up to left side of the basket, calls his shot.

Laser does a trick behind the back lay-up. Nails it. Then tosses the ball to Paul.

Paul (cont’d)
Nobody likes a show-off.

Laser
Hey, can I ask you a question?

Paul
Oh god. Okay. Hit me.

Laser
When you die do you want to be buried or cremated?

Paul
That’s your question?

Laser
I want to be cremated.

Paul
I think I’d rather be buried.

Laser
Why? That’s just taking up more space in the earth.

Paul
I don’t know, something about the idea of being burned into this chalky powder and sprinkled--

Laser
What do you care? You won’t even be conscious.
PAUL
That’s true. I guess I just want to be in a place where people can visit me.

LASER
(growing animated)
But why?! You’ll be dead! You won’t even know they’re there!

INT. PAUL’S RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Joni and Sasha are at a table eating dinner. Tanya has temporarily joined them. Sasha checks out Tanya’s oversized African bead necklace. Joni watches Paul charm customers.

SASHA
God, I love your necklace! Where’d you get it?

TANYA
I don’t know, some flea market--

SASHA
In Africa?

TANYA
No, more like Pasadena.

SASHA
Well, it’s really awesome.

Paul saunters up to the table and stands behind Sasha. He mindlessly places his hand on Sasha’s shoulder.
PAUL
Sorry guys, I need to steal Tanya back now.

Sasha clocks Paul’s hand. She carefully and without looking back places her hand on top of his.

SASHA
That’s okay, Paul.

TANYA
(getting up)
Well ladies, it was fun talking with you.

SASHA/JONI
You too.

Paul pulls his hand away from Sasha’s and walks off with Tanya. Sasha turns to Joni.

SASHA
Okay, I’m sorry but your donor daddy is giving me the sex vibe.

JONI
No he’s not. He wouldn’t do that.

SASHA
Why not? He’s not my dad.

JONI
God Sasha, that’s totally gross! Not everybody wants to have sex with you, okay? Especially when you act like a slut.

SASHA
Fuck you.

JONI
Well it makes you seem insecure and desperate.

SASHA
I’m not insecure and desperate! I’m just a normal sexual person! And maybe you’d get that if you weren’t so uptight!

JONI
Fuck you. I’m not uptight!
Fucking again in his bedroom. Jules writhes beneath him, her eyes closed. Paul seems to be in some kind of zone. He stares at her, enthralled.

CUT TO:

Jules and Paul lie naked in the bed. Jules slithers around the covers, stoned on post-coital endorphins.

JULES
God, I feel so drugular right now.
(sitting up quickly)
I really want a cigarette! Do you have any? I haven’t had a cigarette since Laser was born. Do you smoke?

PAUL
Sometimes. But I don’t have any here. Want me to run to the store?

JULES
(sitting up quickly)

Jules pops up on her knees, getting in his face.

JULES (CONT’D)
Do you think I’m just like some sad-sack middle-aged lesbian?

PAUL
God, that’s it. I was trying to figure out how to describe you to my friends. Thank you.

Jules punches his arm, mock hurt. They start rough-housing. Then kissing. Then the phone rings.
JULES
You want to get that?

PAUL
No. I want to get this...

Paul grabs a handful of Jules’ ass. Jules throws her leg over Paul and climbs up for another round. Suddenly, Joni’s voice echoes through the machine.

JONI (ON MACHINE)
Hi Paul. It’s Joni. I just wanted to apologize for my friend, Sasha. I was really embarrassed when she put her hand on your--

Paul grabs the receiver.

PAUL
Hey, Joni. I’m here...

Jules visibly recoils.

PAUL (CONT’D)
Listen, don’t worry about your friend.

Jules pales. She mouths: “What are you doing?!” Paul gesticulates: “I’m sorry!”

PAUL (CONT’D)
No. Honestly. I didn’t even notice...

Jules throws on her clothes and starts to leave.

PAUL (CONT’D)
Hey, Joni? Can you hold on a second?

Paul grabs Jules’ wrist and mouths “wait!” Jules rips her arm free and walks out.

MOMENTS LATER - JULES

walks outside and is stunned to find Luis already back from Home Depot, sneezing and wiping his nose.

JULES
Did you go to Home Depot?
LUIS
Yeah. I just got back.

JULES
That was fast!

LUIS
Yeah, no lines.

His look of confusion trips off her paranoia. She’s convinced he knows everything.

JULES
What’s that look?

LUIS
What look?

JULES
The look you’re giving me right now!

LUIS
That’s no look. That just my face.

JULES
Look, I’m not gonna play this game with you! You need to keep your judgements to yourself!

LUIS
Senora, I didn’t give no looks!

JULES
I don’t ask you why you keep blowing your nose constantly! I mean, if you have a drug problem that’s your business...

LUIS
I don’t have no drug problem! I have the allergies!

JULES
Then why are you a gardener?!

Luis stares at Jules, innocent.

LUIS
Cause I love the flowers.
JULES
Look, this isn’t gonna work. I’ll pay you through the end of the day and then we’re done.

Jules walks past a totally confused Luis.

INT. RESTAURANT – NIGHT

Nic and Jules dine with their friends, JOEL and STELLA. Nic’s drinking like a fish.

STELLA
Oh my god, these heirloom tomatoes are insane.

JULES
Joni brought some home from Paul’s garden the other day. They were incredible.

Nic tightens at the mention of Paul.

JOEL
So, the kids have been spending time with him?

NIC
Oh, yeah, they’re spending all kinds of quality time together.

STELLA
(senses the sarcasm)
Well, it’s great they like him so much. You know, you hear these stories about kids meeting their donors and the guys end up being nothing like they were on paper.

NIC
No, everyone’s getting along famously. Apparently Paul can do no wrong...

Nic grabs a passing waiter by the arm.

NIC (CONT’D)
Can we get another bottle of the Seavey Cabernet?
Jules gives Nic a look. Joel and Stella feel the tension between them.
STELLA
Hey, have you guys tried those Açai fruit packs?

JULES
No, but they’re pushing them like crack at Whole Foods.

STELLA
I know. Joel’s addicted.

JOEL
What I do is I throw one in the blender with some bananas, frozen strawberries and hemp milk and I’ll tell you, it’s sensational.

Nic slaps her forehead.

NIC
Oh, just fucking kill me...

Everyone stiffens. Jules is embarrassed.

JULES
Honey...

NIC
I’m sorry guys, but I just can’t, with the fucking hemp milk and the organic farming and heirloom tomatoes.

(mocking-voice)
“Oh no, don’t throw that in the trash, no man, you gotta throw that into the composting bin so the fucking worms can shit all over it and turn it into glorious mulch and we can all feel better about ourselves.” God! What a bunch of bullshit!

Nic takes a big swallow from her glass. Jules windshield wipes Nic’s forearm.

JULES
(sotto)
How about some green tea, honey...
Nic slams her glass on the table. Explodes.

NIC
You know what, Jules?! I like my wine! Okay? So fucking sue me! And fyi, red wine has a chemical called Resveratrol in it, which has been proven to significantly extend human lifespan!

JULES
Yeah, if you drink a thousand bottles a day!

NIC
Fuck you.

Nic storms off. Jules turns to Joel and Stella, ashen.

JULES
I’m sorry.

INT. RESTAURANT BAR - MINUTES LATER

Jules walks over to the bar. Nic is sitting in the corner.

JULES
What the hell is going on with you?

NIC
This whole Paul thing is driving me crazy! I feel like he’s taking over my family.

Jules tries to bring it down. She yells in hushed tones.

JULES
No. He’s not!

NIC
(nerves fraying)
Okay! Okay. I’m sorry. I’m just exhausted...

JULES
Maybe you need to take some time off and recharge.

NIC
(self-pitying)
Sure, and who’s gonna pay for that?
Jules looks pissed off, and hurt.
NIC (CONT’D)
Look, I’m sorry, I just feel like
I’m carrying the whole load here.

JULES
Because that’s the way you like it!
That’s the way you keep control!

This is Jules’ break-point.

NIC
What are you talking about?

JULES
Oh come on! You hated it when I
worked! You wanted me at home,
taking care of the kids. You
wanted a wife!

NIC
That is just not true!

JULES
You didn’t trust any of those
nannies! And you sure as hell
didn’t back my career!

NIC
What are you talking about? I just
helped you start another business!

JULES
Yeah, so you can feel better about
yourself!

NIC
No, so you can feel better about
yourself!

JULES
Are you even attracted to me
anymore?

The BARTENDER holds out the bottle of Cabernet.

BARTENDER
Do you still want this?

NIC
Yeah. More than ever.
INT. NIC AND JULES BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jules lies on her side. Nic shuffles to get to close to her. Jules moves away, still pissed at her. Nic realizes she needs to make amends.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - KITCHEN - NEXT MORNING

The family sits in silence, having breakfast. Nic looks around the table, feeling like a pariah.

NIC
Look, I know you’ve all been enjoying your time with Paul. And I know I haven’t been as open to him as everyone else and this has caused some...friction...between us. But I’d like to try and change that...

Everyone keeps eating, uncommitted. “And...?”

NIC (CONT’D)
So I was thinking. Maybe it would be nice if we all had dinner at his house sometime. That way, I could get to know him a little better, and I could see all the good work mom’s been doing with his backyard.

Nic looks at Jules and smiles. Everyone nods. They recognize this is a big step for Nic.
INT. PAUL’S RESTAURANT – LATER

Paul walks over to Tanya who’s standing by the bar.

TANYA
Joni’s pretty. She’s got some of your genes.

PAUL
I think she looks more like her mom actually. But thank you.

TANYA
It’s cute seeing you in dad mode.

PAUL
Yeah?

TANYA
Yeah.
(lowering voice)
It makes me want to fuck you.

PAUL
(uncomfortable)
Oh yeah?...

TANYA
Yeah...

Tanya moves imperceptibly closer.

TANYA (CONT’D)
I’ve been missing our sleep-overs.

PAUL
Yeah, it’s been a while.

TANYA
You want to meet up later?
Paul hesitates. He doesn’t know how to say no.

    PAUL
    Tanya, you’re so sexy and
    beautiful, but I don’t think we
    should do that anymore.

Tanya’s face drops.

    TANYA
    What happened?

    PAUL
    I just feel like I’m being unfair
    to you. Like I’m being lazy.

    TANYA
    What do you mean?

    PAUL
    I mean our thing is really fun and
    easy, but...I don’t want to be 50
    and still “hanging out.” You know,
    if I really want a family then I
    have to stop getting in these
    situations that don’t go anywhere.

    TANYA
    I’m totally up for going to the
    next step.

Paul just looks at her. Finally Tanya gets it.

    TANYA (CONT’D)
    Oh.
    (welling up)
    You just don’t want to go there
    with me.

Paul knows enough to say nothing. Tanya walks off, leaving
Paul to feel like an asshole for finally calling it.

EXT. PAUL’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Paul walks out to check on Jules. She’s sweating her ass
off, shlepping stacks of heavy mulch across the yard.

    PAUL
    How’s it going?

    JULES
    Okay...
PAUL
Here, let me help.

Paul takes some of her load and together they transport the sod to the other side of the yard. Neither know what to say.

Paul stares at her, waiting for her lead.

JULES
We can’t be doing this...

PAUL
I know...

JULES
I’m married...

PAUL
...and the kids...

JULES
Yeah, and I love Nic.

PAUL
I know...

They stare at each other and we cut to...

INT. PAUL’S BEDROOM - LATER


PAUL
I got you some cigarettes.

JULES
(ignoring him)
Jesus, what’s wrong with me? I shouldn’t have fired Luis like that. That was totally wrong...

PAUL
Come on. Don’t be so hard on yourself. Things get messy sometimes...

JULES
That wasn’t messy. That was fucked up. I’m totally fucked up...
PAUL
I think I’m really falling for you.

JULES
Paul, don’t...

INT. PAUL’S BATHROOM - LATER

Jules takes a shower, washing off the evidence. She looks nauseated by her lack of willpower.

EXT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - MAGIC HOUR

The family packs into the Volvo to head to Paul’s.
Paul gets dinner ready with Joni and Laser as his sous-chefs. Both kids seem really jazzed to be cooking with him.
IN THE BACKYARD - EVENING

Jules tours Nic around the backyard, looking a little freaked out as she shows her the work she’s been doing.

JULES
I’m gonna do some planting over there so it won’t look so bare...

NIC
It looks great, honey. Very organic. I’m proud of you.


INT. PAUL’S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - LATER

Nic flips through Paul’s album collection, including Joni Mitchell’s Blue.

INT. PAUL’S HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Everyone digs into the meal, enjoying themselves. Especially Nic, who’s committed to redeeming herself.

PAUL
Hey Nic, I think you’re gonna love this ’98 Screaming Eagle.

NIC
You know what, I think I’m gonna stick with water tonight. But thank you so much.

The Allgoods look at Nic: this is a first.

NIC (CONT’D)
God, Paul, this steak is delicious. What’s the seasoning?

PAUL
I just mist it with a little truffle oil.

Nic looks at Jules and smiles in full overcompensation mode.

NIC
What a good idea. We should try that. Right, honey?
JULES
(taken aback by Nic’s cheerfulness)
Mmm-hmmm.

NIC
And it’s done to perfection.

PAUL
So it’s not too rare?

NIC
No, it’s perfect. Juicy. Tender. Exactly what rare’s supposed to be.

PAUL
Good. A lot of people in the restaurant order a steak rare and they freak out at the slightest sight of red.

NIC
Ugh, isn’t that annoying? That happens to me all the time when I’m grilling.

PAUL
Don’t people know that rare means red?

NIC
Right?! It means bloody!

PAUL
Exactly! They should see what rare looks like in Argentina. The cow’s practically still mooing.

Laser chuckles at Paul’s joke, then reigns it in. Joni tries to insert herself in the conversation.

JONI
I really want to go to Argentina. Buenos Aires is supposed to be--

NIC
(interrupting) ...So Paul, I was checking out your album collection over there. Quite the eclectic mix...  

PAUL
Thanks...
NIC
You don’t meet too many straight
guys who love Joni Mitchell.

Joni glares at Nic: stop being such a Paul hog.

PAUL
Oh yeah, you a Joni Mitchell fan?
NIC  
(smuq)  
Not really. We just named our daughter after her.  

PAUL  
Cool. Right on...  

NIC  
What’s your favorite Joni album?  

PAUL  
I think I have to go with “Blue.”  

Nic raises her hand in a testify.  

PAUL (CONT’D)  
Yeah? You too?  

They high-five across the table.  

NIC  
Oh God, I probably spent half of high school in my room crying to that album. That record kills me.  

PAUL  
I know, it never lets up, you got “River,” “California...”  

NIC  
“A Case of You...”  

PAUL  
“All I Want..”  

NIC  
Mmm!!  

Nic pulls her hands to her chest, shuts her eyes...and starts to sing.  

NIC (CONT’D)  
I am on a lonely road and I am traveling traveling, traveling, traveling/Looking for something, what can it be/Oh I hate you some, I hate you some/I love you some Oh I love you/when I forget about me...  

Jules, Paul and the kids watch, open-mouthed as Nic soldiers on, skipping ahead to another verse.
NIC (CONT’D)
I want to talk to you/I want to
shampoo you/I want to renew you
again and again/Applause, applause/
Life is our cause/When I think of
your kisses/My mind see-saws...

Nic takes a breath. Just as Paul’s about to say something,
Nic resumes her unfortunate solo.

NIC (CONT’D)
Do you see/do you see/do you see
how you hu-urt me baby/so I hurt
you too/then we both get/soo-ooo-
ooo blue...

Nic stops, eyes still closed. She’s connected to a part of
herself she rarely lets herself visit. The moment is
punctured by her smart-ass 15 year-old son.

LASER
Don’t quit your day job, mom.

PAUL
Hey. It hard enough to open your
heart in this world. Don’t make it
harder.

LASER
You’re right.
(to Nic; contrite)
I’m sorry, mom.

Nic looks at Paul. Stunned. Then looks at Jules and points
to Paul.

NIC
I like this guy.

Paul looks at Joni.

PAUL
You didn’t tell me you were named
after Joni Mitchell.

JONI
It’s just so dorky. I don’t really
like to bring it up.
PAUL
I think it’s cool.

NIC
(getting up)
Hey Paul. Where’s your bathroom?

PAUL
Just around there.

On her way to the loo, Nic turns back to Paul.

NIC
You know what? I think I will try
some of that Screaming Eagle.
Nic washes her hands at the sink. Something catches her eye. She lifts Paul’s hairbrush from the shelf in front of her and examines it. She reaches into the bristles and pulls out...

A few strands of long red hair.

Nic pales.

CUT TO

Nic on her knees in Paul’s shower, pulling a clump of tell-tale red hair from the drain.

CUT TO

Nic skulks out of the bathroom. She looks out and b-lines for the bedroom.

CUT TO

Nic pulling pillows off Paul’s bed. Her look tells us she’s found hair here as well.

THEN WE CUT TO

Nic sitting back down at the table. She looks drained. Nobody notices. The sound drops out.

NIC’S POV:

Paul and Jules talking comfortably.

Joni and Laser chiming in, smiling, one big happy family.

REVERSE ONTO NIC:

Totally disconnected. Shell-shocked. She wants to scream but it feels like she’s trapped in cement. Things slow way down...
Nic and Jules perform their nightly ablutions. Jules is sonic-caring her teeth.

JULES
(through the sonic buzz)
Well, you and Paul seemed to get on like gang-busters...

NIC
You’re sleeping with him, aren’t you.

JULES
(freaked)
What?

Nic turns to her, eyes red with anger.

NIC
Just be honest with me. Don’t make me feel crazier than I feel right now!

JULES
Where is this coming from?!

NIC
I found your hair in his drain!

JULES
(scrambling)
What? I was working. I got dirty so I took a shower.

NIC
Oh yeah? You take a nap, too?

Jules pauses a second too long. The jig is up.

The truth has come out. Nic is so angry she’s calm.

NIC
Are you in love with him?!

JULES
No!
NIC
What, are you straight now?!

JULES
No. It has nothing to do with that!
(beat)
I’ve just felt so cut off from you lately...

NIC
Oh, right, so it’s my fault!

JULES
No! Who said anything about fault? Just listen to me!

NIC
I’m listening! What?!

JULES
I just needed...

NIC
What? To be fucked?

JULES
No, appreciated!

NIC
It’s always what I’m not doing for you, isn’t it? Well here’s what I don’t to you. I don’t work out my issues by fucking other people!

Nic starts heading for the door. Jules follows.

JULES
He’s not just “other people!”

NIC
No, you had to go fuck our sperm donor! You couldn’t have picked a more painful way to hurt me...

JULES
Where are you going?!

NIC
I need water! My mouth is dry!

Nic opens the door. There’s Joni and Laser, looking devastated. They’ve been listening to the whole thing.
INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAWN

Jules wakes up looking crusty from a rough night on the couch. She looks like she hasn’t slept at all.

INT. LASER’S ROOM - DAWN

Jules enters and walks over to her sleeping son. She gently nudges him awake.

JULES
Hey Laser. Honey?

Laser turns over, semi-conscious.

LASER
What?

She sits down on his bed.

JULES
Listen, I know you and Joni heard what’s going on. I just want you to know how sorry I feel. And I also want you to know that what happened with Paul and me is over. There’s nothing going on now.

LASER
Okay.

JULES
I know you might need some time to process your feelings around this, but I just want you to know that I’m here for you if you want to talk about anything.

(beat)

Is there anything you want to talk about?

LASER
(leave my room)
Not really.

JULES
(fighting the impulse to push it)
Okay then. Go back to sleep.

Jules pats her son and leaves.
INT. JONI’S BEDROOM - DAWN

Jules enters and touches Joni’s shoulder.

JULES
Joni?

JONI
I don’t want to talk to you.

JULES
Can we just--

JONI
I said I don’t want to talk to you!!

JULES
Okay. I’m sorry.

Jules slowly retreats to the door.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING


INT. NIC AND JULES BEDROOM - MID-MORNING

Everyone’s gone except Jules. Jules lies on her bed, traumatized, listening to Eckhardt on her Ipod sound-dock.

ECKHARDT TOLLE
We can’t let other people’s expectations control us.

The calming words of Eckhardt are having an unintended effect on Jules. Instead of easing her pain, they’re just making her feel like more of a phony.

ECKHARDT TOLLE (CONT’D)
We must learn that, sometimes, it is okay to disappoint people...

Jules rolls over and bats the Ipod out of the Sound-dock.
EXT. PAUL’S FARM - AFTERNOON

Paul’s walking through rows of swiss chard, cell phone to his ear, listening to it ring.

INT. SASHA’S ROOM - AFTERNOON

We can tell Joni’s been crying and downloading the whole thing to Sasha. Joni’s cell rings. She looks at the number.

SASHA
Oh god, is it...?

Joni nods gravely, answers.

JONI
(cold)
Hello.

Conversation Intercut.

PAUL
Hey Joni, how you doing?

JONI
You’re such a phony.

Beat.

PAUL
Excuse me?

JONI
You act like you’re so groovy and together but you’re not. You’re a shitty person!

PAUL
What happened?

JONI
With my mom?!

PAUL
Listen, can I just come and talk with you--

JONI
What’s wrong with you?!

PAUL
Joni...
JONI
Don’t call me anymore.

Joni hangs up and start crying. Sasha hugs her.

EXT. PAUL’S FARM – CONTINUOUS

Sweaty, nauseous with remorse, Paul turns around to find fetching young Brooke, waiting for him with a wicker basket of huge cucumbers.

BROOKE
Hey Paul, look at these cukes...

Paul holds up his hand at her. This girl symbolizes every bad choice he’s ever made.

Paul holds up his hand and give Brooke the universal, “Leave Me Alone” gesture. Brooke looks embarrassed.

EXT. ALLGOOD HOUSE – BACKYARD – AFTERNOON

Jules sits on a lawn chair smoking a cigarette. Her cell rings. She answers.

EXT. STREET – AFTERNOON

Paul walks down the street, wigging out.

PAUL
Hey, it’s me. I just talked to Joni.

Conversation intercut.

JULES
Oh my god, I’m so sorry. I should have called you.

Jules sucks a big, anxious drag off a cigarette.

PAUL
What happened?

JULES
Nic saw my hair in your bathroom.

PAUL
Oh, fuck...
JULES
Yeah.

Beat.

PAUL
I think I love you.

JULES
Paul, come on!

She hangs up.

104  EXT. HOUSE PARTY - BACKYARD - NIGHT

Joni and Sasha stand at the makeshift “bar”. Joni’s downs several Tequila shots quickly.

SASHA
Slow down, tiger.

Across the room, Joni spots Jai chatting with a WAIFY GIRL in a sundress.

Joni drops one more Tequila shot and walks up to Jai and Waify girl, interrupting them.

JONI
I like the scruff. It’s sexy.

Waify girl juts out her hip territorially.
WAIFY GIRL
Uh, ‘scuuuse me...

JONI
You’re excused.

JONI (CONT’D)
Hey, can I talk to you?

Joni leads Jai to a private corner.

She leans in and kisses Jai. And Jai actually returns the kiss. And it’s completely sweet and intimate.

But then the kiss starts to morph as Joni’s energy turns manic, intense, less romantic than emotionally needy. We see Jai start to pull away. But Joni keeps holding him, wanting more. Finally, Jai breaks off the kiss.

JAI
Joni...

JONI
What? Don’t be so uptight.

She leans in to restart the kiss. But he stops her.

JAI
You seem weird.
(off her look)
What’s wrong?

The question triggers the pain she’s trying so hard to squelch. It’s too much for her. So she just takes off, leaving behind a baffled Jai.
Jules walks in to find Nic, awake, in bed.

JULES
Just getting another pillow. The couch is kind of saggy.

NIC
Is your back okay?

Jules perks up: is this an invitation to share the bed again?

JULES
It’s a little ache-y.

NIC
You should take some Advil.

Guess not.

Suddenly they hear bumping and loud footsteps downstairs.

Jules walks downstairs to find Joni stumbling toward her bedroom.

JULES
Hey. How was the party?

Joni tries to avert her mom’s questioning gaze.

JONI
Fine.

JULES
How big was it?

JONI
I don’t know. Medium...ish...

Jules takes in the glassy look in her daughter’s eyes.

JULES
Are you drunk?

JONI
No.
Nic enters from the stairs, having caught the last piece.
NIC
I hope you had a designated driver.

JONI
Why? I’m not drunk.

NIC
Well, you seem drunk to me.

JONI
Yeah, well, you should know.

NIC
(furious; incredulous)
What did you just say to me?!

JONI
I’m going to bed.

Joni starts to leave. Nic grabs her.

NIC
No, you’re not! I’m not done talking to you!

Laser opens his door and watches the scene progress.

JONI
What do you want from me?! I did everything you wanted! I got all A’s! I got in everywhere I applied! Now you can show everybody what a perfect family you have!

JULES
Don’t talk to your mom like that!

Joni spins to face Jules.

JONI
You’re really gonna tell me how to act? Now?!

JULES
Hey, I’m still your mother.

JONI
Whatever...

Jules reaches out and Joni backs away, sickened.
JONI (CONT’D)
Don’t touch me!

Joni heads for her room.

JONI (CONT’D)
I’m so sick of both of you!

EXT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - DAWN - MOS

The sun rises on this formerly happy home.

INT. ALLGOOD LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Jules wakes up on the couch. Sits up. Rubs her aching back.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - JONI’S BEDROOM - DAY

Joni packs for college. The room is littered with half-filled packing boxes. She picks up a pile of clothes from the corner and sees the farmer’s hat Paul gave her. She puts it aside, not sure what to do with it.

EXT. PAUL’S RESTAURANT - PANTRY - DAY

Paul sits on a box of produce, eyes vacant.

INT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - NIGHT

The family has their last supper - before Joni leaves.

NIC
Did you pack that lamp I gave you?

JONI
Yeah.

NIC
Well, we can always get stuff up there, too, if you need it, I mean if the room’s dark or you need extra bedding...

JONI
I’m not going to Siberia, mom.

Jules looks at the family unit, misty.
JULES
I can’t believe this is our last
dinner together.

LASER
Oh God, are you gonna cry?

Jules looks at her son, fed up.

JULES
I wish you were gay. You’d be so
much more sensitive.

The doorbell rings.

JONI
It’s probably Sasha. I’ll get it.

Joni runs to the door. Opens it. It’s not Sasha. It’s Paul.

JONI (CONT’D)
(shocked)
What are you doing here?

PAUL
I needed to talk to you before you
left.

JONI
There’s nothing to talk about.

PAUL
I just want to apologize again for
what happened. I can’t tell you
how much I regret it.

EXT. ALLGOOD HOUSE – SAME

Joni walks out for privacy, closes the door behind her.

JONI
So like, everything that happened
between us. What was that? Was
that just bullshit?!
PAUL
No, it wasn’t bullshit at all. I know I don’t seem credible right now but I really care about you...

Paul struggles to keep his emotions in check.

PAUL (CONT’D)
...and I just hope someday we’ll be able to see each other again. Do you think that could maybe happen?

JONI
I don’t know...

Joni looks down welling up.

JONI (CONT’D)
I just wish you could’ve been...

PAUL
What?

Joni chokes back tears.

JONI
Better...

Paul and Joni look up at each other when the door suddenly flings open. Nic is there, fuming.

NIC
You’ve got some balls, mister!

PAUL
Nic, hold on...

Nic walks toward he and Joni. Joni ducks back inside.
NIC
No, you hold on! Let me tell you something, you really hurt my kids!

PAUL
Well, they’re kinda my...

NIC
(cutting him off)
No! They’re not. This is not your family. This is my family! You’re just a fucking interloper...

Jules joins Nic, concerned things are getting out of hand.

PAUL
I didn’t mean to hurt anyone...

Paul and Jules share a look as Nic deals the coup de grace.

NIC
If you want a family so much, go out and make one of your own!

Nic heads back inside and slams the door behind her.

Paul stand alone, spinning. After a moment he spontaneously looks back into the house. Laser is staring at him through the window. Their eyes lock and then Laser looks away.

Reeling, Paul heads for his motorcycle. He gets on the bike, helmet in hand. Turns on the ignition. He picks up the helmet and pauses, shaking in the hell of his own making. Losing it, he slams the helmet against his forehead, punishing himself for being himself.
Laser, Joni and Nic watch “Locked Up Abroad” Jules walks in front of them, picks up the remote and turns off the TV.

JULES
I need to say something.

Everyone sits up. Jules acts stoic but she’s wrecked.

JULES (CONT’D)
Look, it’s no big secret your mom and are in hell right now. Bottom line...marriage is hard...really fucking hard.

(MORE)
Just two people, slogging through
the shit, year after year, getting
older, changing. It’s a fucking
marathon, okay?!

Everyone is silenced by the outpouring. Jules soldiers on.

So sometimes you’re together so
long, you just stop seeing the
other person. You just see weird
projections of your own junk. And
instead of talking to each other,
you go off the rails, and act
grubby and make stupid choices.
Which is what I did. And I feel
sick about it because I love you
guys and I love your mom and that’s
the truth. Sometimes you hurt the
ones you love the most. I don’t
know why. Maybe if I read more
Russian novels I would...

Nic looks down, overwhelmed by it all.

Anyway, I just wanted to say how
sorry I am about what I did and
that I hope you’ll forgive me
eventually.

Thank you.

And, without further ado, Jules hands the remote back to
Laser and departs the field. Everyone’s silenced by Jules’
rambling apologia, especially Nic.

Jules puffs up her pillows, preparing for another night on
the couch. Just as she’s about to lie down, Nic comes over
and picks up the pillows.

Come on.

Nic heads upstairs to their room. Jules follows.
INT. JONI’S ROOM - MORNING

Joni wakes up. She looks around her room. There’s nothing on the walls. The floor is covered with boxes taped and labeled. It’s time to go.

EXT. ALLGOOD HOUSE - DRIVEWAY - DAY

Nic and Jules stuff the last of Joni’s things in the back of their station wagon. Laser and Joni bring the last of the boxes out of the house.

INT. VOLVO STATION WAGON - DAY

The Allgoods are on the road, heading to college.

INT. ROADSIDE DINER - DAY

The Allgoods share a last meal. Nic and Jules seem wired as separation anxiety kicks in. Joni looks at her watch.

NIC
It’s okay, we’re fine on time.

Joni seems distant, her mind already at college. Nic sees this. Wants to connect with her daughter one more time.

NIC (CONT’D)
It’s probably gonna be really hectic when we get there so your mom and I wanted to take this time to tell you how much we’ve loved being your parents and how proud we are of you.

Joni looks away, skirting what she fears is a prelude to a maternal melt-down. Nic soldiers on.

NIC (CONT’D)
I’ve been thinking about what you said to me, about my wanting to show everybody what a perfect family I have.

A WOMAN (50’s) in the next booth over looks over, intrigued. Her daughter (20’s) sitting next to is oblivious.

JONI
Mom, forget about that--
NIC
No, maybe you're right. Maybe I did push you too hard. I don’t know. Maybe I was scared...

Nic looks off, sucking back the feelings.

NIC (CONT'D)
I just love you so unbelievably much, Joni. I hope you felt that. At least some of the time...

JONI
Yeah, I did.
(looking at her watch)
We should go.

Nic sags. The family makes motions to leave.

Jules gets up to find the woman in the booth over still staring. She smiles reflexively, catching her off guard.

JULES
It’s a hard day.

WOMAN
(stiffening; awkward)
Excuse me?

JULES
We’re taking our daughter to college.

WOMAN
I’m sorry.

The woman looks away, embarrassed. Jules walks off.

EXT. COLLEGE CAMPUS - DAY - ESTABLISHING
The station wagon passes through the city.

INT. STATION WAGON - DAY
As they drive into town, Joni sees STUDENTS swarming the campus. She takes it all in, nervous, excited. Nic and Jules steal looks back at Joni, feeling her nervousness, wishing they could take it away.
The Allgoods pull up to the curb, get out.

Laser pulls a dolly with Joni’s boxes. Joni and the moms follow behind. Nic and Jules follow Joni to the door. They all jam up at the threshold.

JONI
Guys, it’s okay. I got it.

Nic and Jules get the hint. They move back and Joni enters the room alone. Nic and Jules quietly turn and leave.

Joni stands among her bags and boxes looking around. She reaches into her bag and pulls out her phone. She goes to the picture of Paul she took in front of Poquito Mas. She stares at it for a long moment. Then she turns it off.

Finally she moves to the doorway and looks out. She realizes her family isn’t there.

Joni exits, looking around to find her family. The station wagon is gone. She looks panicked.

NIC (O.S.)
Joni...

Joni looks up to see her family heading towards her from across the road.

JONI
Where’d you go?!

NIC
We had to move the car.

JONI
(covers her fear)
I thought you left.
JULES
We wouldn’t leave without saying goodbye.

NIC
Give us some credit.

And suddenly, everyone realizes...this is it. It’s time to say goodbye. First Laser comes up and hugs Joni.

LASER
It’s gonna be weird not having you at home.

JONI
Sorry to leave you alone with them.

LASER
It’s okay. I can handle it.

Laser backs up. Then the moms both come up and hug Joni, tears streaming down their faces.

JONI
Guys, come on...
(beat)
Look, I’ll talk to you soon.

Joni tries to detach from the hug. But her moms won’t let go. They keep holding her and crying.

Slowly, their tears begin to break Joni down.

Trapped in their loving embrace, Joni’s feelings rise up, unbidden, overpowering her. She starts crying.

The moms hold her tighter, which makes her cry even harder.

Soon she’s sobbing in her mothers’ arms, as all the pressure, resentment and anger she’s felt starts seeping out of her.

Nic and Jules feel their daughter letting go. They hold her tight to comfort her.

They keep holding her until a calm sets in.

The hug breaks apart. Nic pushes the hair from Joni’s face. Joni gives her moms one last smile, then turns and walks away. We stay on Nic and Jules, watching their daughter set off on her new life.
The family drives home. Jules is at the wheel. Nic’s in the passenger seat, eyes red and puffy. Laser’s in the back.

No one speaks, everyone’s lost in their own worlds. Finally Laser breaks the spell.

Laser
I don’t think you guys should break up.

Nic
No? Why not?

Laser
You’re too old.

Both Nic and Jules crack smiles. Their son’s rudeness is unsurpassed. But then his words have an unexpected gravity.

Nic reaches over and grabs Jules’ hand. Jules holds it tight. Neither Nic or Jules take their eyes off the road. They just look straight ahead and drive home.

FADE OUT

THE END