

"THE NEXT WAVE"

By

Derek Reid

derekreid@outlook.com

FADE IN:

EXT. CALIFORNIA COASTLINE - OCTOBER 1993 - DAY

The oceanfront of Pismo Beach, California on a sunny, autumn weekend. The beach is still a popular place late in the year, with FAMILIES and groups of TEENAGERS who mill about and enjoy themselves. Many beach-goers swim, surf or lay out on the sand. All the fashions and visible technology are appropriate for the year 1993.

PATRICK (18, muscular) stands a few feet from the water near a small pile of shirts/towels. He's dripping wet with his surfboard in hand. He looks out over the ocean and shields his eyes to block out the sun's glare.

RYAN (17, lanky) surfs into view and reaches the shoreline. His surfboard is wooden, top-of-the-line and expensive. He wades out of the water and approaches Patrick.

PATRICK

Some pretty-decent riding for a book-worm!

RYAN

To 360, or not to 360, that is the question. Whether 'tis nobler on the roaring ocean to --

PATRICK

What are you doing?

RYAN

It's modified from --

PATRICK

I know it's Shakespeare Ryan. I was awake for most of Ms. Anderson's English class after all. I'm just wondering why you'd want to ruin such a nice weekend-afternoon with educational references.

RYAN

It was really more of a joke than a reference.

Patrick smiles.

PATRICK

OK, if that's the case I guess we can let it slide -- once.

(glances at Ryan's board)

Have I mentioned how nice your surfboard is before?

Ryan grins.

RYAN

Every now and again.

PATRICK

And you're **sure** there's no way I can convince you to part with it?

RYAN

Nothing doing my friend.

PATRICK

How bout for my board, a hundred-dollars and JESSICA LEE's phone number?

RYAN

No chance. I spent almost all last-summer wheeling fertilizer-bags around to save enough money to buy this thing.

Patrick glances Ryan over.

PATRICK

Yeah, one would think you'd have bulked-up a little more from that whole-job.

RYAN

(jokes)

What a terrible thing to say Patrick! That's just my genetics.

PATRICK

You're right. Clearly my own bitterness talking there.

(pause)

It really is great though. Too bad most of my cash is tied into keeping my old clunker-jeep on life-support.

RYAN

I suppose you could always sell the jeep.

PATRICK

Whoa there bro, surfing's great and all -- but you can't take a girl to prom on top of a long-board, ya know?

RYAN

I guess not.

PATRICK

Um, and speaking of driving-people places I need to head-out now to make it to my wrestling-meet on time. So if you want me to drop you home on the way we both gotta jet.

RYAN

Thanks man, but I think I'm gonna hang-around here and surf some more. I appreciate the ride-offer though!

PATRICK

You sure?

RYAN

Yeah. There's a bus-stop about two-miles from here.

Patrick motions to Ryan's surfboard.

PATRICK

You can take that thing on a bus?

RYAN

I think so. I did it once a couple-years ago with my old board.

PATRICK

Seems like a big hassle to carry it that far.

Ryan smiles.

RYAN

I'm sure I'll survive somehow.

PATRICK

Your call I guess. I'll catch you around school on Monday then!

RYAN

Sounds like a plan. Good luck at your wrestling-meet!

Patrick flexes a bicep.

PATRICK

I won't need any luck there! May need a little to pass our next math-test though. Remember, you said you'd help me study for that!

RYAN

Don't worry. I already -- cosine'd onto that plan.

PATRICK

More unwanted educational references!

Ryan LAUGHS.

RYAN

Sorry.

Patrick picks his towel and shirt up from the beach-pile, but also grabs a pair of eyeglasses that were there by mistake.

Patrick fumbles with the glasses before he manages to place them on the other shirt and towel still on the sand.

PATRICK

Phew! Glad I didn't accidentally break those with my kung-fu grip.

(pause)

Oh! Don't forget about the party at my place next-weekend either!

RYAN

(insecure)

Uh -- I'm not so sure about that one.

PATRICK

What?! You've gotta come man! **Lots** of chicks will be there. We'll find you that prom date yet!

RYAN

Yeah, I'm just not that good at talking to girls.

PATRICK

I bet you weren't good at riding a bike either till you actually tried doing that a few times.

RYAN

It comes more naturally to you I think.

PATRICK

Nah! It's only cause I'm a year older! Extra time to practice the whole gab-thing is all.

RYAN

Year older? Your birthday was in September and mine is in March.

PATRICK

Yes, and I've turned eighteen whereas you are still seventeen and eighteen is one-year older than seventeen. I thought you were supposed to be the math-whiz here.

RYAN

Ugh, fine! I'll think about it.

PATRICK

My party you mean?

RYAN

Yeah.

PATRICK

Alright! I'll take that as Wednesday's *Can't Wait!* Later Ryan.

RYAN

Later Patrick!

Patrick heads up the beach.

Ryan runs into the water again with his surfboard.

EXT. CALIFORNIA ROADSIDE - LATER

Ryan walks down the side of a two-lane road with no sidewalk or much of a shoulder. There's no traffic visible on the street. Ryan carries his surfboard and towel under an arm and wears both his t-shirt and eyeglasses.

SUPERIMPOSE: PISMO BEACH, CALIFORNIA - OCTOBER 19TH, 1993.

Ryan continues a few steps and halts. He lays his surfboard down on the side of the road, then walks a couple-yards up to a spot with more room and stops again.

RYAN
(to himself)
Now I remember why I only ever did
this once.

Ryan rotates his head in a circular motion and GROANS. He extends his arm and stretches.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Oh, ow! My shoulders!

He stretches out his other arm.

Ryan removes his glasses and tries to wipe-off some dirt that's dried to the lenses with his shirt. He then BLOWS on them.

RYAN (CONT'D)
OK, just a mile left -- ugh.

Ryan walks back toward his surfboard. He can no longer see the oncoming-lane.

After a few steps LOUD-MUSIC BLARES.

RYAN (CONT'D)
What the?

Ryan turns again in the direction of the music right in time to be HIT head-on by a car going about 35 mph. The car has a DRIVER and PASSENGER (males, ages 16-19).

Ryan's eyeglasses fly out of his hand as he lands on the car's hood. His head SMACKS into the front windshield and some blood splashes onto the glass.

The driver SLAMS the breaks.

The car SQUEALS, cuts to the left and comes to a diagonal-stop across both street-lanes. Ryan rolls from the hood and lands on the opposite road-side from his surfboard. The board hasn't been hit or damaged at all.

The car sits idle a moment before it carries out a clumsy, three-point turn then SPEEDS OFF in the direction it came from, leaving Ryan motionless near the street.

FADE TO BLACK.

CUT TO:

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - OCTOBER 2017 - DAY

A hospital patient-room. An ORDERLY (female, early 30's) serves breakfast to a HOSPITAL PATIENT (male, mid 40's) who occupies a bed on the side closest to the entrance. The patient's about thirty-pounds overweight. A large, "GET WELL SOON!" flower-bouquet is near his bed.

SUPERIMPOSE: LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA - OCTOBER 17TH, 2017.

The orderly takes a bowl of oatmeal off a metallic cart and sets it on a tray stretched-across the bed.

HOSPITAL PATIENT
(indicates the oatmeal)
What's this supposed to be?

ORDERLY
Oatmeal. It's good.

The patient makes a close and exaggerated examination of the bowl.

HOSPITAL PATIENT
You seem like a nice person Kelly.
Why would a nice person tell such a lie?

Kelly smiles.

ORDERLY/KELLY
Maybe I should have specified that it's good for you.

HOSPITAL PATIENT
Ah! So now that the whole, awful truth is out in the open perhaps we can get this -- **oatmeal** replaced with some real-food. I'll take a short-stack of pancakes drenched in maple syrup, two eggs, biscuit with sausage gravy, three bacon-strips, shredded hash-browns and a bowl of peaches covered in sugar.

KELLY
That doesn't sound like a great idea for someone who had double-bypass surgery four-days ago Michael.

HOSPITAL PATIENT/MICHAEL
You heard the part at the end with the peaches right?

KELLY

I can probably get you peach-slices tomorrow, minus the sugar if that wasn't just the punchline for your joke.

Michael GRUMBLES.

MICHAEL

I bet this oatmeal costs me thirty dollars.

Kelly grins.

KELLY

You're thinking of aspirin-packets. The oatmeal is only eleven and comes with a free quarter-cup of blueberries!

MICHAEL

(not enthused)

Swell.

Kelly turns her attention to the cart again and grabs a glass-carafe of orange juice.

RYAN (O.S.)

Uhhh...

KELLY

(annoyed)

Seriously Michael! I think there are five-year-olds in here who complain less than --

MICHAEL

That wasn't me.

Kelly looks at Michael.

KELLY

(confused)

What?

Michael points out the bed across the room.

Ryan (now age 41) lays in another hospital-bed with his eyes closed. He's connected to an Electrocardiogram/ECG machine by several wires attached to his body, an Electroencephalography/EEG device via a separate series of wires and tubes wrapped around his head and also to a ventilator by way of a plastic tube that travels down his throat.

The ECG machine begins to emit soft, steady BEEPS. Ryan turns his head a little.

RYAN

Uhhh...

Kelly, in a state of shock, releases her grip on the glass carafe. It falls to the ground, SHATTERS and orange-juice spills out over the linoleum floor.

KELLY

Ah!

The room-door is opened from the outside by a MALE ORDERLY.

MALE ORDERLY

What was that?!

KELLY

Go get DOCTOR LARSON!

The male-orderly rushes out to find the doctor.

Kelly moves to the open-doorway as quickly as possible while making sure she doesn't slip on puddles of juice. She pokes her head out into the hallway.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - DAY

KELLY

And um, the janitor too please.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - LATER

Doctor Larson (male, 50's) hovers over Ryan, who's been propped to a sitting position in the bed with his breathing-tube removed. All the spilled juice and broken glass has been cleaned off the floor.

DOCTOR LARSON

Hey Ryan. Can you move your arms at all?

Ryan moves his fingers a little while his face showcases effort.

RYAN

No. Only my fingers a bit.

DOCTOR LARSON

Alright. How about your head?

Ryan moves his head from side-to-side slowly.

RYAN

Yeah, but it's difficult.

DOCTOR LARSON

That's to be expected really. In fact I'm kind of surprised you're as mobile right now as you are. Of course we've tried to stimulate and rotate your muscles on a regular-basis but in reality there's only so much that can be done for a comatose patient. I mean, park a motorcycle in the garage for twenty-plus years and it's gonna have hiccups starting-again too.

RYAN

I wasn't a motorcycle last-time I checked.

DOCTOR LARSON

Well, uh -- no, you're not. I just meant you'll probably need a few months of intensive physical-therapy before you're fully about due to muscle atrophy. I think your long-term mobility prognosis is excellent though!

RYAN

I guess that's something anyway.

DOCTOR LARSON

We'll have to do a few tests here first but we should be able to get you transferred to an off-site rehabilitation facility by the end of this week. I'm sure you don't want to waste any time!

A pause. Ryan doesn't say anything.

DOCTOR LARSON (CONT'D)

OK then, I'll let you get some rest for now.

Doctor Larson starts to leave but thinks of something else.

DOCTOR LARSON (CONT'D)
 Ryan, I'm sure all this comes as a shock but make sure you also look on the positive side! I mean, your chances of coming out of that coma at all were practically non-existent till today. It's certainly one of the most remarkable things I've seen -- maybe even heard of.

MICHAEL
 I'd say it was a miracle.

Doctor Larson looks over at Michael across the room.

DOCTOR LARSON
 (somewhat uncomfortable)
 Well, uh -- maybe.
 (pause)
 At any rate someone should be stopping in soon to check on how everything is going. Have a good afternoon you two!

Doctor Larson exits the hospital room.

Silence for several seconds.

MICHAEL
 So you've been out since '93 huh?

RYAN
 Seems to be the case. Did I miss anything interesting?

MICHAEL
 Huh. Well, whoever's been in a coma on television always wants to know who the U.S. presidents all were.

RYAN
 Sounds like a good-enough thing to know I suppose.

MICHAEL
 Alright let's see here. So uh, after Bill Clinton's two terms in office it was George Bush in 2000.

RYAN
 Bush became president again?

MICHAEL

Oh, wait no! That was George W. Bush, the son of former-president George Bush. Like John Adams and then John Quincy Adams.

RYAN

OK. Got it.

MICHAEL

After him was Barack Obama, who was our nation's first black-president and the current one is Donald Trump.

Ryan stares at Michael.

RYAN

You know, it's not nice to make fun of the person who's been in a coma.

MICHAEL

No way! It's the honest truth! I'd never pull anything like that on you!

RYAN

(not convinced)

I guess I'll have to take your word for it.

MICHAEL

I mean, think of what needs to happen for us to both wind-up here. To start, my first roommate had to be a nonstop talker -- seriously, blah blah blah, blah blah, blah. I didn't even know there was so much a person could say about goiters. And while I sympathized at some point -- enough is enough you know? It made it impossible to eat my already disgusting hospital-food. Then this place has to be too cheap to allow single-rooms for non-contagious patients but oh yeah, the guy in a coma! Now **that** sounds like the ideal roommate-situation!
(realization)

No offense meant to you of course! Finally I couldn't have anything infectious or there's no way they'd let us pair-together and all this ignores the previously stated astronomical-odds of your own recovery! So I'd be remiss if I didn't use this chance to provide actual-knowledge from my -- somewhat-vast supply and instead went for an insensitive gag with the arguable sophistication of a whoopee-cushion.

RYAN

Well, when you put everything like that I'm sorry I doubted you.

MICHAEL

No worries! You've had a lot to take in today.

Kelly enters the hospital room.

KELLY

Hi guys! What's the story in here?

RYAN

Hey Kelly.
(short pause)
May I ask you something?

KELLY

Sure thing!

RYAN
Who's the president now?

Kelly looks surprised.

INT. HOSPITAL HALL - LATER

The male-orderly pushes Ryan down the hall in a wheelchair.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Kelly enters Ryan and Michael's hospital room with a blood-pressure cuff. Michael is asleep.

Kelly pulls a chair up to Ryan's bedside and sits down.

KELLY
How'd your tests go today?

RYAN
I guess they went alright. Do you know if someone from the hospital has been able to contact my family?

KELLY
Yup! The reception-desk talked to your dad on the phone. He'll be at the rehab-facility a day or so after you get there.
(brief pause)
He probably wants to give you a chance to get settled first.

RYAN
(a bit disappointed)
Oh.
(short pause)
What about my mom?

KELLY
I uh, don't believe they spoke with her.

RYAN
OK.

KELLY
Mind if I take your blood-pressure once more before you drift off?

RYAN

Nope. You'll to have to do most of the heavy lifting though. I still can't move my arms much.

KELLY

No problem! On the scale of bothersome hospital-duties I've had that doesn't even register.

Kelly wraps the blood-pressure cuff around Ryan's arm and pumps it. She examines the numbers.

RYAN

How is it?

KELLY

In the typical range.

Kelly removes the cuff.

RYAN

Thanks, uh nurse --

KELLY

(faux annoyance)

Nurse?! And what makes you think I couldn't be a doctor by chance?!

RYAN

I um, sorry uh, doctor --

Kelly grins.

KELLY

I'm only kidding. I'm not a doctor or a nurse. Just a nursing assistant -- an ordinary orderly really.

RYAN

Alright. So what's up with the guilt-trip then?

KELLY

That's just life in the year twenty-seventeen. Lots of people getting offended over lots of things. I wouldn't feel right if I sent you into the world totally unprepared for that.

(short pause)

Though the aggrieved-doctor shtick seems to have become a running joke with me to the point of auto-pilot and I probably shouldn't have gone there. You've had more than enough to deal with so I apologize.

Ryan smiles.

RYAN

No problem. On the scale of jolts I've recently had that didn't even register.

Kelly grins.

KELLY

Thanks. I'm glad to hear it! Is there anything else I can do before I go?

RYAN

Um, you think you could stick around and talk for a bit? My roommate isn't much of a conversationalist at the moment.

Michael SNORES from across the room on cue.

Kelly CHUCKLES.

KELLY

I mean yeah, that's no problem. But are you sure you don't want to get some sleep? You've got a few more tests scheduled tomorrow.

RYAN

No. I mean, I've been asleep pretty-much the last twenty-four years since getting hit. Actually, I'm sort of afraid to go back. What if I wake-up next at age sixty-five? Or maybe -- never again?

KELLY

Oh no! All of your results so far have been perfectly normal. I wouldn't even concern yourself about that!

RYAN

That's good to know. Thank you.

KELLY

You're very welcome. To be honest I can even relate a little. I mean, it's nothing like what you've experienced and I'm not gonna pretend it is, but I've been thinking a lot about life lately. Seems things were going nice and slow for me till about age -- twenty-three and then suddenly -- blink, near mid-thirties.

(pause)

I'm not totally sure where all the time went. A lot of days around here have sort of blended together.

RYAN

Do you not like being a nurse
(realizes what he's about
to say)
-- ing assistant then?

Kelly smiles.

KELLY

I do actually! Even though I'm taking classes part-time now to become a registered nurse. Funny right?! I definitely feel fulfilled with my job now but I decided I'd like to be able to afford an apartment with no-roommate by the time I'm forty. What is it that you wanted to do, or hope to now?

RYAN

I hadn't really figured that out.

KELLY

There's always college I guess.

RYAN

I don't know. I'd definitely be the old man on campus now.

KELLY

Nah! Lots of people who didn't finish college decide they want to attend later in life! The real problem I've gathered is if you get a degree and it's not in demand or you aren't suited for the field. Then I guess your life can be destroyed.

RYAN

Um -- that's good to know.

KELLY

I mean, I wish I could say I was completely kidding but I've heard a few stories from friends.

(smiles)

So just make sure you major in something useful! Be good at finance or something and you probably shouldn't have too many issues.

RYAN

I'll keep that in mind.

KELLY

Or you can just follow my professional lead and break a pitcher on the floor whenever anything-surprising happens.

RYAN

Is that what that sound was?! I thought I heard something like breaking-glass earlier but I decided it must have been my snap back to reality.

KELLY

Nope, all me! And boy did I hear about it **all day** from the janitor! It's not completely my fault though! Plastic containers are a thing now. I've even filled out a comment card about it! You'd think with all the lawsuits -- that's another thing about 2017, some people sue other people over anything -- but unfortunately foresight in institutional settings can be in short supply.

RYAN

That happened in the '90s too. Someone once sued a restaurant because they said their coffee was too hot.

KELLY

I know exactly what you're talking about! Tho interestingly it came out later that that case may have been more reasonable than most people believed at the time -- but you know, I haven't exactly managed to steer this conversation well. Probably should have gone a more lighthearted route than lawsuits and my approaching middle-age angst. Hmm. If you did want to stay up a little while I could go get a book I brought to work and read you a few pages from that.

RYAN

That would be great. Thanks.

MICHAEL

That would indeed be great.

Kelly LAUGHS.

KELLY

Oops! Sorry Michael.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

A LITTLE GIRL (age 5) opens the hospital-room door. She holds a couple of "WELCOME HOME" balloons.

LITTLE GIRL

Daddy!

Ryan opens his eyes.

MICHAEL

Hi pumpkin! Oh wow, balloons huh?

The girl runs to Michael's bedside and throws her arms around him. She lets the balloons go and they float up a few-feet to the ceiling.

LITTLE GIRL

I missed you!

MICHAEL

I missed you too! Where's your mom?

LITTLE GIRL

Out talking to the doctor.

MICHAEL

Hm. Probably about daddy's new diet no doubt.

LITTLE GIRL

He says you can come home today!

MICHAEL

Wonderful! Would you like to get some ice cream on the way?

LITTLE GIRL

Mommy says you can't have ice cream for a while!

MICHAEL

I know. But Daddy can have an iced tea while you enjoy yours twice as much for me.

LITTLE GIRL

Yay!

Michael motions his daughter to move closer.

The girl leans in and Michael WHISPERS something into her ear. She smiles.

Michael's daughter jumps up, grabs hold of the balloons by their strings and rushes to Ryan's side of the room. She lets loose of them again to give Ryan a big hug and they float to the ceiling by his bedside.

LITTLE GIRL (CONT'D)

(to Ryan)

Feel better soon!

RYAN

Thank you.

The girl leaves the balloons near Ryan and goes back to her father.

MICHAEL

Hey pumpkin, could you go wait with mommy so daddy can get dressed and I'll see you again in a minute?

LITTLE GIRL

OK.

(pause)

I love you Daddy.

MICHAEL

I love you too.

The little girl walks to the hospital-room door.

LITTLE GIRL

Just a minute right?

MICHAEL

Just a minute.

The girl opens the door.

LITTLE GIRL

(to Ryan)

Goodbye, uh -- daddy's friend!

Ryan grins.

RYAN

Bye. It was nice to meet you.

LITTLE GIRL

You too!

The little girl leaves the hospital room.

Michael gets out of bed with a white undershirt and sweatpants on. He grabs a button-up shirt that hangs from a metal hook on the wall and starts to put it on.

MICHAEL

You know what? I had a dream last night where I was chasing a giant cheeseburger around the mall -- it had legs attached and everything!

RYAN

Sounds wild.

MICHAEL

I know right?! I mean, the mall near me closed like four-years ago.

(short pause)

Anyway, the hospital wants me to change up my diet when I get home and start with an exercise routine in a couple months when I'm fully-recovered from surgery. I thought I was going to have a real hard-time with the whole thing, but just now I realized I'm not going to have any problems at all. I'll do three hundred push-ups a day and eat nothing but celery and multi-vitamins if that's what it takes to be with my family another forty-years.

RYAN

I understand.

Michael has gotten his shirt buttoned. He slips his feet into a pair of flip-flops on the floor.

MICHAEL

What do you think? Can I start a new fashion-trend?

Ryan grins.

RYAN

Probably not.

MICHAEL

Yeah, I suppose you're right.

Michael walks to the hospital-room door. He stops and turns to Ryan.

MICHAEL (CONT'D)

You know, you've been a great roommate. Better even than no roommate! Good luck with your physical-therapy and I hope your next forty-years are great too.

RYAN

Thank you.

MICHAEL

God bless.

RYAN

You too.

Michael leaves the hospital room.

A tear rolls down Ryan's cheek.

INT. REHABILITATION CENTER - SWIMMING ROOM - LATER

Ryan wades through an indoor swimming-pool. He's observed by a REHABILITATION SWIM-INSTRUCTOR.

INT. REHABILITATION CENTER - CARDIO ROOM - LATER

Ryan walks on a treadmill while he swings both arms back-and-forth. There's several wires connected from the treadmill to Ryan's body that record his vitals.

INT. REHABILITATION CENTER - BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan enters an on-site bedroom utilized by the live-in patients of the rehabilitation center. He pockets the electronic key-card used to gain entry.

Ryan notices a gift-wrapped package with card that's on the night-table near his bed.

RYAN

(to himself)

Oh wow! What's this?

Ryan picks up the package then sits on the bed with it.

He opens the card and reads the inscription aloud.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Dear Ryan, Merry Christmas and
congrats for all your quick
progress and hard work -- from your
friends at Meadow-wood
Rehabilitation Center.

Ryan sets the package back down on the night-table, disappointed.

Ryan stares into space a few seconds, then SIGHS, grabs the package again and starts to UNWRAP it.

INT. REHABILITATION CENTER - WEIGHTS ROOM - LATER

Ryan lays on a weight-bench and lifts the bench-bar, which is difficult even without weights attached. A WEIGHTS-INSTRUCTOR stands over him in case of mishap.

WEIGHTS-INSTRUCTOR
 Good job Ryan! Only five-more reps
 left!

INT. REHABILITATION CENTER - BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan sits on the bed, fully-clothed. He's got two suitcases packed and ready on the floor.

KNOCKS on the door. Ryan gets up, opens it and RYAN'S FATHER/DAN (late 60's) enters, who's an inch or two shorter than Ryan.

RYAN'S FATHER/DAN
 Hey.

RYAN
 Hey Dad.

DAN
 Ready to go?

RYAN
 Yeah.

DAN
 Then grab your stuff and let's get
 outta here.

RYAN
 OK.

Ryan picks up his suitcases.

INT. DAN'S CAR - LATER

Dan drives Ryan home in his mid 2000's-era vehicle. The traffic starts and stalls on a Los-Angeles highway.

All's silent in the car.

DAN
 You aren't upset I didn't help
 carry your bags are you?

RYAN

No.

DAN

Alright. I figured it would give you a chance to work your muscles out a little.

RYAN

I'm pretty much a hundred-percent now as far as that goes.

DAN

That's good to know. I guess I'm also just getting to be an old man these days.

RYAN

We've got that in common then.

(pause)

Do you still fix cars?

DAN

Um, I tinker on this car whenever it needs something but I closed the shop two years ago and pretty much retired as a mechanic. Arthritis was starting to creep in and the newer car-models all have internal computer-systems I don't even want to learn how to deal with.

(pause)

You should like the new house in LA I think. It'll probably seem familiar even though you've never been there.

RYAN

Why's that?

DAN

Well, your mother had a lot of input in the process. It was her idea for us to move after your accident so we'd be closer to the hospital, but we still ended up a half-hour out since the closer-places weren't in our budget. I mean, the facility you were at is real first-rate. I read in a magazine once that it's one of the top three medical-centers in the whole country. I'm sure that adds thirty-k to the home values within a couple miles by itself.

RYAN

You may have missed your calling as a real-estate broker.

DAN

Maybe. Tho all I was getting at is we were lucky to get you in there since we couldn't have managed it under normal circumstances. But the hospital wanted to do some long-term studies with coma patients so they offered to take you on for free. I think that means we're required to schedule a few follow-up appointments down-the-road though.

RYAN

Alright.

The traffic stalls again. Dan SIGHS.

DAN

Of course most of the commute-time around here doesn't actually involve driving.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan and his father enter Ryan's bedroom. Each carries a suitcase.

There are a few laminated-posters on the walls, including one ocean/beach scene and several others that feature musical acts such as U2, Lenny Kravitz and the Carpenters. There's also a framed-photograph taken in the early 1990's of a teen-aged Ryan with RYAN'S MOTHER (early 40's) and father (then mid 40's) and a second photo of Ryan with just his mother.

On a desk is a thin layer of dust, dictionary, several novels written prior to 1993 such as the *Lord of the Rings* series and seven different school-yearbooks (three middle-school yearbooks from 1988-1990 and four from "ARROYO GRANDE HIGH SCHOOL" 1991-1994) in a stack.

Ryan's father puts the suitcase on the bed. Ryan sets his on the floor.

DAN

I'll let you get unpacked. I'm sure you'll need some more clothes but we can go out tomorrow and get those -- probably a GED study-book too. I mean, I'm not sure exactly what it is you want to do with your life now but getting a GED seems like an obvious step number-one to me. I doubt it'd take you more than a couple weeks to study for the test and pass it.

RYAN

Sounds good.
(glances around)
This looks almost exactly like my old room.

DAN

Yeah. Your mother wanted to keep things in here mostly the same as how you had yours. She even got all the posters laminated so they'd be in tact for whenever you -- uh, got home. Um, I'll be back to let you know when dinner's ready.

RYAN

OK. Thanks.

Ryan's father leaves the room and shuts the door before he can become too emotional in front of his son.

Ryan opens his desk-drawer and looks inside. He smiles.

RYAN (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Yup, even my extra-pair's still
 here!

Ryan takes an eyeglasses-case out of the drawer. He removes a pair of glasses and puts them on.

RYAN (CONT'D)
 Now there's that good ole twenty-
 twenty.

Ryan looks around the room again. He walks to the framed picture of himself with his mother and examines it.

His smile disappears.

He takes the photo off the wall and sits down in his desk-chair with it. Ryan runs his hand over the image of his mother and tears well in his eyes.

Ryan SNIFFLES. He sets the photo on the desk, removes his glasses and wipes his eyes with a hand. Ryan then removes a packet of Kleenex from the desk-drawer and UNWRAPS that.

EXT. DAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Dan and Ryan get into Dan's car in the driveway.

INT. DAN'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Dan drives the car down his street while Ryan looks out the passenger window. No one else is out and about.

RYAN
 Are there any kids in this
 neighborhood?

DAN
 A few I think. Why?

RYAN
 Just that nobody's outside. Isn't
 today Saturday?

DAN
 Yeah. They're probably all indoors
 glued to the internet.

RYAN
 Internet? What's that?

DAN
Trust me, you're better off not
knowing.

EXT. DMV BUILDING - LATER

Ryan enters the local Department of Motor Vehicles building.

INT. DMV BUILDING - DAY

The DMV is packed with WAITING PEOPLE. Ryan picks up a
"DRIVER'S LICENSE HANDBOOK" from a table.

EXT. SHOPPING MALL PARKING-LOT - LATER

Dan's car pulls into a mall parking-lot. More than three-
quarters of the spaces are empty.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan and his father are at the "YOU ARE HERE" map/sign near
the entrance. Only a couple other MALL SHOPPERS walk around.

DAN
Do you have the money I gave you?

RYAN
Yeah.

DAN
OK. Go find the book and whatever
else it is you wanted. All the
stores are on this map but I think
the bookshop's somewhere near the
back.

RYAN
Sounds good.

DAN
I assumed you didn't want to be
clothes-shopping with your dad.

No answer from Ryan.

DAN (CONT'D)

So, uh, I'll be checking out tools at the department store before all department stores close forever. Let's plan to meet here again in ninety minutes.

RYAN

Alright. See you then.

Dan wanders into the mall.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - BOOKSTORE - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan pulls a GED study-book off a shelf in the bookstore's "EDUCATION" section and examines the cover.

MOMENTS LATER

Ryan at the check-out counter. A BOOK-STORE CASHIER (male, 40's) glances at the GED book as he rings it up.

BOOK-STORE CASHIER

You've got my sympathies. My kid's a screw-up too.

Ryan frowns.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - LATER

Ryan leaves a clothing store with a large shopping-bag of clothes. He stops and looks at his watch.

He glances up again and notices a music shop across the way.

INT. SHOPPING MALL - MUSIC STORE - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan flips through a stack of CDs. There's only three other MUSIC-CUSTOMERS in the whole store. He grabs a U2 album recorded after the year 2000.

RYAN

(to himself)

Here's a new one.

MOMENTS LATER

The MUSIC-STORE CASHIER rings-up Ryan's U2 selection at the counter.

Ryan looks around.

RYAN
Um. Where is everybody?

MUSIC-STORE CASHIER
That's a good question.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan sits on the bed and listens to his new album on a portable CD-player while he pages through the DMV handbook.

He bobs his head to the MUSIC (either heard or not on-screen). After a bit he turns the player off and removes his headphones.

RYAN
(to himself)
Well at least Bono's still got it.

Ryan gets up and sets the DMV booklet on the desk. He looks at the stack of yearbooks and grabs the 1994 "ARROYO GRANDE HIGH SCHOOL" edition from the top. He brushes dust off the book's cover.

RYAN (CONT'D)
'94 eh?

Ryan sits on his bed again and opens the yearbook. He flips past the first couple pages and arrives at one with his own photograph (age 17) taken for the '94 school-year that's been blown up to cover almost the whole space. Under the photo a caption reads "RYAN MARSHALL: THE ENTIRE CLASS OF ARROYO GRANDE HIGH-SCHOOL HOPES YOU COME BACK TO US VERY SOON!"

Ryan wipes his eyes.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Oh wow...

INT. DAN'S KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan grabs a phone-book from a stack of "YELLOW PAGES" on a counter and a cordless phone from the wall.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan's on the bed with the phone to his ear. The phone-book lays open beside him.

RYAN

(into phone)

Hey Patrick. This is Ryan Marshall from high school and I'm uh, up as of recent. I called the house you lived in back then but I guess none of your family's there anymore. So I phoned your -- um, uncle and he told me this was your number.

(short pause)

Anyway, if you could give me a call at -- uh, you know what -- I didn't get the phone number for this new house just yet so I'll call back again in a minute and leave that so you can reach me.

Ryan hangs up. Within seconds the phone RINGS in his hand and startles him enough to nearly drop it. He keeps hold though and answers.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Marshall residence. Ryan speaking.

(short pause)

Oh hi Patrick! How did you get the number?

(short pause)

Wow! You must be doing pretty well these days to have Caller ID!

(pause, confused)

Wait, hold up. What?

(pause)

Like a letter mailed through the phone? Strange.

(pause)

I mean, I woke up and that's basically the story -- but yeah, I was shocked too. I just left the rehab place a week ago or so.

(pause)

Sounds great man! Um, let me go get the address.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dan watches TELEVISION on his couch till his front-doorbell RINGS. He gets up and answers to find Patrick (now age 42, decent shape) on the porch.

PATRICK

Hey Mr. Marshall!

DAN
Ugh. Call me Dan please. Mr.
Marshall sounds so weird now.

PATRICK
Sure thing Dan!

DAN
Come on inside.

Patrick steps indoors.

DAN (CONT'D)
Ryan will be glad you came by. He's
in his room studying now I think.

RYAN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan reads his GED book at the desk. He wears eyeglasses.

KNOCKS at his door. Ryan stands up and opens it to find
Patrick.

PATRICK
Hey bro! Long time no see huh?!

RYAN
Hey Patrick! No kidding right?!

Ryan and Patrick hug. Patrick enters the bedroom and looks
around.

PATRICK
Wow! New location, but the setup
hasn't changed too much!

RYAN
(embarrassed)
Yeah. I guess so.

Patrick points out the GED book on Ryan's desk.

PATRICK
What sort of study-session did I
interrupt this time?

RYAN
Oh. I have the GED test scheduled
and I've been prepping a little for
that.

PATRICK

Huh! To be honest that's not the kind of thing I figured a guy like you would need to even study for.

RYAN

Well, after going through the book I'm not so sure I needed to either.

Patrick grins.

PATRICK

Mind if I sit down?

RYAN

Not at all.

Patrick plops down in the desk chair. Ryan sits on his bed.

PATRICK

Was I ever floored when I got your voicemail! Just blown away! First I'd heard of you being awake. You'd think something like that would have been **all over** the news or whatever.

RYAN

It may have been on local news. I got a call from a reporter who wanted to do an interview but I wasn't really down for it.

PATRICK

I hear ya man! I'm sure it takes a while to wrap your head around something like -- all that.

Ryan half-smiles.

RYAN

Honestly, I don't think I've got my head wrapped around it yet.

PATRICK

That's understandable. I'm not sure how I'd be handling things if it were me.

A pause.

RYAN

So -- what have you been up to the last twenty-five years?

PATRICK

Oh boy! Life story time! Hum. After high-school I tried out for the '96 Olympic wrestling-team in Atlanta - - didn't make it though. There were just more hopefuls than available slots, not a big deal. Then studied accounting for a year and change at university till I couldn't handle being completely miserable anymore and dropped out.

RYAN

You didn't like accounting?

PATRICK

Not in the slightest. Why do you ask?

RYAN

I was told by someone recently that finance was the field to be in these days.

PATRICK

Well, not in my own limited personal-experience.

(short pause)

So, I went to trade school, became a plumber and married Jessica Lee - - tho she's Jessica Cranston now naturally -- and ended up buying a pretty decent place, still around ole Pismo Beach!

RYAN

Wait, you married Jessica Lee?! High-school Jessica Lee?!

PATRICK

Yup! You're gonna have to find a new lady to woo now I suppose. But in my defense I did try to get you two together at one point if memory serves -- however in retrospect I'm not sure she'd have appreciated me passing her phone number to other random guys, so you may have done me a favor by not taking that.

RYAN

Probably. But she never would have been interested in a guy like me anyway.

PATRICK

I'm not so sure about that! One of the two big things I've learned post-teenager is that most people spend **at least** as much time worrying about what everyone else thinks as they do evaluating each other. I mean, lots of worries I had about myself back then I doubt anyone even noticed.

(pause)

And if it makes you feel better Jessica isn't completely perfect. In fact she wanted to drag me out today to look for a new couch. You kind of saved my bacon there! Hard to argue with the *visit my best friend from high school who was in a coma* card. Heh.

RYAN

I -- was your best friend in high school?

PATRICK

Of course man.

Ryan is touched but also a little bit uncomfortable. There's a brief silence before he attempts to change the subject.

RYAN

So um, you aren't into shopping much then?

PATRICK

Ugh. Not in the way my wife goes about it at least. Which is to spend a whole day at six-different stores looking for whatever and asking my opinion on whatever a dozen times only to ignore all my input and getting something-random anyway.

(pause)

Now I realize there are worse flaws in human behavior, a few of which I might even exhibit myself on rare occasions, but it would still be **so** much easier if Jess could go out and get whatever she wanted shipped over, or even just order it off the internet! That way I could watch baseball and still say things like *uh huh* and *sounds good* -- but it seems really important to her for us both to browse showrooms for whatever reason she has I don't understand.

RYAN

Then I take it people must still evaluate each others' faults to some degree if you've managed to pick up on this.

PATRICK

Well uh sure, you'll notice some things. I mean, hours spent looking at sectional-sofas really gives you time to digest the fact you're looking at sectional-sofas.

(pause for thought)

Or maybe it's teenagers who can place extra-emphasis on what others think while adults might judge too much if they're not careful. I may need to rework my whole theory -- and perhaps find a way to get a bunch of high-school students on my home-owner-associations' board-of-directors!

(short pause)

What's your take on it?

RYAN

I don't know, but I may be missing some important years for context. For now though, what exactly is this internet thing I keep hearing about?

PATRICK

Yeah sorry that was dumb I wasn't thinking of -- wait, what?! You don't know about the internet?!

Ryan shakes his head.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Wow! Actually, looking back I may not have heard of the net in '93 either. Um, just forget I mentioned it. The internet is maybe five-percent useful and ninety-five a huge waste of time. If the whole thing got shut down tomorrow I figure your average person would get the jitters for a week but wind up better off.

RYAN

OK, well aside from the technology that must not be explained what exactly **is** new and impressive these days? Can't say I've exactly been blown away with what I've seen so far.

PATRICK

Yeah, the flying cars got held up in committee again.

RYAN

No Mars landing either, I would have settled for that.

PATRICK

Hmm. Let me think -- oh! You don't have to wear glasses anymore!

RYAN

You mean contact lenses? They had those back then too. I'm just not wild about inserting anything.

PATRICK

No man, Lasik! Permanently corrected vision by lasers shot into your eyes! A friend of mine had it and now he lives a lens-less lifestyle.

RYAN

Sounds like he's twisting his tongue too.

PATRICK

Cute, Ryan.

Ryan smiles.

RYAN

Thanks. But seriously, does that hurt? *Lasers shot into your eyes* kinda sounds painful.

PATRICK

Um, I'm not totally positive on that.

RYAN

What?! Why suggest lasers in my eyes then if you don't know whether or not it hurts?!

PATRICK

I mean, I'm sure it's fine. Millions of people have had it done and word probably would have gotten around if doctors were roasting their eyeballs.

(thinks)

Oh, phones have definitely advanced also! Now a parent can reach their children anywhere, except the dinner table where they'll use that same phone to ignore you -- speaking of, I've got kids now too! I guess that pretty much concludes my biography so far, or autobiography -- whichever of those is the one by me.

RYAN

Autobiography. Nice tho! How's fatherhood going?

PATRICK

Can't complain. I have a sixteen year-old boy and a thirteen year-old girl. The girl is wonderful and the boy is a lot like me -- tho he's wonderful too aside from that.

Ryan LAUGHS. Patrick smiles.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

So is there anything else I can regale you with?

RYAN

Sure. What is the second thing you learned?

PATRICK

What?

RYAN

You said there were two big things you learned since high school. I assume there's another then?

PATRICK

Oh right! Heartburn!

RYAN

Heartburn?

PATRICK

Absolutely! Now get this, I knew heartburn was a thing right? I mean, there's commercials on TV for it all the time and everything. But I didn't **really** know what heartburn was till I started getting it post-thirty. The first time it happened I thought there might be something seriously wrong until I remembered *oh yeah, heartburn exists*. Just give yourself at least two hours after eating a meatball-sub before laying down, that's all I'll say.

RYAN

I'll keep that in mind.

PATRICK

So what are your plans post medical-miracle?

RYAN

I don't know. Pass the GED,
probably look for a job -- maybe
try surfing again. You still surf?

PATRICK

No. Not since my stint at college
anyway.

RYAN

Any particular reason?

PATRICK

Not really. Took a little break
that turned into a forever break I
guess. Also, I play a round of golf
every once in a blue-moon and
there's only room for one black-
hole-of-time sport in my life now.

RYAN

Hmm.

INT. DMV BUILDING - LATER

The DMV is packed again with WAITING PEOPLE. Ryan and his
father stand at the "TAKE A NUMBER" ticket-dispenser.

RYAN

It feels like I just took all these
tests. Doesn't really seem fair.

DAN

I understand, but not renewing a
driver's license for two-decades
probably seems delayed even to the
government.

Ryan presses a button on the dispensing machine and it SPITS
out a ticket. He examines it.

RYAN

Number four-hundred thirty eight.

(pause)

You think I can drive the car home
if I pass the written?

DAN

You didn't even drive much before
the accident. I'd like you to
practice in a parking lot or
something before putting my car at
any serious risk.

RYAN

It's probably one of those things
you don't forget. Like riding a
bike.

DAN

I'll need to see a peer reviewed
medical-study stating that first.

A VOICE sounds over the DMV speaker-system.

VOICE

Now serving number one-hundred
fifty two.

Ryan looks at his ticket again.

RYAN

They can't be going in sequential
order right?!

Ryan's father grimaces.

EXT. THRIFT STORE - LATER

Ryan, his father and a STORE EMPLOYEE leave a thrift store
with the components of a 1990's-era computer between them.
Dan carries the computer tower, the employee's got a giant
printer and Ryan has the monitor with a box full of computer
peripherals (keyboard, mouse, wires, etc) balanced on top.

On the way to Dan's car the peripheral-box slips off and hits
the ground, but none of the items inside get damaged.

RYAN

(annoyed)

Ah!

Ryan sets the monitor down to pick up the box.

INT. RYAN'S ROOM - LATER

The computer's set up on Ryan's desk. Ryan looks over a
printed resume that's also open as a word document on-screen.
In the "EDUCATION" section both "ARROYO GRANDE HIGH SCHOOL
(1990-1993)" and "GENERAL EDUCATIONAL DEVELOPMENT DIPLOMA
(2018)" are listed. The "EMPLOYMENT EXPERIENCE" section has
"LABOR ASSISTANT - MAYFIELD LANDSCAPING (1993)".

Ryan's completely underwhelmed with the final product.

RYAN
(frustrated)

Ah!

Ryan pounds out "IN A COMA!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! (1993-2017)" at the top of the computer word-document. Then he SIGHS and deletes it.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ryan and his father talk. Ryan wears a plain colored t-shirt and jeans.

RYAN
So how does one apply for a job in this day and age?

DAN
I'm not quite sure. It's been a long time since I've had to look for one. I know the newspaper doesn't have a help-wanted section anymore though. Might be hard to fit one in since they shrank the paper I still pay for down to about six-pages. I could probably drive you into town so you can ask around at stores.

RYAN
Or -- I could walk into town and ask around.

DAN
I'd rather you didn't do that.

RYAN
A grown adult applying for jobs with his father probably won't impress many hiring-managers.

DAN
I'm sure it's not the first time some of them have seen that recently -- however I'd be more than happy to wait for you in the car.

Ryan and his father are both getting annoyed.

RYAN
I'd still rather --

DAN

Forget about it! Also, you're not gonna be hired for any job if you go into an interview dressed like that!

RYAN

I wasn't planning on wearing this!

DAN

Come with me a minute.

INT. DAN'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan's father is in his bedroom. The bedroom and closet-door are both open.

Ryan enters the bedroom. He now wears a faded, navy-blue suit that looks from the 1970's. The suit runs an inch too long in arm and coat length.

The atmosphere is less tense now.

RYAN

You can tell me the truth. This suit never once fit you did it?

DAN

A father's suit always runs large on his son.

RYAN

I'm taller than you are.

DAN

What does that matter?

RYAN

I just don't think I believe in relative measurements is all.

Ryan's father shrugs.

EXT. BANK - LATER

Ryan wears his father's suit with the cuffs folded. He carries a folder with his resume and looks beat.

Ryan enters the bank.

INT. BANK - DAY

Ryan approaches a BANK TELLER (mid 20's).

RYAN

Hi. I was curious if your bank is hiring.

BANK TELLER

Have you applied already?

RYAN

No.

BANK TELLER

Uh, I don't think we see walk-ins usually.

RYAN

(dejected)

Alright.

Ryan turns to go.

BANK TELLER

Hey, wait! Let me go ask the bank-manager. I know he was looking for an assistant earlier.

RYAN

(grateful)

Thank you.

The teller smiles.

BANK TELLER

No problem. But also, no promises. Feel free to sit a minute.

The teller goes into a back-room to find the manager.

INT. BANK - MANAGER'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan sits across a desk from the BANK MANAGER (male), who looks over his resume. There's a coffee-mug full of pens near Ryan.

BANK MANAGER

Your resume is -- um, sparse.

RYAN

It's because I've been in a coma since high-school.

The bank manager SCOFFS.

BANK MANAGER

Alright, look. I'm a busy guy and don't much appreciate practical-jokes! If this is for some kind of -- mid-life-crisis *YouTube* show I'll have you know you're not allowed to film inside this business and I **do not** consent to having my likeness posted anywhere!

RYAN

I've got no idea what you're talking about, but I'm completely serious.

BANK MANAGER

Oh I'm sure you -- wait a sec... I do remember something like that a while-back now on the news.

RYAN

So it did make the news huh? I guess that's my fifteen minutes of fame.

BANK MANAGER

Oh wow! That was you huh?! Well -- uh, my apologies I guess.

RYAN

Not a problem.

The manager glances at Ryan's resume again.

BANK MANAGER

Unfortunately there's still not really a way I could consider you for the open position. Our assistant-managers are required to have some sort of business-degree and at least three years of retail-banking experience.

RYAN

(dejected again)

Oh.

BANK MANAGER

Have you considered enrolling at a university?

RYAN

I sort of hoped to start with the real-life thing before getting those birthday-candles that look like gravestones.

The manager smirks, but then straightens-up.

BANK MANAGER

Uh-hum. Well you're probably a ways out from that still. I only mention it because even most of our tellers are college-graduates.

RYAN

Wait, what?! Why's that?!

BANK MANAGER

It's just the current industry employment-market.

RYAN

Ugh!

BANK MANAGER

Look, I'll hang onto your resume for a while on the chance something-suitable opens.

RYAN

I guess that's something.

Ryan *slowly* gets out of the chair.

RYAN (CONT'D)

You'll notice how careful I was when standing. I'd hate to have knocked over your cup of pens here since I'm not sure I'd be qualified to pick them up.

BANK MANAGER

Uh, thank you?

INT. DAN'S BATHROOM - LATER

Ryan's back in normal clothes.

Ryan turns on the bathroom faucet and WASHES his hands at the sink.

Ryan looks up into the bathroom-mirror for a moment. He runs a hand over his face and notices the different feel of his skin.

He drops his arm and continues to stare at his reflection for several seconds.

Ryan punches the mirror with his left-hand and the glass SHATTERS. Blood pours from his knuckles down onto the floor-tile.

Ryan SCREAMS and covers his injury. He WINCES.

RYAN

Oh wow! That was dumb!

INT. HOSPITAL OBSERVATION-ROOM - LATER

Ryan sits on an examination table while Doctor Larson examines his hand, which has already been stitched-up by hospital staff.

DOCTOR LARSON

Everything looks alright with the stitches but you're probably going to have several permanent scar-lines after they come out.

RYAN

OK.

DOCTOR LARSON

So, what happened?

RYAN

I cut my hand on a mirror.

DOCTOR LARSON

Uh-huh, but how did you cut your hand on a mirror exactly?

RYAN

It's not going to happen again.

DOCTOR LARSON

Well that's good to know. Um, I'm going to recommend you stay on hospital grounds for forty-eight hours. I'd like for you to talk to someone on our psychological staff.

RYAN

That won't be necessary.

DOCTOR LARSON

Perhaps not, but we also need to do a follow-up test regarding your coma -- so might as well get that out of the way since you're here already.

RYAN

Then I guess it's fine.

DOCTOR LARSON

Great! I'll have someone set a room up for you.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Ryan lays in a hospital bed. His HOSPITAL ROOMMATE is asleep.

Kelly enters the room with a book in hand.

KELLY

Hi Ryan! I heard you were around!
(concerned)
How's uh, things?

Ryan glances around the room.

RYAN

Familiar.

KELLY

Unfortunately I can't stay long. I'm scheduled in a different-wing tonight and then I'm off the next two days, but I brought that book I was reading last time on the chance you get bored.

RYAN

Oh? Thanks much.

Kelly smiles.

KELLY

No problem. Make sure you at least check out the ending! I think it's a revised-edition!

RYAN

(a little-confused)
Um, sure thing.

Kelly hands Ryan the book.

KELLY

OK, I gotta get going. The hospital is a stickler on its regulations. I mean, you've heard of HIPPA right?

RYAN

Yeah.

KELLY

They may seem benign, but they're actually some of the fiercest creatures in all nature!

Ryan smirks.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Alright, well, later Ryan!

RYAN

Bye Kelly. Thanks again.

KELLY

No problem!

Kelly leaves the room.

Ryan opens the book. He spends a few seconds on the first page, then quickly flips-back to the end.

On the last-page a message written in pen reads "RYAN, CALL ME IF YOU'D EVER LIKE TO TALK! (310) 555-0187. - ALMOST A NURSE, KELLY MYLAR".

Ryan smiles.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ryan pins up dark colored bed-sheets across his window that block out most of the natural light.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ryan watches a GAME SHOW on television.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Ryan eats dinner alone at his desk.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ryan watches the AFTERNOON NEWS on TV while sprawled out on the couch. He YAWNS.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan sits on the bed with his legs extended and reads a book on stock-market investing. There's an open spiral-notebook he uses to jot notes-down.

A KNOCK at the bedroom-door.

RYAN

Come in.

Ryan's father enters.

DAN

Hey Ryan.

RYAN

Sup Dad?

DAN

Can we talk a minute?

RYAN

Sure.

Ryan sets the book down.

DAN

Um, so how's your hand doing?

Ryan examines the knuckle of his left-hand. The stitches have been removed and it's almost-completely healed aside from several long, permanent scars.

RYAN

Seems to be coming-along alright.

DAN

I ask mostly because you had the stitches taken-out a couple weeks back and the doctor said you should be pretty-much good to go by now.

RYAN

There's still fourteen-days left on his timeline.

DAN

Yeah, but that was worst-case scenario and even that only involved avoiding intense physical-activity.

RYAN

What's your point exactly?

DAN

My point is -- I think it's time for you to look into getting back on the horse.

RYAN

My hand is --

DAN

I don't mean you should start a professional-boxing career. Only that it'd be good to stop moping-around and get on something productive.

Ryan holds up the investment-book.

RYAN

This doesn't look productive to you?

DAN

While I appreciate your interest in the subject, don't you think that investing is putting the cart a-ways-out before the horse?

A pause.

RYAN

I can see why you bought this book. You've certainly cornered the market on horse metaphors.

DAN

Oh, knock it off! I'm just saying that to open an investment-account you're gonna want a job and a couple-thousand dollars to put down, but since you lack both those things right now you might want to put your focus on that-track first instead.

RYAN

And what track would you suggest then?! A job in food-service till robots take those over? Get a college-loan to be at the bottom-rung of some career when I'm fifty?! Try to learn a trade I'll have no talent for? Start a company with no money and no credit? Work in the family business that no longer exists?!

DAN

Hey, you never expressed **any** interest in fixing cars that I remember! Even though I did try to get you involved a couple times! So go ahead and rage at the world if that makes you feel better but don't try and dump the blame for this whole situation on me! You're not the only one who's suffered here!

RYAN

Oh that's just rich! I miss more than half the years I've been alive, then when I wake up my mother is dead, I've got next-to-no job prospects and my own father acts like he can't be bothered to care at all! I mean, thanks for stopping by my rehab a few times and driving me to some appointments I guess, but aside from that we might as well be roommates who met through the classifieds!

A pause. Ryan's father SIGHS.

DAN

You know, right after your accident the doctors approached your mom and I. They said with your particular injury there was basically no-chance you'd ever recover but they wanted to keep you on life-support to study long-term coma. All the associated medical-expenses would be covered by the hospital -- I mean, we never could have afforded it otherwise, but even with that off-the-table I still thought about declining their offer.

RYAN

I can't believe you'd even stoop so low to say --

DAN

Please, just let me finish. I wondered, what kind of life would that be for you? Connected to a bunch of wires and tubes while slowly rotting-away in a hospital-bed surrounded by so much disease and tragedy. But your mother was adamant we go through with it. She said she was certain you'd regain-consciousness at some point and from then on she was at your bedside without fail every Sunday after church. I went a few times also but it was just too difficult most-days for me.

(pause)

You know the teenagers in the car that hit you -- who were drunk as skunks apparently, drove about a quarter-mile down the road till they plowed into a telephone pole and both died on impact? So aside from bringing attention to the accident-scene the whole thing was just a waste from top to bottom. What does a person even do with all that?

(A pause, Dan's eyes well-up with tears)

After your mother got her cancer-diagnosis she spent some time in your hospital and when I'd visit she'd always remind me to check-in on you before I left. I mean, I'd have done that regardless but she just wanted to make sure. Then she passes away, and twelve years later you do come back and -- it doesn't seem fair to me is all. Your mother kept you alive, she kept you company and even --

(motions around the room)

kept up your bedroom. I only wish I'd have been the one to die so she could have seen you again.

Tears stream down Ryan's face. He hugs his dad.

RYAN
I'm sorry for the way I've been
acting.

DAN
I apologize too.

LATER

Ryan takes down the bed-sheet window curtains and tosses them
on his bed.

Ryan goes to his desk and picks up the book Kelly gave him.
He flips through the pages again.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - LATER

Ryan approaches his father in the living room.

RYAN
You ready to ride-shotgun while I
barrel us down the highway at
exactly the speed-limit?

Ryan's father hesitates.

DAN
You know, when I said to get into
something productive I didn't
necessarily mean that --

RYAN
I set up lunch with a girl I know
and I'd like to pass my driving-
test so I can actually get to the
restaurant.

DAN
(excited)
What?! Why aren't you in the car
already?! Let's get a move on!

EXT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - LATER

Ryan drives his father's car by himself into a restaurant
parking-lot.

INT. MEXICAN RESTAURANT - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan sits at a restaurant-booth with Kelly. Both wear casual-clothes and menus are within reach.

KELLY

So how's everything been?

RYAN

Pretty good I guess. I passed the test for my driver's license yesterday -- again.

KELLY

Oh nice! Congratulations!

RYAN

Yeah, just in time to put half my life-savings in the gas tank -- or what would have been half if my dad hadn't covered it.

KELLY

Well, that was nice of him at least.

RYAN

Yeah, but I have a feeling that even on empty he would have gotten behind the car and pushed it here.

KELLY

(confused)

Really? Why's that?

RYAN

Um, he's just a character I guess.
(changes the subject)
But seriously, what's with the price of gas now?

KELLY

Oh, gas prices! No kidding right?! We've been on that roller-coaster so long I guess that isn't always my first-thought. I figured you were upset about the state of your actual save... uh, never-mind. But yeah, gas is super-expensive now for sure! Tho you did manage to miss the bigger price-spike about ten-years ago.

RYAN

What?! How much did it cost then?!

KELLY

Over five-dollars a gallon here at one-point I think.

RYAN

Wow! I remember in high school when my friend Patrick and I would fill-up his jeep and spend a whole-Saturday driving-around local towns.

KELLY

That'd be a fairly pricey-hobby these days.

RYAN

Why does it cost so much? It can't just be inflation.

KELLY

Huh! I actually don't know.

(pause)

I guess I could look it up on my phone.

RYAN

Look up -- what on your phone?

KELLY

Uh, *gas-price history* you think?

RYAN

Look that up -- on your phone?

KELLY

Yeah. Don't they have Wi-Fi here?

RYAN

I don't understand what you're saying and suspect Wi-Fi can't even be a real word.

KELLY

Oh yeah, that's right! I'm sorry! Wi-Fi is something used to connect to the internet.

RYAN

OK, this is the **third** time I've heard tale of this -- internet, and I'm afraid it's fallen on you to completely explain it.

(short pause)

I will not be dissuaded.

KELLY

You haven't been on the internet yet?!

RYAN

Nope.

KELLY

Doesn't your dad have it at his place?

RYAN

No. He doesn't come off as the internet's number-one fan.

KELLY

Wow! But I guess I can understand that. Sometimes I think I can be too big of a fan.

Kelly opens her purse and takes out a cell phone. She pauses.

KELLY (CONT'D)

You know, this probably isn't the best device for a maiden world-wide-web voyage. I mean, teenagers watch everything on a three-inch screen these days but I can't fully-grasp that whole concept.

(pause)

If you wanted you could follow me to my apartment after lunch and I'll break out my trusty laptop -- computer. I've got a couple free-hours before I need to get ready for hospital late-shift.

RYAN

Sounds good to me!

KELLY

Alright! Now, let's try to get a waiter's attention. I didn't have any breakfast this morning and plan to inhale a tostada the size of a plate!

EXT. KELLY'S APARTMENT - LATER

A two-bedroom apartment on the building's ground-floor.

INT. KELLY'S APARTMENT - DAY

Kelly finishes setting her laptop up on a desk in the living-room.

KELLY
OK then. The ship's all yours!

Ryan sits in the desk-chair. Kelly stands to one side and reaches over him to operate the laptop. She clicks on the computer's internet-browser and opens up a generic, minimalist search-page.

KELLY (CONT'D)
May I present -- the internet!
(short pause)
Ta-dah!

RYAN
(not impressed)
Wow. It's -- uh, fantastic?

KELLY
(good-natured)
Hold on there guy! Just give me a second here!

MOMENTS LATER

Ryan and Kelly SING ALONG to the final-seconds of a U2 VIDEO playing on the computer.

KELLY
So what do you think?

RYAN
Mark me down as impressed!

KELLY
You wanna watch another? Grunge was popular back when you were in school wasn't it?

RYAN
Yeah, it was -- but no thanks.

KELLY
Not a grunge-fan?

RYAN

Just because something was popular
in high-school doesn't mean I have
to like it later right?

KELLY

I suppose not.

RYAN

Can we chat a few minutes instead?
I may have hit my new-tech exposure
limit for one day.

KELLY

I'm not sure how I'd explain that
to my mid-twenties roommate, but
sure! The couch is wide open.

Ryan and Kelly move to the couch and sit down.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Now if the front-door opens just
pretend you're starring at a phone!

RYAN

Um, alright?

KELLY

I'm totally kidding! It's actually
too bad my roommate had to work
today cause she was quite-
interested in your whole-situation.

RYAN

How would she know about my
situation? I thought you were
serious about those hippos and
health-care regulations.

KELLY

Of course I am! I didn't mention
anything that hadn't already been
aired on television.

RYAN

Oh. Well I guess we're good then.
(pause)
How're your nursing-school classes
going?

KELLY

Going really-well actually! We're doing medication-administration right now. By the way, does your bucket-list include getting multiple saline-injections by chance?

RYAN

Bucket-list?

KELLY

Um, the list of things you want to do before you die a-k-a kick-the-bucket.

RYAN

Oh. Then absolutely not.

Kelly CHUCKLES.

KELLY

Just felt I had to ask there. But if you ever change your mind it'd probably make you really popular in my RN courses.

RYAN

I guess I'll have to take my chances with things as they are. Don't you give shots as a medical-assistant?

KELLY

Oh yeah, I do. So a few lessons so far have been reruns. You can't ever get complacent though --
 (spaces her thumb and
 finger out against her
 triceps)
 that's when you accidentally jam a needle all the way through a patient's arm!

RYAN

Uh...

KELLY

Only joking of course! So what else's up with you? Your hand looks like it healed well.

Ryan makes a brief examination of his hand.

RYAN

Yeah, not too bad I guess. Anything new at the hospital?

KELLY

Um, there's been new-patients there for sure.

(pause)

I hope you don't mind, but if *How's it going* questions were being graded you'd probably get an A for asking but a *D minus* for answering.

RYAN

Sorry. I don't really like talking about what I'm doing when I'm not doing much.

KELLY

You were telling me about your driver's license at lunch. There's something right there.

RYAN

I opened a tight-jar of pickles this week too. Which is still not a whole-lot worth bragging about.

KELLY

Life's not a contest Ryan. Just do your best.

(motions around her apartment)

As you can see no one from *Time Magazine* is running over to do a feature-story on me right now either.

RYAN

No no, you're doing fine. I didn't mean to --

KELLY

And you're doing fine too! You just caught a bad-break. So what's the problem?

RYAN

I dunno. I guess I just wasn't very -- sociable back in school. But it didn't bother me very much since I thought I was doing what would get me ahead down the line. Lots of extra-studying to ace my tests to get into a great-college to make a ton of money and that sort of thing. Then I'd impress people and have the kind of relationships I was probably just too cowardly to establish at the time.

KELLY

Wow.

RYAN

Yeah. But I suppose topping a rocket with fuel won't stop it from blowing-up on liftoff if there's some problem.

KELLY

I'm not sure I'd look at things that way.

RYAN

How would you look at things?

Kelly thinks.

KELLY

Oh! You told me once before you were a surfer right?

RYAN

I surfed a little bit. I wouldn't say I was a *surfer* exactly.

KELLY

OK. But what happens when -- someone who surfs misses a wave?

RYAN

They'd wait for the next one I guess.

KELLY

Right! They'd ride the next wave!

RYAN

Huh!

(pause)

Um, Kelly?

KELLY

Yeah?

RYAN

Would you -- uh, like to have dinner with me?

KELLY

Well, I have to get ready for work soon. And we just ate like -- two hours ago right?

RYAN

No, I didn't mean tonight. I meant would you like to have dinner with me uh, -- sometime.

Kelly catches on.

KELLY

Oh! Well, um, I dunno --

RYAN

Never mind! It was a dumb thing to ask. Sorry.

KELLY

No, no it's not that! It's just -- how old are you now?

RYAN

Forty-one.

KELLY

That's not what I was getting at. I mean you were -- seventeen right before your accident right?

RYAN

Yup.

KELLY

So as of now, have you turned um...

Ryan's eyes widen as he grasps Kelly's point.

RYAN

Oh! Uh -- no. But I do have a birthday coming in about a week!

KELLY

OK then, that's great! How bout we go to dinner right after your birthday then? It'll be my treat!

RYAN

Sounds great.

KELLY

It's just I have no idea where the line's drawn on comas and underage-dating but I wish to be on the hundred-percent right side of that.

RYAN

That certainly seems fair-enough.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan sits at his desk. His thrift-shop computer's been replaced with a brand-new laptop, which he uses to watch a SURFING VIDEO online.

Ryan closes his laptop's internet-browser at the video's end. He rests his chin in his hand, lost in thought.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ryan's father reads a newspaper on the couch. Ryan sits by him.

RYAN

You know the news is online right Dad? Most of it's free even.

Ryan's father folds the paper across his lap.

DAN

Yeah, but when I get to the end of a newspaper there isn't any more news to read for the day, which is a plus generally. How's the internet and new-laptop working?

RYAN

All working great! Thanks a ton!

DAN

That's good. The guy who came over and installed everything while you were out seemed to know what he was doing.

RYAN

You didn't have to though. I know you're not super into the whole thing.

DAN

Well I figured you'd probably have some use for it. Just consider them an early birthday-present. Actually I'll still get you a gift but it'll be like -- an electric-razor or a screwdriver set, which I find a lot more-exciting anyway.

Ryan LAUGHS.

RYAN

That's more than fine! But seriously, feel free to use the computer whenever you want. There's more to do than just reading the news.

DAN

Like what?

RYAN

You could try chatting with other ex-mechanics in -- um, Switzerland?

DAN

That's something I guess. But why bother when everyone I want to talk with right now is down the hall?

RYAN

Uh -- I love you Dad.

DAN

I love you too Ryan.

Ryan hugs his father and then gets off the couch.

RYAN

Oh, I almost forgot what I came out for in the first place!

Ryan's father smiles.

DAN

Get used to that feeling.

RYAN

I had a question to ask you.

DAN
What's that?

RYAN
Do you know what happened to my old surfboard? I guess it must have gotten creamed in the accident right?

EXT. SELF-STORAGE FACILITY - LATER

Ryan OPENS the door of a storage unit. He picks a shoe-box on the ground up and enters.

INT. STORAGE UNIT - DAY

In the unit there's a few pieces of old furniture and other items packed in boxes. Off to one side is Ryan's old surfboard, laying across two chest-of-drawers sets.

The board's covered with dust but otherwise undamaged.

Ryan brushes some dust from the board with his hand and smiles. He reaches into the shoe-box and removes a couple rags and a wax-bar.

EXT. HIGHWAY - LATER

Ryan drives down a highway with the surfboard hooked to a roof-rack on top of his father's car.

EXT. CALIFORNIA COASTLINE - LATER

Ryan walks toward the Pismo Beach waterfront with his surfboard. He now wears a pair of swim-trunks.

MOMENTS LATER

Ryan stands on the shoreline and watches the waves come from the ocean. He then puts down his surfboard, sits on the sand and continues to stare into the distance.

MOMENTS LATER

A YOUNG MALE (12-14) approaches with a cheap, plastic surfboard. He looks down at Ryan and then across the water to follow his gaze.

YOUNG MALE
 (confused)
 What are you looking at?

RYAN
 I'm not sure I know.

YOUNG MALE
 Uh -- OK?

The kid notices Ryan's surfboard.

YOUNG MALE (CONT'D)
 Hey, that's a sweet-board you got there!

RYAN
 Yeah, I guess it is.
 (short pause)
 You want it?

YOUNG MALE
 C'mon! You don't have to be a jerk!
 I was just paying a compliment!

RYAN
 No, I'm completely serious. Would you like the board?

YOUNG MALE
 (suspicious)
 Why would you want to give me your surfboard?

Ryan stands and grabs the board.

RYAN
 I don't need it anymore. I came out to catch the next wave but I think these may be too literal.

YOUNG MALE
 What?

Ryan holds the board out to the kid.

RYAN
 Here, it's yours.

The kid takes the surfboard.

YOUNG MALE

Um, wow! Thanks man! But you're not like -- on drugs or something and want this back later right?

RYAN

No, no. Just take good care of it.

YOUNG MALE

Sure thing I will!

Ryan starts to leave.

YOUNG MALE (CONT'D)

Oh, hold up! Do you uh, want my old one?

Ryan turns back.

RYAN

Nah. Give that to someone without any.

Ryan departs. The kid rushes into the ocean with his new surfboard.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - LATER

Ryan stands on the porch of an upper middle-class house in a nice neighborhood. He wears the same clothes as at the storage-unit. His father's car and a van with "PATRICK'S PLUMBING SERVICES" lettering are parked in the driveway.

Ryan RINGS the doorbell and PATRICK'S SON (age 16) answers. He looks a lot like Patrick did at that age.

PATRICK'S SON

Hello?

RYAN

Hey Patrick! I just stopped by to -
-

PATRICK'S SON

Um -- I'm Steven. Patrick is my dad.

Ryan realizes the mistake he's made.

RYAN

(somber)

Oh yeah. Of course.

(pause)

Is he home?

PATRICK'S SON/STEVEN

Yeah. You're not selling anything are you?

RYAN

No. It's just that you look a lot like your dad did in-the-day and I got lost-in-time a moment I guess. Could you tell him Ryan Marshall is here?

STEVEN

OK. I'll let him know.

Steven closes the front door and LOCKS it.

A few awkward-seconds pass till Patrick opens the door again. He wears jeans and a t-shirt.

PATRICK

Now here's a surprise! Hey Ryan!

RYAN

Hi Patrick. Is this a bad time? I could always come back later.

PATRICK

Oh yeah, you think you could drive three-and-a-half hours home and try again tomorrow sometime? Come in you lunatic! It's a very nice surprise.

RYAN

Thanks.

Ryan enters Patrick's house.

INT. PATRICK'S DEN - MOMENTS LATER

Patrick and Ryan come into Patrick's combination den/office. In one corner there's a workstation with desk, computer, printer, landline phone, file cabinet, etc and elsewhere's a big-screen television surrounded by a small-couch and several comfortable-chairs. Some Seattle-Mariners baseball memorabilia is hung on the walls.

Patrick plops down in a chair and motions Ryan to another.

PATRICK
Take a seat buddy!

RYAN
Thank you.

Ryan sits down.

RYAN (CONT'D)
This is a cool space.

PATRICK
Thanks! It's been a couple years in the making. My baseball games were starting to conflict with my wife's cooking-competition shows and this setup has managed to work pretty-well for us both so far. I even manage to get some work done in this room occasionally to sort of justify having it.

RYAN
Does plumbing require much office work?

PATRICK
A little. There's the normal scheduling of jobs and what-not, plus the piles and piles of forms one needs to complete to actually employ anyone in this state.

RYAN
Is that complicated?

PATRICK
I mean, you practically need to hire someone to figure out how to hire someone. Let's not go down that road now though. I could complain about our state-government for hours and I'm trying to keep my blood-pressure down.

Ryan grins.

RYAN

Alright.

(glances around and
notices the baseball
items)

What's with the Seattle-Mariners
gear?

PATRICK

Oh, that. Heh. Well, in college my
room-mate was from Washington State
and he got me into following
baseball. The Mariners had a few
good years in 1995, 2001 and --
yeah, that's pretty much it. The
guy literally apologized once for
roping me to their boat but what
can ya do? A true fan's gotta stick
with their team unless that team
cheats on their town with another
city or something. I guess it's
like a less-serious marriage --
with peanuts, toasted-grasshoppers
and beer at a thousand-percent
markup.

RYAN

Toasted grasshoppers?!

PATRICK

Or cheese-fries. Take your pick.

RYAN

Now that sounds potential! Maybe we
could watch a game here at some
point?

PATRICK

For sure! But remember I did give
you fair warning on the whole not-
being-good thing in advance. Tho I
guess if Chicago was able to win a
World Series again there's hope for
everyone else!

Patrick CHUCKLES.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

I mean, I've read the M's are supposed to be alright this year but that's what gets said for most teams on most years isn't it? Our division is **tough** right now too!

(pause)

But anyway, how's everything with you?

RYAN

Not bad. I've got my immediate life-plan figured out and I'm pretty sure I've got a date next weekend.

PATRICK

That's good to -- what?! A date next weekend?!

RYAN

Yeah. A girl that works at the hospital I was in.

PATRICK

Huh! Doctor there or something?

RYAN

No. Medical assistant.

Patrick smiles.

PATRICK

Just as well. You won't have to spend an hour waiting at the theater for her reading a magazine.

RYAN

It'd be worth it.

PATRICK

Now **that** is a positive sign!

KNOCKS at the office-door.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Hello?

WOMAN'S VOICE (O.S.)

How's progress?

PATRICK

Uh, it progresses.

Patrick's wife, Jessica (Lee) Cranston (age 41, very pretty) opens the door.

WOMAN'S VOICE/JESSICA

(to Patrick)

OK. But remember we have to be **inside** the restaurant in thirty-minutes and you agreed to wear a shirt with buttons and not-jeans.

She notices Ryan in the other chair.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry. I didn't know you had, um -- company?

PATRICK

Not just any company! Jessica Cranston, may I re-introduce you to...

Patrick DRUMS hands on his thigh.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Ryan Marshall, circa Arroyo-Grande High School!

Jessica's eyes widen. She rushes to Ryan's chair.

JESSICA

(to Ryan)

What?! Stand up you!

He gets out of the chair. Jessica throws her arms around Ryan and bear-hugs him.

RYAN

Uh --

Jessica releases Ryan after several seconds.

JESSICA

Oh, wow! I prayed for you and your family then.

RYAN

Thanks.

JESSICA

Patrick told me you'd recovered but it's still a shock to see you here right in the flesh! I just wish I'd known you were stopping by!

Jessica glances over at Patrick then turns back to Ryan.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

I definitely would have cancelled the dinner-date we have with some friends of ours.

RYAN

Oh, no worries at all! Actually I was just about to head out -- and in fairness to Patrick I should mention he didn't know I was dropping in. It was just a spur of the moment thing cause I happened to be in the area already for something.

PATRICK

That's good-looking-out man.

JESSICA

Well, I'm definitely glad you did stop by! You're also welcome anytime! Maybe next visit we can all go to *Marco's* hamburger-stand on 83rd like the whole-crew used to do in high school. Can you believe that's still there after so many years?!

RYAN

Uh, I don't think I ever went then.

JESSICA

(confused)

Oh? I'm sorry.

RYAN

No, don't worry! I wasn't very social at the time. If I had wanted to go with you all I should have asked.

JESSICA

And we should have invited you.

PATRICK

Well the important thing is there's cheeseburger-baskets and large milkshakes with our names on them in the near future!

JESSICA

Small milkshakes.

Patrick LAUGHS.

PATRICK

Probably for the best, since I've been gaining and losing the same thirty-pounds for nearly a decade now. All the neighbors must think it's one of my hobbies.

Patrick SLAPS his stomach with both hands.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

Lost as of now.

Jessica smiles.

JESSICA

My hero.

EXT. PATRICK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan backs his father's car out of the driveway. Patrick and Jessica wave-goodbye from the porch.

Patrick looks at Jessica.

PATRICK

Did I mention *I love you* yet today?

JESSICA

I believe so, but I'll take it anyway.

Patrick and Jessica kiss.

JESSICA (CONT'D)

Now hurry up and get dressed! We're gonna be late, late, late!

PATRICK

Don't worry, I know exactly where my Edgar Martinez jersey is.

Jessica gives Patrick a playful kick to his rear as they go indoors.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan fills out college-application forms at his desk. Brochures for *UCLA* and several-other schools lay near.

INT. FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR'S OFFICE - LATER

Ryan enters the office of a FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR (female, age 50+) who sits at her desk.

RYAN

Hello Mam. Um, the receptionist said I could just come in.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR

Yup! Please feel free to sit down.

Ryan sits in an empty chair across the director's desk.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

So how did you hear about our food bank?

RYAN

From the sign out front.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR

Oh. Well, that's not a bad answer all things considered! Were you able to submit the volunteer-form on our website?

RYAN

I'm not really an internet-aficionado yet. I was hoping you'd have a paper copy here that I could fill out.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR

Huh! Um, I think we should have a couple around somewhere. Let me take a look real quick.

The director pulls out a stack-of-papers from a bottom desk-drawer and shuffles through them.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR (CONT'D)

A-ha!

She hands a form to Ryan who gives it a brief glance.

RYAN

I'm having a bit of dejavu. You don't want my full employment-history for a volunteer position right?

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR

Oh, no. We don't get enough people who want to help as it is! We just need some information about your emergency contacts, any criminal history, weekly availability and those sorts of things.

RYAN

I can probably only do two-nights a week till my schedule gets cemented but I should hopefully be able to help more down the road.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR

That's totally fine! There's a lot of organizing of shipments that happens during evenings. Can you drive a forklift?

RYAN

Uh, no.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR

No problem! It's actually not that difficult. I've even managed to maneuver one around myself a few times when we were low on staff!

RYAN

Impressive!

The director beams.

FOOD-BANK DIRECTOR

Well, you know...

EXT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

A homey, Italian-restaurant illuminated with building-lights.

INT. ITALIAN RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Ryan and Kelly sit at a table while a WAITRESS takes their orders. Both are dressed for a date this time. Ryan wears a white, button-down shirt.

WAITRESS

What would you two like for dinner tonight?

KELLY

I'll have fettuccine Alfredo with an ice-tea please.

RYAN

Can I get spaghetti-marinara and a coke?

WAITRESS

Sure thing! I'll be back in just a moment with your drinks.

The waitress leaves. Kelly smiles.

KELLY

Marinara is an interesting choice for a first date.

Ryan taps his shirt-collar.

RYAN

You'll notice I'm also wearing a white shirt. I've clearly thrown all caution to the wind here!

KELLY

Very bold!

RYAN

Or maybe I just didn't think things through, whichever.

KELLY

Well I guess we'll know for sure by the dessert course, but I have every confidence in you!

(short pause)

How's life been since we last talked?

RYAN

Good! I've actually managed to keep busy. Visited an old pal of mine, applied to a few colleges and signed up for a part-time volunteer-position.

KELLY

Wow! I'm impressed!

RYAN

I decided to embrace your whole next-wave analogy.

Kelly LAUGHS.

KELLY

Oh, you mean the whole surfing thing? That was hardly Robert Frost.

RYAN

Maybe the concept isn't that complicated, but I still found it difficult to start doing.

KELLY

That's probably why lots of people stagnate instead. I mean, I suppose if you wanted to you could graduate college, get married, adopt a couple foster-teenagers and even find yourself ahead of the curve in the next five, ten years.

RYAN

I don't think I want to adopt just to improve my social standing.

Kelly smirks.

KELLY

Well, of course making a positive impact in children's lives would need to be the underlying motivation there.

LATER

Ryan and Kelly eat their meals.

RYAN

Can I ask you an uncomfortable question?

KELLY

Um, I guess so.

Kelly reaches for her ice-tea and takes a sip as Ryan speaks.

RYAN

Why are so many people now so, uh -
- fat?

Kelly almost spits her drink to laugh but catches herself and swallows.

KELLY

Oh, you meant uncomfortable to ask huh? Well uh, lots of people focus on poor diets -- excessive sugar-intake and such...

RYAN

That can't be the whole story. I mean, when I was a kid we practically lived on *Hi-C* and pizza slices but now even the children are huge!

KELLY

Yeah, but what's different now? Parents drop their kids off at schools they can't walk to, most of which probably don't have much in the way of PE programs when they're there -- then at home many stare into electronic-devices the rest of the day. It's pretty easy to gain weight when you're practically burning no calories. I mean, I'm sure you guys played tag and would ride your bikes till the streetlights came on and whatever so it wasn't such an issue then. But yeah, it's also not just children as you've noticed. A high-percentage of the adult-population is overweight or obese now too.

(pause)

Anyway, that's just my take as a medical quasi-professional. There may be something to the whole processed-carbs thing too but I think yeah, mostly frozen-calories.

The waitress returns with two bowls of gelato. One bowl has several lit-candles inserted into the dessert.

Kelly grins.

KELLY (CONT'D)

And speaking of...

The waitress sets the bowls on the table.

WAITRESS

(to Ryan, over the top)

I heard it was someone's birthday today! Guess who gets to blow out their **birthday** gelato!

Ryan gives Kelly a look. Kelly smiles and shrugs.

EXT. KELLY'S APARTMENT - LATER

Kelly UNLOCKS her front door. She turns to face Ryan.

KELLY

Thank you for coming Ryan. I had a nice time.

RYAN

Well, thanks for footing the bill. I had a great time too!

(pause)

Uh, Kelly you wouldn't happen to be interested in --

Kelly gives Ryan a quick kiss.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Uh, wow. Um -- I was going to ask if you wanted to uh, get-together again sometime?

KELLY

(sheepish)

Oh. Sorry about that.

RYAN

No, no. I mean -- that was fine too but -- would you like to go out with me again?

KELLY

Well I haven't been in the habit of dating eighteen year-olds for a while. You're very mature as that goes though -- mature for a forty-two year old these days even.

RYAN

I've been told I'm too serious before. Perhaps my body just needed time to grow into my brain or something.

KELLY

Doctors still don't have a full-grasp on what happens to a person in a coma. Maybe you spent decades pondering the mysteries of the universe.

RYAN

If that's what happened I don't remember it.

A pause.

KELLY

Anyway, I guess that was my rambling way of saying mark-me-down for date number-two! Why don't you call me and we can set something up when we've checked our calendars? I know I've got early-shift tomorrow at the hospital tho, so I'm gonna have to cut this particular porch-convo short regardless of how awkward and pleasant it's been managed so far.

Ryan grins.

RYAN

Sounds good! I'll definitely call you.

KELLY

Neato. Have a great night!

RYAN

You too.

Kelly starts to close the door.

RYAN (CONT'D)

Uh, Kelly?

Kelly stops.

KELLY

Yes?

Ryan gives Kelly a longer kiss. Kelly blushes.

KELLY (CONT'D)

Oh, wow. Turnabout is fair play I guess. Kiss --

(GIGGLES a bit)

um, I mean see you later!

Kelly quickly SHUTS the door. Ryan stands on the porch a few seconds then steals a glance at Kelly's apartment-window. Curtains make it impossible to see in or out.

Ryan jumps into the air and CLICKS his shoes together.

Afterward he walks-away in a more business-like fashion.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Ryan sits on his bed and examines a thick manila-envelope addressed from "THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, LOS ANGELES".

Ryan flips the envelope around a few times then RIPS into it. He pulls out several, typed pages and a school welcome-book. He sets it all down except the first typed-page and looks that over.

Ryan grins.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

Dan reads a newspaper on the couch.

RYAN (O.S.)
(excited)
I'm going to owe at least fifty-thousand dollars!

Dan raises his eyebrows in temporary-confusion. Then he smiles and sets down the paper.

INT. PATRICK'S DEN - NIGHT

Ryan, Patrick, Kelly and Jessica sit around the television and eat take-out food from "MARCO'S HAMBURGER-STAND".

Patrick wears a Seattle-Mariners jersey and the TV's set to a baseball game.

BASEBALL ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
(from television)
And that three-run home run by Mitch Haniger puts the Seattle Mariners into the lead.

PATRICK
Yes! That's my Mitch Hani-greatest-of-all-time!

JESSICA
Um, honey -- don't take this the wrong-way because I'm just looking out for you, but have you thought about rooting for the California team like almost everyone-else in the whole state?

PATRICK

Cheer the Oakland Athletics?! Never in a million years! I will however support the Dodgers since they're in a different conference and I don't want to be the stammering, awkward guy at summer-barbecues. Also I'm not-quite nuts enough to have my sports-happiness completely in the hands of Seattle baseball.

JESSICA

Is rooting for two teams something that's even allowed?

PATRICK

I mean, Seattle's American-League and the Dodgers are National. I don't see why I can't have a team from both.

RYAN

How does that square with you comparing baseball to marriage though?

JESSICA

Excuse me?!

PATRICK

I said **a less serious** marriage!
 (to Ryan)
 And if you saw my SAT scores you'd know my analogies are never exact.
 (short pause)
 But yeah, you may have some tough-choices to make soon regarding your own primary MLB-allegiance.

JESSICA

Let Ryan pick his own team Patrick!

PATRICK

He can pick whatever team he wants -- except maybe the Angels.

JESSICA

What's wrong with them?

PATRICK

They're the Mariners' scrappy divisional-rival! With Mike Trout seeming like too-good-a-guy to hope for constant professional-failure!

JESSICA

(to Ryan)

You don't have to jump-off a bridge just because he did.

RYAN

I'll weigh all my options carefully before deciding.

JESSICA

A wise decision Ryan.

(to Patrick)

OK, but what happens if the Mariners and Dodgers face each other in the -- baseball championship or something?

PATRICK

The *World Series*?! Why even worry about a scenario with odds that small?

Patrick gives Jessica a kiss on the cheek. She smiles.

PATRICK (CONT'D)

You've been quiet over there Kelly. How's your world going? Ryan's said many fantastic-things about you!

Kelly blushes.

KELLY

Has he really? Um -- world is going well. Just plugging-along with nursing school at the moment.

(turns to Ryan)

Ryan and I will both be at the UCLA campus later this year.

RYAN

Probably taking different-classes tho.

KELLY

Well, having two people in the medical-field is a recipe for never seeing each other again.

PATRICK

(to Ryan)

So you decided on the whole college-route huh?

RYAN

Yeah. I'm gonna take some general-courses first and see what clicks.

PATRICK

Hey man, do your thing! But remember if you get tired of unsolicited-worldviews from professors that spend most of their time nurturing-grievances or kids spending most of their time not-having-jobs there's always a company-van and a tool-belt here with your name on it!

(short pause)

Actually I guess my name's on the van technically -- but you know what I mean!

RYAN

Thanks man! Although if memory serves neither of us had much work-experience in our late teens and we still managed to have occasional-opinions.

PATRICK

Yeah, but would you listen to what high-school me had to say about anything?

Ryan smiles.

RYAN

I would about some things.

PATRICK

(touched)

Nice of you to say.

RYAN

Well I definitely appreciate the offer man -- and who knows, I may take you up on it sometime! But right now I have vague-plans about non-profit management.

PATRICK

(genuine)

That's commendable.

Patrick takes a bite of hamburger.

JESSICA
Oh, the news is on!

PATRICK
We've only got two-innings left
Jess. Can't we DVR that?

JESSICA
(annoyed)
Are you joking right now Patrick?!

Patrick smiles.

PATRICK
Yes I'm joking. We don't even have
that in our cable package.

Patrick grabs the TV remote and flips to a news station.

NEWS-ANCHOR
(from television)
...and crews report the wildfire-
blaze is now eighty-five percent
contained.

INT. NEWSROOM STUDIO - NIGHT

A NEWS ANCHOR at a desk.

NEWS-ANCHOR
And now our own DIANNA LENNON sits
down with a man who came out of an
almost quarter-century coma last-
year in order to find out how he's
handled being suddenly thrust into
the modern era.

INT. DAN'S LIVING ROOM - DAY - RECORDED EARLIER

Ryan sits on his father's couch as reporter Diana Lennon (mid
30's) interviews him.

DIANNA LENNON
I'm sitting across from Ryan
Marshall, who was hit by a car in
1993 and only recently returned to
consciousness. How are you Ryan?

RYAN
(a bit nervous)
I'm not too bad. Thanks for asking.

DIANNA LENNON

You must have had quite a shock after realizing what happened to you.

RYAN

That's definitely true. It seemed like almost no time had passed at all but everything was quite different in certain respects.

DIANNA LENNON

I can imagine that! What would you say is the most surprising difference between the early '90s and right now?

RYAN

Well, uh -- I haven't seen anyone wearing a denim-jacket and jeans combo yet.

Diana LAUGHS.

DIANNA LENNON

Oh yeah! Wow! What were we thinking then right?! Can't forget to buy those jeans ten-sizes too large as well!

RYAN

(more relaxed)

Tho now I'd say they seem to be worn a couple-sizes too small.

DIANNA LENNON

Believe it or not you may have just missed the worst of that particular look! So what's been one of the difficult-things you've had to adjust to?

RYAN

My mother having died for one.

DIANNA LENNON

Oh. I'm very sorry to hear that.

RYAN

Thank you. She was a wonderful person.

(pause)

I guess another difficult-thing that doesn't concern present-day really -- but I did find it hard to kinda have an idea where my life was going only to have everything spin out. Then to just get back with pushing-forward instead of focusing on where other people were or where I'd hoped to be at this point.

DIANNA LENNON

Huh! So how have you managed so far in that process?

RYAN

I've been doing alright. Finally figured out that you know, if someone starts with a weight attached to one foot that strapping a second to their other foot and jumping into a lake isn't going to be their best option. It's also been good to do some volunteer-work helping people instead of using the time to be upset I'm not on the Supreme Court now or whatever.

DIANNA LENNON

That sounds like a great attitude and I hope everything goes well for you in the future! Thanks for taking the time to sit down and talk with us!

RYAN

No problem!

INT. NEWSROOM STUDIO - NIGHT

NEWS ANCHOR

And thank you for that great interview Dianna! We go over now to Mark Kershaw with next week's weather...

INT. PATRICK'S DEN - NIGHT

Patrick turns the TV off.

JESSICA

Wow. What a great segment!

RYAN

Yeah, I wanted to do something substantial with it but I got kinda nervous and went a little fluff.

PATRICK

I think that's probably about as substantial as local-news gets.

KELLY

I agree with the general-consensus for sure!

(pause)

Well thank you both for having us over, but I'm on-staff tomorrow so I probably need Ryan to drive me home now. I can get a bit grumpy if I don't get my health-industry-approved-but-not-guaranteed six-hours sleep -- and we're gonna be cutting it close there.

PATRICK

It's hard to imagine you as a grump.

KELLY

We're not talking Nurse Ratched or anything, but I will sometimes click my pen too hard.

PATRICK

(not malicious)

My condolences for your Saturday at least. I'll definitely pour-one-out for you at the golf course after waking up at noon.

JESSICA

Golf?! Noon?! Remember you said you'd **finally** help me look for a sofa tomorrow!

PATRICK

Ah! OK -- for the record and since we have witnesses here -- why am I needed on this outing exactly?

KELLY
She wants to spend time with you.

JESSICA
Correct!

KELLY
I've seen this movie once or twice before.

PATRICK
Oh, is that what it is?!
(to Jessica)
I mean, you could always just come golfing with me then.

JESSICA
(faux pout)
But two of our sofa-cushions are torn up.

PATRICK
(genuine)
Well, let's go furniture-shopping instead then.

Jessica beams.

INT. RYAN'S BEDROOM - LATER

Ryan shuts the bedroom door. He YAWNS, removes his over-clothes and tosses them onto the desk-chair.

Down to his undershirt and boxers Ryan climbs into bed, closes his eyes and smiles.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. RYAN AND KELLY'S BEDROOM - DAY - 25 YEARS LATER

Ryan (now age 67) gets out of his and Kelly's queen-sized bed. Curtains keep the early-morning out and it's difficult to see much in the dark-bedroom.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan walks down the hall barefoot. He passes two framed-degrees from UCLA (Ryan, Public Affairs and Kelly, Nursing) and several family-photos on the wall. One of the photos is from Ryan and Kelly's wedding (in 2023) and another was taken several-years later that includes Ryan, Kelly and their two adopted-children (ages 8-16). At least one child is a different race so the adoption-point is obvious.

INT. BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Ryan enters the dark bathroom and closes the door most of the way behind him. He then steps forward and JAMS his foot against the bottom of the sink-cabinet by mistake.

RYAN
(under his breath)
Ouch! Wow, that was dumb!

An ELECTRONIC-VOICE EMITS in the darkness.

ELECTRONIC VOICE (O.S.)
Would you like the lights on --
Ryan?

RYAN
Ow! That would be peachy.

Nothing happens. Ryan SIGHS.

RYAN (CONT'D)
Yes, bathroom-lights on.

The bathroom lights come on.

The Electronic-Voice SOUNDS again from unseen-speakers in the bathroom.

ELECTRONIC VOICE (O.S.)
Vocal-sensors detect elevated-
stress-levels. Do you require
assistance?

RYAN
You mean for my super-serious
stubbed toe? Why don't you just
call --
(realizes something)
no! **Do not** call for assistance!

Ryan looks at himself in the mirror. He becomes more contemplative and runs a hand across his aged face.

SUPERIMPOSE: ARROYO GRANDE, CALIFORNIA - JUNE 27TH, 2043.

A brief HUM from inside the mirror and its reflective properties transform into a display-screen that showcases a static, visual weather-report for the next several days.

ELECTRONIC VOICE (O.S.)
 Would you like today's weather
 forecast, sports scores or stock-
 market report?

RYAN
 No, I'm alright for now.

ELECTRONIC VOICE (O.S.)
 As a reminder, the -- Mariners
 played yesterday at --

RYAN
 I'll check it later. No worries.

ELECTRONIC VOICE (O.S.)
 Alright, have a good -- Saturday,
 June 27th.

RYAN
 I'll try. And have yourself an uh,
 full-powered June 27th? But unlike
 the stock market --
 (smiles)
 don't get any shorts.

The mirror returns to reflective normal.

A pause.

RYAN (CONT'D)
 (to himself)
 Even the mirror's a critic I guess.

The bathroom door is pushed open and Kelly (now late 50's)
 comes inside.

KELLY
 (cheerful)
 I thought I heard something in
 here!

RYAN
 Oh yeah, sorry bout that. I don't
 seem to have all the settings for
 the Voice-Two system figured out
 yet.

Kelly drapes an arm around Ryan.

KELLY

At least you have a whole relaxing-weekend to look into it.

RYAN

(amused)

A weekend? I'm retired as of today remember?

KELLY

Oh yeah, that's right! It hardly seems real to me even after the party.

(pause)

I guess you have your whole life to look into it then.

RYAN

Well, hopefully not all of it...

Ryan and Kelly kiss.

FADE OUT.

THE END