

BELMONT PREP

"Pilot"

by

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&
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COLD OPEN

INT. DUNCAN'S BEDROOM - DAY (SOMETIME IN THE '90S)

DUNCAN COOK (8), bubbling with anticipation, stands in his pajamas overlooking an outfit laid out next to a backpack. We hear an older Duncan (24) reminisce, still full of the same wide-eyed innocence and enthusiasm.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

Everyone has a favorite day of the year. Mine's not Halloween or my birthday or even Ash Wednesday. For me it's always been the first day of school.

INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER

Duncan, now wearing those clothes and backpack, grabs a bagged lunch and a shiny apple and walks out of the room.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

I guess it was the anticipation. What to wear? What subjects would I study? Would I get along with my teacher?

INT. LIVING ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Duncan enters the living room.

DUNCAN

Who am I kidding? Of course I would. I had the best teacher in the whole world.

Duncan hands the apple to a warm, heavysset WOMAN and sits down across from her at a desk. She flips over a chalkboard and begins teaching him.

DUNCAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My mom.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER THAT DAY

Duncan's Mother is teaching him math on her chalkboard. A chicken-shaped egg-timer RINGS, signaling the end of class. Duncan's Mother sprints out of the room as he packs up.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

Even though I was home-schooled, my mom gave me a full range of classes.

Duncan walks through a sliding door, into the backyard. His Mom, out of breath and dressed in gym sweats, blows a whistle. She chucks a dodgeball at him, knocking him off his feet.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

The kitchen is decorated like a middle school dance, replete with streamers and a disco ball. Duncan (now 13), dressed in a blazer, nervously stands against the fridge, trying to build up his courage.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

She went out of her way to make sure I had the full school experience.

All-4-One's "I Swear" begins to play. Duncan offers his hand to his Mother and the two start to awkwardly slow dance.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

A mock graduation stage has been set up. Duncan's Mom sits in a folding chair as the "audience," reading off a list of names while holding a camcorder.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

She was a true educator and the guiding force in my life. Always there for me...

DUNCAN'S MOM

Theodore Ruxpin, Lucas A. Skywalker...

Duncan (now 18), dressed in a cap and gown, stands off to the side in line behind his toys, eagerly waiting for his turn.

DUNCAN'S MOM (CONT'D)

And our Valedictorian: Duncan Cook.

Duncan hops onto the stage. His Mom applauds, then suddenly clutches her arm, drops the camcorder and keels over out of her seat. Duncan, unaware, proudly picks up his diploma.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

...And then one day she wasn't.

He looks out and sees his Mom, face down on the lawn.

INT. COMMUNITY COLLEGE NIGHT SCHOOL - OBVIOUSLY NIGHT

Duncan (in his 20s and how we'll see him for the rest of the show) sits in what is probably his first real classroom, with a bunch of adult, non-English-speaking immigrants.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

I decided to honor my mother by following in her footsteps. I enrolled in a local college and set out to get my teaching degree.

(MORE)

DUNCAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 It was my first time on my own and
 college was off the hook.

Duncan turns to a forty-year-old MEXICAN WOMAN who is breast-feeding her baby.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
 So, you thinking about rushing?

She stares at him blankly.

INT. BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Duncan, just as eager as he was when he was 8, hovers over an outfit laid out next to a messenger bag. He pages through a photo album.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
 So now comes another first day of
 school. Today I pay tribute to a
 woman who was a great mom...

ANGLE ON: a photo of a young Duncan at Christmas excitedly lifting his new pet frog for the camera to see.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
 ...and an even better teacher.

ANGLE ON: another photo of Duncan, in a lab coat, crying as he dissects his pet frog. His Mom stands over his shoulder, grading him: "A+".

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
 Today I get to inspire and shape minds
 just like my mom did for me.

EXT. BELMONT PREP - MORNING

Duncan walks up to the majestic main gates, takes a deep, hopeful breath, then enters.

DUNCAN (V.O.)
 Today I start teaching at one of the
 most prestigious private schools in
 all of North America.

He heads up a hill, the Ivy League-esque campus in the distance.

DUNCAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Today is my first day at Belmont Prep.

EXT. BELMONT PREP - MOMENTS LATER

Duncan walks over the crest of the hill revealing a parking lot overflowing with uppity kids in cutting edge European couture. Every car that arrives is more expensive than the last. The whole scene is a disgusting display of wealth. Duncan heads into the crowd, attempting to welcome students.

DUNCAN

Hi, I'm Mr. Cook, welcome to Belmont!

Duncan extends his hand to a pre-teen STUDENT who ignores him and yells into his phone:

STUDENT

I don't care if only half of them are alive, we'll make the rest out of holograms! All I know is the Beatles will be playing my Bar Mitzvah!

Duncan tries to greet more kids, but they're all too self-involved to respond. Just then, a TIMID KID approaches him.

TIMID KID

Excuse me. Can you help me?

DUNCAN

Of course! What do you need, pal?

He hands Duncan a set of Porsche keys.

TIMID KID

Park it in the back. I just had it restored and don't want it dinged.

Duncan stands there, stunned. A valet hustles over and grabs the keys from him. Duncan then sets out to greet more kids, determined. He heads right for a little girl in a dress.

DUNCAN

Hi there! I'm Mr. Cook--

He goes to shake her hand and is immediately grabbed by a SECRET SERVICE AGENT.

SECRET SERVICE AGENT

Hands off the Senator's daughter!

The Agent puts him in a submissive hold and slams him down onto a car, smushing his face into the hood.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

First day of school, nothing like it!

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT ONEEXT./ESTAB. BELMONT PREP - YESTERDAYINT. AUDITORIUM - SAME

CHYRON: "ONE DAY EARLIER." Duncan and a handful of other young-looking teachers sit in the front of an empty auditorium. The HEADMASTER proudly addresses them.

HEADMASTER

I want to welcome all you first-year teachers to the faculty. We have quite a rich history at Belmont Prep.

Duncan is eating this up. He notices a PRETTY REDHEAD across the room, who seems equally invested. She catches him staring at her, and smiles back.

HEADMASTER (CONT'D)

Founded by my great grandfather, Lamont Belmont, these grounds were once New York's most beautiful plantation. And Lamont fought hard to keep it that way, but alas, when federal troops finally forced him to de-slave his land, he had to come up with a new use for the grounds.

ANGLE ON: a portrait of Lamont Belmont, who poses amongst several black men in farming clothes. He smiles widely, his arms around two of the men. A couple of them have forced smiles, some just stare off.

HEADMASTER (CONT'D)

It was at that point Lamont decided to turn his property into an educational institution to cultivate the great minds of tomorrow! And that he did. Belmont has produced fifteen CEOs of Fortune 500 companies, four Nobel Prize winners, two Oscar-winning filmmakers and one Little Mister Rockland County Cutie-Pie Pageant Winner. And now it's up to you to prepare today's young minds for the things they'll do to change the world!

The teachers all politely clap. Duncan leaps from his seat and gives a full-on standing ovation.

HEADMASTER (CONT'D)

I know you all probably have questions, so allow me to answer them: yes, I was that Little Mister Rockland County.

EXT. CAMPUS FACULTY HOUSING - YESTERDAY

Duncan drags his bags up to a run-down colonial house. It should be condemned, but instead teachers live here. Duncan knocks on the door and the pretty redhead from the auditorium, CHARLOTTE, answers. He's taken aback.

CHARLOTTE

You must be the last roommate, I'm Charlotte.

DUNCAN

I'm-- I'm Duncan. Nice to meet you. So you live here too? That's cool, I've just never been to a boy-girl sleepover before.

Charlotte chuckles, charmed by his innocence.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I've actually never been to a boy-boy sleepover either. This is kinda my first time being away from home.

(then)

That's not true, one time I spent the night in the hospital. I was pretending to be KITT from "Knight Rider" and drank half a gallon of gasoline.

CHARLOTTE

Well I drive an electric car, so I think it's safe for us to be friends. I'll show you around.

INT. CAMPUS FACULTY HOUSING - MOMENTS LATER

Charlotte tours Duncan around as they walk down a hallway.

CHARLOTTE

I'm a history teacher, so I think this place is amazing -- it used to be the slave quarters! Can you believe we get to live here? For free?! That's my room over there.

Duncan looks into her bedroom. It's a little granola, mostly decorated with pictures of Charlotte volunteering and doing charity work. Duncan picks up a photo of her in Africa.

DUNCAN

Wow. And I thought I was going to make a difference teaching... What was Africa like?

Charlotte quickly grabs the picture.

CHARLOTTE

Actually, that's just me at Epcot... But I'll go one day! Until then I'm gonna focus on shaping the future here.

CONNIE KWAN (26), eternally bitter and hungover, walks out of her room dressed in a bathrobe, carrying a shower caddy.

CONNIE

You mean baby-sitting a bunch of trust fund brats? What a noble cause.

DUNCAN

Then why would you work here?

CONNIE

Same reason you would: Because I needed a job, and private schools are the only ones cheap enough to hire inexperienced teachers. Plus, we live right on campus, so that's pretty convenient for people who aren't legally allowed to... operate any type of vehicle.

ANGLE ON: Connie's shower caddy. Tucked in between her body wash and lufa is a bottle of Jack Daniels. Connie enters the communal bathroom and slams the door behind her.

CHARLOTTE

And that fine specimen of human athleticism is the new gym teacher, Connie Kwan.

DUNCAN

She looks familiar.

CHARLOTTE

You probably saw her on TV when you were a kid. Connie was a teen tennis star, but she kind of Corey Haim-ed out pretty early in her career.

Charlotte continues her tour.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

And over here is your room.

They enter a windowless room, which is empty except for a cot and some shackles on the wall.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Sorry, since you got here last you kinda got stuck with this one.

DUNCAN

Nah, this is perfect, just needs a little interior decorating.

Duncan unzips one of his bags and pulls out a set of Christmas lights. He dangles them through the chains. Charlotte can't help but smile at his optimism. Just then, JOE "D-LO" DELORENZO (24), everything about him screams "bro", enters. Duncan stands to introduce himself, but D-Lo blows right by him, heading for Charlotte.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Hey, I'm Duncan, your new--

D-LO

Yeah, cool, don't touch my stuff.

(to Charlotte, rapid-fire
flirty riffing)

Charlotte! Charlotte, North Carolina, former home of the Hornets, and Larry Johnson... How great was Grandmama? Not as great as you. Come with me.

CHARLOTTE

What do you want, DeLorenzo?

D-LO

Please, we ain't working right now. Call me D-Lo. And I actually just need a little help putting together some furniture.

DUNCAN

I can help. I'm really handy. I built my fourth grade best friend Damian out of Legos.

D-LO

Your best friend is made of Legos?

DUNCAN

Oh no, not anymore. My mom made me take him apart after I blamed him for teaching me the F word.

Duncan rushes into D-Lo's room. D-Lo looks at Charlotte.

D-LO

Is he retarded?

CHARLOTTE

No, home schooled.

Charlotte and D-Lo follow Duncan into D-Lo's room.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

So what did you need help with?

REVEAL: A sex swing hangs from D-Lo's ceiling. Duncan, unaware of what it is, hops in and starts swinging.

D-LO

Actually, I need help testing it...

CHARLOTTE

Ew, is that a sex swing? I can't believe you bought one of those.

D-LO

It's not like I paid full price. I got it used off Craigslist.

Charlotte exits, repulsed. Duncan is now pumping his legs, as if on a schoolyard swing, and getting really high.

D-LO (CONT'D)

Time to leave, dickhead.

DUNCAN

You're right, I probably should get ready for tomorrow. First day of school, and it's gonna be awesome!

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. BELMONT PREP - BACK TO FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL

Duncan's where we left him, face pressed against the hood. The Secret Service Agent releases him and exits. ARMAN, a limo driver who speaks with broken English, helps Duncan up.

ARMAN

First day, huh?

Duncan nods.

ARMAN (CONT'D)

Yeah, this place -- it can be pretty rough. Not too late to get out.

DUNCAN

What are you talking about? This is what I've wanted to do my whole life. Think about how you felt the first day you got to live out your dream as a limo driver!

ARMAN

You think this was my dream -- driving spoiled child to school?! No, no, no. Growing up I always want to go to veterinary school... learn to spay and neuter pets. You know, do my part to make world more like Bob Barker intended it. But things don't always turn out the way you want them to.

DUNCAN

It's never too late.

ARMAN

Well, for this old Armenian pony, I think it is.

DUNCAN

I'm sure you have your reasons, but if I were you, I'd have a hard time turning my back on what I knew I was destined to do.

A bell rings.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Speaking of which, gotta run.

Duncan runs off. Arman thinks, then calls out.

ARMAN

Wait! I just remember my other dream: to have consensual sex with Garth Brooks, and non-consensual sex with his alter-ego, Chris Gaines!

INT. BELMONT HALLWAY - DAY

Charlotte walks with a purpose towards the administration office. D-Lo approaches and puts his arm around her.

CHARLOTTE

Why are you touching me?

D-LO

I've got some plans for you and me tonight. How does five and a half Budweiser Lights chilling on ice and a full mp3 library courtesy of a Mr. Brian McKnight sound?

CHARLOTTE

Sounds about as fun as a pap smear.

D-LO

Hot. So where are we going?

CHARLOTTE

I am going to the main office. This morning was sign-ups for club advisors and I'm hoping there are still some spots.

D-LO

Wait, you want to be an advisor?

CHARLOTTE

Hell yeah, I've been doing volunteer work my whole life. I've been so fortunate to have found so many people less fortunate than me. I just hope some of the good clubs are still left...

They enter the main office and Charlotte makes a bee-line towards a WOMAN sitting at a table with a list of clubs on it. Charlotte groans -- most clubs are already taken.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

Damn, all the legit ones are gone. Ugh, what's left...

(reading)

Tap Dance, Movie Club... Forensics. Hmm, Forensics, that's actually not terrible -- a debate club -- that could be worthwhile...

She signs her name next to the Forensics Club.

WOMAN AT TABLE

That's actually a forensic science club...

(off Charlotte's look)

Kids who love "CSI."

Just then Connie walks up to the Woman.

CONNIE

Hi, I signed up earlier and forgot to grab the club roster from you. I'm advising D.A.R.E.

The Woman hands it to Connie as Charlotte looks on, shocked.

CHARLOTTE

D.A.R.E.?! Are you serious? D.A.R.E. uses your life story as a scare tactic! You have to trade me!

CONNIE

(holding roster)

Oh, you mean my fleet of designated drivers? Sorry. I'm keeping this one.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Duncan bursts through the door, full of energy. The students watch as he grabs a marker off the desk, walks up to a whiteboard and writes "DUNCAN COOK" on it.

DUNCAN

Alright, everybody. I'm Mr. Cook, but I want you all to call me Duncan, 'cause as far as I'm concerned, a mister's just something that keeps you cool in the summer.

The whiteboard suddenly flickers alive into a computer screen, startling Duncan.

STUDENT

It's a touch screen and you just wrote on it with a permanent marker.

DUNCAN

Okay, we'll worry about that later. Now let's get to know each other.

Duncan goes to sit at his desk but decides against it.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

This desk is way too formal.

Duncan grabs an extra wide chair and swings it around to sit on it backwards. He really struggles to straddle it. It's obviously uncomfortable, but he's trying to come off as hip.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

(pained)

That's better. Now don't think of me as some stuffy teacher. Think of me as one of your bros, Tweeting you some funny YouTube links. But instead of someone getting kicked in the balls, I'm sharing with you the wonderful world of algebra... Hashtag: math is the bomb.

Duncan is interrupted by BYRON, a slick-haired preppy student who chats loudly on his cell.

BYRON

(into phone, "No way!")

Shut the fuck up! Shut the fuck up!
Shut the fuck up!

DUNCAN

Hey bud, can you maybe--

Byron puts his finger up to shush Duncan.

BYRON

(whispering to Duncan)

Shut the fuck up.

(back into phone)

Sorry, keep going... Shut the fuck up!

Duncan snatches the phone from Byron's hand, walks over to his desk and drops it into a drawer.

DUNCAN

Anyway, as I was saying, we're gonna--

The phone in the desk starts vibrating, interrupting again. Duncan gets up and opens the drawer. A picture-text pops up on the phone of Byron flicking him off. Duncan looks and sees Byron using a second phone.

BYRON

Can I have my first phone back? My second one gets terrible reception.

Duncan rips the second phone out of Byron's hand.

DUNCAN

What's your problem?

BYRON

You. Look at you. What makes you qualified to teach me? Where did you even go to school?

DUNCAN

Well, I was home schooled--

BYRON

Home schooled?! If you've never been to high school, how can you teach it?

Duncan's smile fades for the first time.

DUNCAN

Well...

BYRON

And if you've never been around students, how can you even pretend to connect with them?

DUNCAN

This is what I'm meant to--

BYRON

I can't think of one single reason I should listen to you. Can you?

DUNCAN

I'm... the teacher?

BYRON

Sorry, Duncan, I just don't see this working out.

Everyone snickers.

BYRON (CONT'D)

And just so we never forget...

Byron gets up, grabs the permanent marker from Duncan's desk and writes on the board under Duncan's name "IS A HUGE DOUCHE." All of the kids erupt in laughter. Byron sits back down, pleased with himself, and gives Duncan a "your move" look. Duncan starts to sweat as the room spins around him.

DUNCAN

I have to go cry... Cry-ton... Michael Crichton... Michael Crichton wrote "Jurassic Park." You guys should talk about that until I get back.

Duncan runs out of the room in a panic.

INT. LIMO - DAY

Arman sits, parked in front of the school, reading a paper. The back door swings open and Duncan jumps inside.

ARMAN

So, fifteen minutes into inspiring
minds, how it going?

Duncan empties his wallet into the front seat.

DUNCAN

(panicked)

How much to hide in here until the end
of the day?

ARMAN

Come on, your money's no good here.
But I will hang onto this movie stub
from "Argo." Never saw it, but
wouldn't mind if people thought I did.

Duncan slides into a fetal position, a broken man.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWOEXT. BELMONT PREP - DAY

Charlotte walks by the limo and sees Duncan through a rolled-down window in the back seat, wiping tears from his eyes.

CHARLOTTE

Duncan?

Charlotte opens the door and gets in.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

Duncan scootches over to make room for her.

CHARLOTTE

What's wrong? Why are you in here crying?

DUNCAN

I'm watching "Problem Child 2." It was the only VHS Arman had in here. It was supposed to cheer me up, but it just made it worse.

(welling up)

Life's really hard for us orphans!

CHARLOTTE

No, why aren't you teaching your class?

DUNCAN

It's this kid. Byron. I wasn't there two minutes before he crucified me in front of the entire class. For the first time in my life he made me doubt if I can really do this.

CHARLOTTE

Look, he's just acting out because he's troubled in some way.

DUNCAN

You think?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah, all kids who do are usually hiding something deeper. If you can figure out what the issue is, you can be the guy who turns his life around.

Duncan starts to come around to the idea and get excited.

DUNCAN

Could be drugs?

CHARLOTTE

Yeah could be, or like maybe he got his girlfriend pregnant?

DUNCAN

Or he could be a closeted homosexual!

CHARLOTTE

(feeding off his excitement)
Or he could totally have an eating disorder!

DUNCAN

Oh my god if I could be so lucky!

CHARLOTTE

See, that's the spirit!

The newly motivated Duncan jumps to his feet and pecks Charlotte on the cheek. Duncan stops for a beat: "Was that weird?" They both dismiss it and Duncan rushes out the limo, ready to take on the world, but then quickly turns around.

DUNCAN

Or maybe he's a vampire?!
(off her look)
You're right, that's stupid... I've seen him in daylight. One down!

INT. BELMONT PREP BASEMENT - LATER

Charlotte rushes down the stairs as she nervously checks her watch. She finds a door with "FORENSICS CLUB" stenciled across the glass and enters.

INT. LAB - CONTINUOUS

It's almost an exact replica of the lab from "CSI", including the cheesy dramatic lighting. A bunch of NERDY KIDS stand around a slab performing an autopsy on a dead possum.

NERDY KID 1

Is it possible that foul play was involved?

NERDY KID 2

When you've been in this business long enough, nothing is...

Nerdy Kid 2 puts on a pair of sunglasses.

NERDY KID 2 (CONT'D)

Impossum-ble.

Another kid hits play on a boombox and the "YEAHHH" from The Who's "Won't Get Fooled Again" blares. Charlotte stumbles in. She shuts off the music and they all turn, annoyed.

NERDY KID 3

Hey, who are you?

CHARLOTTE

Sorry I'm late, I'm Ms. Stevens. Your new faculty advis--

(noticing possum)

Oh sweet Jesus, is that roadkill?!

NERDY KID 2

It's our victim and we're trying to figure out how it died.

ANGLE ON: the tire-marked possum. Clearly it was run over.

CHARLOTTE

Right. Well, I was thinking we could move the club in a new direction. Maybe do a little charity work. Get out of this musty lab and help people.

NERDY KID 3

We do help people. By solving fake murders.

CHARLOTTE

Don't you think that's kind of silly when you could be making a difference for real people.

NERDY KID 1

Listen, we like to look at things under blacklights and pick things up with tweezers. It's what we're about.

CHARLOTTE

But--

NERDY KID 2

Hey, if you don't want to be part of this, you can leave. We'll be fine on our own.

The kids go back to work as Charlotte stands there for a beat. She turns to go, then notices a stain on her sleeve. She gets an idea, runs back over to the slab, pushes the possum onto the floor and climbs onto it.

NERDY KID 1

What are you doing?

CHARLOTTE

The reason I was late today was because... I was murdered! See if you can figure out where, the clues are all over me.

The group gets excited and starts inspecting her.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

I can assure you, detectives, my left boob was not involved in my demise.

(beat, then fed up)

Okay seriously, stop it. Stop poking it. Stop it.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Duncan walks down the hallway and spots Byron. Excited, he makes a bee-line for him.

DUNCAN

Byron! My brotha from a richer motha!

Byron turns to see Duncan and rolls his eyes.

BYRON

What?

DUNCAN

Hey, buddy! I just wanted you to know, as your teacher, if you ever have any problems, school-related or incredibly personal, you can always come talk to me.

BYRON

Okay...

Duncan stands in anticipation. Byron just stares at him.

DUNCAN

So... Do you have any problems you want to talk about?

Byron puts his arm around Duncan and pulls him in.

BYRON

You know what, something is bothering me. I haven't told anyone, but I feel like I can trust you.

(MORE)

BYRON (CONT'D)

You see, one of my teachers is a whiny little bitch, and if he had any self-awareness, he'd do the world a favor and kill himself.

(then, exhales)

You're right, I feel way better.

He smiles at Duncan, then walks away. Duncan, left standing there, notices Byron take a huge bite off a Snickers bar. Duncan pulls a list out of his pocket. It's titled: "Possible Problems." He crosses off "Anorexic." This takes us into the following MONTAGE:

-Duncan watches as Byron solves an equation at the digital board. Byron finishes, revealing his answer: "Byron > Jesus Christ." Byron cockily laughs as he goes back to his seat. Duncan takes out his list and crosses off: "Low Self-Esteem."

-Byron walks up to his locker and notices a DVD stuffed into it. He pulls it out, revealing: "Naughty Firemen 4: Pole Slidin'." Confused, he tosses it into the trash. ANGLE ON: Duncan, disappointed. He crosses "In The Closet" off his list.

-Byron walks up to a bulletin board with several fliers on it (the kind with tabs you rip off), then walks away. Duncan rushes over and eagerly inspects a flier that says "Free Meth." All the tabs are still intact. He pulls out his list, crosses off "Drug Addict" and exits. Connie then walks up, looks around and rips off all the "Free Meth" tabs.

-ANGLE ON: Duncan's list. Everything is crossed out: Cutter, Gang Member, Steroids, Allergic to Gluten. Duncan crumples up the list and tosses it in the trash.

INT. CAMPUS FACULTY HOUSING - NIGHT

Duncan and Charlotte sit around grading papers together.

DUNCAN

I just don't understand. I tried everything, but there's nothing wrong with him, he's too well adjusted. It sucks.

CHARLOTTE

Maybe he's really good at hiding it. Just keep being there for him, and I'm sure he'll come to you when the time is right.

DUNCAN

I hope so... I really want to help the kid. He's clearly suffering.

(MORE)

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I mean, I'm grading his quiz right now, and he just doesn't seem to be--

Duncan stops and looks up. He thinks for a beat and his eyes light up.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

That's it! I've got it! I figured out the reason...

CHARLOTTE

What is it?

DUNCAN

(excited)
He's stupid!

Duncan happily draws a giant "F" on the paper.

INT. CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

Duncan stands at the board -- there is still a faded version of "DUNCAN COOK IS A HUGE DOUCHE" on it. The bell rings and the kids start to pack up. Duncan zeroes in on Byron.

DUNCAN

Byron! Hey, Byron!

Duncan cuts him off at the door.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I think I figured out why you've been having problems in this class.

BYRON

Oh yeah, why's that?

DUNCAN

(sincere)
You just need some smart juice.

BYRON

Huh?

DUNCAN

When I was little, I had the hardest time learning my multiplication tables, and got really down on myself. So my mom gave me a glass of "smart juice" to help me out. I got really excited, drank a ton of it, and studied really hard. And you know what? It worked. I aced all my quizzes.

(MORE)

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

Later she told me it was regular old grape Kool-Aid. It just gave me the confidence I needed to work hard and pass those tests.

(beat)

I want to be your smart juice.

(intense eye contact)

Gulp me down. Let me fill you with self confidence.

BYRON

Uhhh, what?

DUNCAN

Byron, you're clearly acting out because you're frustrated with how you're doing. I can fix that. If you give me a few good hours a week, I guarantee you'll do well.

Byron takes this in, actually considering it.

BYRON

You want to help me pass? And all it'll take is giving you a few good hours?

Byron thinks for a beat, then:

BYRON (CONT'D)

You know what, Mr. Cook. You've got yourself a deal. Let's do it.

They shake hands. Duncan is thrilled.

DUNCAN

Great!

Byron jots down his address and hands it to Duncan.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

So does this mean you don't want me to kill myself?

BYRON

Uh, I guess not.

Duncan smiles and walks away, raising his fists triumphantly.

DUNCAN

He wants me to live!

INT. BAD NEIGHBORHOOD - DAY

Charlotte and the Forensics Club walk down the sidewalk in a rundown neighborhood. The kids are really into this.

NERDY KID 1

We found traces of newly-laid tar on the bottom of your shoes. And after contacting city hall, we figured out that several potholes on this street were covered that same day you were "murdered."

He gestures to the street. There are in fact several freshly-covered potholes. As they continue walking:

NERDY KID 2

We checked out the fibers from that red stain on your jacket. It came from Mama Brava brand tomato paste.

Charlotte raises her eyebrows, impressed.

NERDY KID 1

So we cross referenced all of Mama Brava's local delivery records... and only one came up on this tar-y street.

They reach the front of an old, beat-up building.

NERDY KID 1 (CONT'D)

Here!

Charlotte smiles.

CHARLOTTE

Well done, guys. This is the scene of the crime... and it's an unspeakable crime at that.

Nerdy Kid 3 crosses his fingers:

NERDY KID 3

Come on, double-rape-homicide, come on, double-rape-homicide...

She opens the door to the building. One kid has a blacklight all ready to go.

INT. OLD BUILDING - CONTINUOUS

It's a soup kitchen filled with homeless people.

CHARLOTTE

You wanted murder, boys, here you go.
 (proud of herself)
 Someone killed the hopes and dreams of
 these poor souls!

The kids all groan. They are not amused.

CHARLOTTE (CONT'D)

And now that you've solved it, let's
 carry out justice and get them back on
 their feet!

Charlotte looks at the kids, impressed with herself. They
 just stare at her.

NERDY KID 1

We went to all that effort for this?
 We could have been using this time for
 cold cases we still have to solve! A
 litter of baby possums is out there
 wondering why someone decided to take
 their father's life!

CHARLOTTE

I thought this combined everyone's
 interests. The best of both worlds.

NERDY KID 2

No. You just tricked us so we'd do
 what you want to do.

The Kids walk off. Charlotte is left standing there, feeling
 terrible. She notices a coughing HOMELESS GUY.

CHARLOTTE

Wait! Come back, this guy looks like
 he might die soon! That could be fun!

HOMELESS GUY

You know, I'd say you're wrong, but I
 just found a hypodermic in my leg, and
 I didn't put it there, so... maybe?

INT. BYRON'S DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Duncan tutors Byron at the center of a luxurious antique
 table that could comfortably seat thirty.

DUNCAN

...So a binomial coefficient is the
 total amount of combinations from the
 different sets of numbers.

(MORE)

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I had a bi-curious uncle so I always remember it as the theorem to determine the amount of options he had at a party depending on which way he was planning to swing.

BYRON

That totally makes sense. Hey, are you hungry?

Byron rings a bell. Servants enter with plate after plate of gourmet food. Duncan stares in awe.

DUNCAN

Wow, this is amazing! With my salary I've been living off of Ecto Cooler and Count Chocula... pretty much just a monster-based diet.

BYRON

Well, consider this a thank you.

MONTAGE:

-Byron and Duncan lay face down on massage tables as they get worked on by masseuses. Duncan holds up a text book under the opening of the table where Byron looks down through.

-Duncan and Byron lay by a pool. Duncan holds a math question up to Byron. Byron shrugs. Duncan spins around, revealing his tanned back -- except for a quadratic formula he had written earlier in suntan lotion.

-Duncan and Byron sit courtside at a Knicks game. Duncan tries to explain something to Byron, who is clearly not understanding. Duncan reaches over and grabs a dry erase board from the Knicks' coach. He wipes it clean, then draws a graph to better explain. Byron nods, getting it. The coach snatches his board back and screams at Duncan.

INT. BYRON'S DINING ROOM - DAYS LATER

Byron and Duncan continue to study. They get to the last page and Duncan shuts the book.

DUNCAN

Well, I think you're ready for tomorrow.

BYRON

If you say so, Mr. Cook.

DUNCAN

Byron, I know so.

Duncan checks his watch.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

I better get going, the last bus leaves in ten minutes and I'd prefer not to sleep at the station again. It gets a little cold there... but there's usually plenty of body heat from all the rats, so I guess it's not so bad.

BYRON

You know, I can give you a ride.

INT. HELICOPTER - LATER

Duncan's face is pressed against the glass as he takes in the incredible view below him.

DUNCAN

This is amazing! I've never even been in a hatchback before, let alone a helicopter.

BYRON

Actually, I have another surprise.

Byron takes out a pitcher of grape Kool-Aid and pours them each a glass. Duncan is touched.

DUNCAN

Smart juice. You remembered.

They cheers as Byron takes a photo of them with his phone.

INT. CAMPUS FACULTY HOUSING - DAY

Charlotte, frustrated, sits watching episodes of "CSI." She hears a HELICOPTER outside and turns to look. Duncan enters.

CHARLOTTE

Did you just get airdropped back home?

DUNCAN

Oh that? That was Byron. He's done a complete one-eighty. He's letting me tutor him, he's excited for class and he hasn't left feces on my desk in days... I've really connected with him!

CHARLOTTE

(bitter)
How terrific for you.

Duncan walks off as she goes back to watching "CSI." D-Lo enters, wearing overly-tight jeans. He poses, crotch out.

D-LO

Charlotte, let's say you see this profile from across the dance floor. Does this package intrigue you? Or does it threaten you?

CHARLOTTE

It reminds me to buy more socks.

D-Lo pulls a giant wad of socks out of his pants.

D-LO

Whoa, nice detective skills. Those kids in the Forensics Club must love you.

CHARLOTTE

No, the opposite. They hate my guts.

D-LO

What happened?

CHARLOTTE

I tried to use the club for good, but I just ended up letting them all down. They don't want to volunteer, they just want to look at evidence with blacklights. I guess I should have respected that.

D-Lo thinks for a beat.

D-LO

I got an idea for how to make you feel better...

CHARLOTTE

Look, D-Lo, you and me are like 50 Cent and an acting career -- you can try all you want, but it's never gonna happen.

D-LO

No, I meant I know how to fix things between you and the club. I know just where to take them.

CHARLOTTE

Really?!

Charlotte jumps off the couch, re-energized.

D-LO
 Sure do, let me just grab my
 windbreaker.

D-Lo pulls a jacket out from the crotch of his pants and they exit.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Duncan stands in front of the class as they work on a test.

DUNCAN
 Alright everyone, pass them in.

The kids leave and hand in their tests. Byron is the last.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)
 How do you think you did?

BYRON
 I think you know how I did.

They high-five.

DUNCAN
 High-five, so cool! Hey, have you
 thought much about when we're going to
 step it up to low-fives? I have. I
 think about it all the time.

Byron smiles and exits. Duncan starts grading his test. Duncan is shocked as he marks answer after answer wrong. Byron's clearly failed. Confused, Duncan runs out after him.

INT. HALLWAY - DAY

Byron is talking to his buddies. Duncan rushes over, holding Byron's test, and pulls him aside.

DUNCAN
 Byron, what happened?!

BYRON
 What are you talking about?

DUNCAN
 You failed!

BYRON
 What?! Why did you do that?!

DUNCAN
 Because you only got 35 percent of the
 answers right...

BYRON

But I held up my end of the agreement!

DUNCAN

What do you mean?

BYRON

I did my part! The dinners, the massages, the freakin' HELICOPTER!

DUNCAN

Wait... you were bribing me?

BYRON

You really think you'd be my first choice to bring courtside to a Knicks game?!

ANGLE ON: ERNIE, Byron's buddy, decked out in Knicks gear.

ERNIE

You took him?! Over me?! I AM THE KNICKS!

Ernie throws his Knicks hat on the ground and storms off.

BYRON

We had a deal! And you didn't hold up your end -- I was supposed to pass!

DUNCAN

Byron, I was trying to help you! I'm sorry you misunderstood that. I would never trade good grades for gifts.

BYRON

Well I'm sorry too. Real sorry for you. Because I'm gonna take you down. Your days at Belmont are numbered.

Byron storms off. Duncan just stands there, stunned. After a beat, Ernie walks back over and picks up his hat.

ERNIE

Did he take you the night Nickelback sang the National Anthem?

Duncan reluctantly nods.

ERNIE (CONT'D)

(that really hurt)
Dammit.

END OF ACT TWO

ACT THREEEXT. BELMONT PREP - MORNING

Duncan and Connie, who's clearly hungover, walk toward the school. She inspects a vial of pills.

DUNCAN

I can't go in there. Byron's gonna make my life a living hell.

CONNIE

Ugh, my head is spinning. Does this say Tylenol or Ketamine?

DUNCAN

Tylenol.

CONNIE

Okay, good. I keep my Ecstasy in a Tylenol container.

She pops a pill.

DUNCAN

I can't believe Byron thought I'd make such a ridiculous agreement with him.

CONNIE

(quote fingers)
What sort of "agreement"?

DUNCAN

He thought he was bribing me-- Wait, what were you just doing with your hands? Why does everyone do that around here?

CONNIE

What? Quote-fingers?

DUNCAN

Yeah, what is that?

CONNIE

(can't believe she has to explain this)
Wow. It's what people do to imply something, without actually saying it.

Duncan thinks for a moment, then:

INT. CLASSROOM - FLASHBACK

We flashback to the scene where Duncan offers to help Byron. This time, we are a little wider -- and can see Byron's hands. He does quote-fingers as he talks.

BYRON
(quote fingers)
You want to "help me" pass?

Duncan smiles and nods.

BYRON (CONT'D)
And all it'll take is "giving you" a few "good hours?"

Duncan smiles and nods.

EXT. BELMONT PREP - BACK TO SCENE

DUNCAN
Wow, we were on very different pages.

CONNIE
Look, I'm sure he's
(quote fingers)
"forgotten" all about it.

DUNCAN
Yeah, maybe he-- Ohhh. You're messing with me. Got it.

They enter:

INT. SCHOOL LOBBY - CONTINUOUS

Photocopies cover every inch of the hallway walls. On each one is Duncan and Byron in the helicopter, cheers-ing with what looks like wine, with the caption: "Mr. Cook's favorite equation: Wining + Dining = 69ing... HIS STUDENTS! Don't be his next victim!" Duncan goes white, horrified.

CONNIE
Didn't know you were such a romantic.

DUNCAN
This is obviously not true! That little rat is setting me up!

CONNIE
Give the kid some credit. He's willing to lead people to believe that he was molested. That's some serious commitment to a smear campaign.

DUNCAN

Quick, help me take all these down
before anyone sees!

He starts frantically ripping down the posters. An OFFICE AIDE taps him on the shoulder.

OFFICE AIDE

Mr. Cook, the Headmaster would like a
word with you.

DUNCAN

(struggling to be optimistic)
A word. One word... okay, can't be
that bad. Maybe it's
"congratulations," or "Yahtzee!"

CONNIE

Or "fired"? Or "pedophilia charges"?
No, that's two words. Yeah, you're
right, it's probably "Yahtzee."

INT. CAMPUS FACULTY HOUSING - AFTERNOON

D-Lo and Charlotte walk through their living room. The Forensics Kids trail behind them.

NERDY KID 1

You better not be tricking us again.
This place has a very similar vibe to
that soup kitchen...

CHARLOTTE

Don't worry. No more tricks, guys.
(to D-Lo)
This better work.

D-LO

Trust me, they're gonna love it.

They get to D-Lo's room. It's dark inside. He ushers everyone in. The Kids stand around, disappointed.

NERDY KID 2

Sweet. A dark room...

CHARLOTTE

(under her breath, to D-Lo)
What are you doing?

D-LO

Sure, it might look like an ordinary
room, but why don't you turn on those
blacklights, boys.

They all do. The dark room is suddenly illuminated in purple stains. They're all over his bed, his desk, the ceiling, etc.

CHARLOTTE

Gross--

NERDY KID 1

Look at all this evidence! DNA everywhere!

NERDY KIDS

Yes! / Awesome! / So many stains!

They scurry around, enthusiastically examining all the stains with their kits. Charlotte turns to D-Lo, thanking him with a smile, then joins the kids.

CHARLOTTE

This is fun, right?

NERDY KID 2

It's not just fun...
(puts on sunglasses)
It's out-stain-ding!

They all stare at a kid holding a boombox. He realizes they're waiting on him, presses play and The Who blares again.

INT. HEADMASTER'S OFFICE - DAY

Duncan enters, nervous. The Headmaster sits at his desk.

HEADMASTER

Come in, Mr. Cook. Take a seat.

Duncan sits in a leather-upholstered chair across from him.

HEADMASTER (CONT'D)

Comfy, isn't it? Made from real manatee calflings. There are only ten of these in the U.S. The other nine are at my house. Now, I think you know why you're here.

DUNCAN

Sir, this is all a big mix up. The things Byron are claiming are--

HEADMASTER

Untrue? Relax, Mr. Cook. That's why I called you in. I know he was trying to bribe you.

DUNCAN
You do? Oh, thank God.

HEADMASTER
And you should have taken it.

DUNCAN
What?!

HEADMASTER
As I said in orientation, this school is a training ground for future politicians and CEOs. What Byron did is exactly what gets you ahead in those kinds of fields. We shouldn't punish him for displaying such behavior. We should reward him. Besides, his father did pay for the polo field.

DUNCAN
But we're supposed to be driving these kids to go on to do great things, not pay for shortcuts.

HEADMASTER
Mr. Cook, this school isn't a Michelle Pfeiffer movie with an excellent soundtrack by Coolio, this is a business. And if you can't wrap your head around that, maybe you don't have a place at Belmont Prep.

Duncan, devastated, gets up to leave.

HEADMASTER (CONT'D)
And Mr. Cook, when someone tells you they have a chair made out of baby manatee flesh, you fucking compliment it.

INT. CAMPUS FACULTY HOUSING - DAY

Charlotte walks down the hall, riding high off her victory. She enters Duncan's room and sees him pulling the Christmas lights off the slave chains.

CHARLOTTE
Hey, wanna know what CSI really stands for? Charlotte. Successfully...
(long beat)
I don't know what the "I" is yet, but I won my club over and we should go celebrate.

DUNCAN

I can't, I have to finish packing.

CHARLOTTE

What?! You're leaving? Why?

DUNCAN

I know I'm a bit sheltered, but I really thought I could come here and do what my mom did for me. But now it's clear, I don't have what it takes to teach. Especially at Belmont.

CHARLOTTE

Everyone struggles along the way--

DUNCAN

Look, I'm a guy who clearly doesn't understand how things work. Byron was right, I'm not qualified to do this.

Duncan shuts his suitcase and stands.

CHARLOTTE

You can't leave.

DUNCAN

Why not?

CHARLOTTE

Because I need you here. You're the only other person who cares about this as much as I do.

DUNCAN

I'm sorry. Take care, Charlotte.

Duncan forces a smile as he walks past her and exits. Charlotte stands there, upset. After a beat, D-Lo enters.

D-LO

So I'm trying to decide on a calf tattoo. I'm either gonna get my mom's name, or a picture of Scarface--
(off the empty room)
What happened to, uh, other guy?

CHARLOTTE

He quit.

D-LO

Are you alright? You look upset.

CHARLOTTE

I'm fine. Thanks again for helping me out with the club. That was really sweet. Sorry I misjudged you.

D-LO

Don't worry about it, because I correctly judged you.

CHARLOTTE

As?

D-LO

Super cute, kinda awesome, probably decent at Mario Kart. I don't know, those were just my first instincts.

Charlotte smiles and blushes.

EXT. BELMONT PREP - MOMENTS LATER

Duncan sits on his suitcase. Arman rolls up in his limo.

ARMAN

Duncan, waiting for someone?

DUNCAN

Just a cab to the train station.

ARMAN

A cab, huh? Wow. Kinda an F-you to your buddy who drives limo. Get in.

Duncan hops into the backseat and they take off.

INT. LIMO - CONTINUOUS

In the front seat next to Arman is a caged ferret.

ARMAN

Who was that girl who checked on you in limo a while back?

DUNCAN

Charlotte?

ARMAN

She is very pretty. Hair beautiful red, like the fires that reduce my village to ash.

DUNCAN

Yeah, she's great, but that doesn't matter anymore.

Arman almost runs a stop sign and slams on the brakes. The cage tips over and the ferret disappears into the backseat.

DUNCAN (CONT'D)

What's with the ferret?

ARMAN

Next assignment for veterinary school is ferret circumcision. I think it's self mutilation, but who am I to argue with someone else's religion?

DUNCAN

You're going to veterinary school?

ARMAN

Yes. After our talk I go and chase my dream. Enroll in night classes. I guess I owe you thanks.

Duncan thinks for a beat and his eyes widen.

DUNCAN

Arman, turn this limo around!

ARMAN

What?

DUNCAN

I didn't think I had it in me, but I did inspire someone after all: you! Just like my mom did for me. Maybe I can make it work at Belmont!

Arman smiles and sharply turns the car around. Duncan and the ferret go sliding across the backseat.

INT. CAMPUS FACULTY HOUSING - NIGHT

Duncan excitedly bursts through the front door. No one is in the living room. He starts eagerly looking around.

DUNCAN

Charlotte? Anyone home? Guess who had a change of heart? I'll give you a hint, it's someone who prefers the taste of astronaut ice cream to regular ice cream...

Duncan hears a creaking noise. He rounds the corner, and realizes it's coming from D-Lo's room. Through a tiny crack in the door, he can see a sliver of D-Lo and Charlotte making out on the swaying, creaking sex swing. Crushed, he pulls away before he can see anything else.

INT. DUNCAN'S ROOM - LATER

Duncan is laying his clothes out for the next morning.

DUNCAN (V.O.)

I'm still excited to see what the future holds for me here at Belmont Prep, even though everything hasn't gone completely according to plan...

Duncan stops to hear the sex swing continue to creak.

DUNCAN (V.O.) (CONT'D)

I know things don't always work out how you hope, but, like everything else, Mom prepared me for that too.

INT. KITCHEN/MOCK SCHOOL DANCE - FLASHBACK

A thirteen-year-old Duncan finishes dancing with his Mom.

DUNCAN

Should I get us some punch?

DUNCAN'S MOM

That'd be lovely.

Duncan walks over to a little table with a punch bowl and pours them two glasses. He turns to walk back, but stops as he sees his Mom is now slow dancing with Teddy Ruxpin.

DUNCAN

(to self, betrayed)
So much for bros before hoes, huh, Ruxpin?

END OF SHOW