

MICK: A KID WHO FOUGHT

Based on true life events

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HOLLINS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL - DAY

Blossoming Spring trees.

INT. THIRD GRADE MATH CLASS - DAY

Twenty-nine third-graders pay attention to the Math teacher, MR. CHARLES BURLY (47) large and strong, a bitter, failed scientist, as he writes on the board.

MR. BURLY

Okay class, adding four four-digit numbers: 1,264 plus 2,438 plus 9,631 plus 6,499.

All the kids watch intently except for one boy, MIKOLAJ (MICK) WIECZOREK (9) lanky, excess energy, bouncing his knee.

He sits halfway along the windows, speeds his pen across his paper. He writes the same four four-digit numbers.

MR. BURLY

Now watch. Always start with the right column, 4 plus 8 plus 1 plus 9.

Mick's pen zips down the left digits touching each number lightly, he taps above the hundred's column, writes below the thousands, "19".

His pen zips down the hundreds, he taps the ten's column, writes "8" under the hundred's.

MR. BURLY

22, right? So we put "2" and carry the twenty.

Burly puts a "2" above the twenty's digits.

Mick's pen zips down the tens, he taps the right column, writes "3" below the ten's and a "2" below the right column.

He gazes at the numbers, shrugs, looks out the window. An eagle soars.

MR. BURLY
 Now 2 plus 3 plus 3 plus 6 plus 9.
 Okay, 23. So we put "3" and carry
 the two hundred.

Burly notices Mick.

MR. BURLY
 Uh-hum!

Mick doesn't turn.

MR. BURLY
 Mick!

Timidly, Mick looks at Burly.

MR. BURLY
 Mick, this lesson is for you, also.

Mick holds up his paper.

MICK
 19,832, Sir.

Many kids SNICKER. Burly frowns, his cheek twitches.

Embarrassed, Mick looks down.

MICK
 I, I'm sorry, Mr. Burly.

MR. BURLY
 Mikolaj Wieczorek, you will stay
 after school today.

Mick bites his bottom lip, fighting back a tear in one eye.
 He wipes it.

A girl sitting next to him, JAN MELTON (9) thick glasses,
 long braided pony tail, frumpy clothes, puts a tissue on
 Mick's desk. He looks the other way.

EXT. ROAD WORKS - DAY

A flagman waves cars around machines and men working on a
 stretch of highway. A sign reads, "Virginia State Road
 Works, City of Alexandria," followed by cost details.

Mick's father, POP (50) rugged, Polish, thick accent, slight
 broken English, short and stocky, drives a Roller machine,
 flattens newly leveled dirt.

He arrives at the end of the stretch, stops prior to reversing back over the road.

The FOREMAN (35) big arrogant S.O.B., struts along the newly dumped soil. He yells at an older man, BAKER (60) limps, who pulls sticks out of the pile.

FOREMAN
Hurry up, Baker, get those sticks.

Baker hustles, as quickly as he can.

FOREMAN
Faster, Baker, we ain't got all day.

The Foreman approaches Baker, shoves him so he falls in the dirt. The Foreman laughs.

FOREMAN
Where you belong, old man, ha!

The Foreman looks up to see Pop watching.

FOREMAN
And what's your problem, Pole man!

Pop shakes his head, no, reverses the Roller machine, looks backward and drives off.

INT. MICK'S DINING/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

One large room. A photo on a sideboard shows Lech Walesa (Poland's famous freedom leader) shaking hands with an elderly man, who looks like an older version of Pop.

Above the photo are three round award plaques:

"THOMAZ WIECZOREK, BEST MATH STUDENT, HUNT HIGH SCHOOL."
"THOMAZ WIECZOREK, BEST SCIENCE STUDENT, HUNT HIGH SCHOOL."
"THOMAZ WIECZOREK, VALEDICTORIAN, HUNT HIGH SCHOOL."

Mick, MOM (45) Polish, small, slight accent, Pop and THOMAZ (18) Mick's studious, straight "A" brother, eat dinner.

POP
So, Mikolaj, you do bad in school again?

MICK
Poppa, I wasn't--

THOMAZ

So why'd you have to stay after?

MICK

Poppa, the teacher, he--

POP

Now, you do not blame teacher. His job to help you.

MICK

But--

POP

Enough! Do not stir a tiger.

MOM

Maybe we should talk to the teacher.

Pop ignores her, eats.

MOM

Poppa, maybe we should talk to the teacher. Your father would have--

Pop throws his napkin on his plate, stands.

POP

Father's dead. Maybe you talk to Mikolaj. Thomaz never bad student.

Pop points over at Thomaz's plaques.

POP

Mikolaj, you can do better.

Pop stomps away.

MOM

Mikolaj, the school year is almost finished. Next year you might get a better teacher.

Mick nods, thankfully.

THOMAZ

Momma--

MOM

Thomaz, Mikolaj is not you.

Mom reaches over and pats Mick's arm.

INT. MICK'S BATHROOM - NIGHT

Mick enters as Thomaz finishes brushing his teeth, rinsing from a glass.

THOMAZ

If you were born in Poland, you'd understand.

MICK

You were only three when you came here.

THOMAZ

Micky, I was born... in... Poland.

Thomaz puts his glass down.

INT. BAR - NIGHT

Burly slams his glass down, as he drinks with two friends, TED and BOB (45ish). He's had too many.

MR. BURLY

Polish... a 9 year old, little wise ass.

TED

Ha, you wouldn't be a bit jealous?

BOB

Had a gifted rival beat you in school, eh, Burly?

MR. BURLY

The bastard got my science job, got the prettiest girl, too.

Burly downs another.

MR. BURLY

Not jealous, not me. Kids like him are... shits.

Burly passes out, falling face down on the table. His friends laugh.

TED

Nope, not jealous... at... all.

BOB

Poor Burly.

TED

Poor kid.

EXT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Lower income suburbs. The second story bedroom window juts out of the roof. Mick opens it, looks out.

Super careful, obviously scared of heights, he climbs out onto the slanted roof. He clings on tightly, crawls up over the window.

His hands clasp firmly on an exhaust pipe, he lies back, gazes at the stars.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Kids play. Mick lies on a table top, gazing at the clouds. ROBERT BOREN (9) chubby, brainy in all subjects, comes over.

ROBERT

Hey.

Mick sits up. They shake hands in a "personalized" give-me-five handshake.

MICK

What's up, Rob?

Robert pulls out some chewing gum, offers a stick to Mick, who takes it.

ROBERT

New sub Math teacher.

MICK

Triple awesome. Can't be worse than Burly.

They race to the school.

INT. THIRD GRADE MATH CLASS - DAY

Mick and Robert enter, head to their seats. Robert sits in front of Mick.

MR. STEWART (40) pleasant looking and temperament, stands in front as all the kids come in.

ROBERT

Y'know, Mick my dude, one of these days, I'm going to top you in Math.

MICK

Hey, you get A's in everything, don't be greedy.

Mr. Stewart stands.

MR. STEWART

Good morning, My name's Mr. Stewart. Mr. Burly has an urgent family matter, so I'll be your Math teacher for the rest of the year.

Joy, smiles on all the kids. Mick whispers to Robert.

MICK

Triple awesome times ten.

MR. STEWART

So first we have a test.

Shock. The kids murmur.

MR. STEWART

I know it's my first day, so don't worry. This won't count for your grades. I'm just interested to see how much you know without warning.

MICK

Race you. Fifty cents for the winner.

ROBERT

You're on.

Mr. Stewart hands out the test papers.

MR. STEWART

Okay, you have one hour. If you can't finish them all, that's fine, be sure to do your work next to the question. Always show your work because on real tests, that can give you extra points.

The classroom clock shows 1:00.

All the kids busily answer the questions. Mick's hand moves down the paper faster than anyone's.

INT. THIRD GRADE MATH CLASS - LATER

Mick's watch displays 1:20. He stands.

MICK

Uh-hum.

Rob glances, gives Mick a thumbs up and an envious frown.

Jan looks up, sighs.

He walks to Mr. Stewart, hands over his paper. Mr. Stewart appears stunned. He glances at the paper, there are only answers, no work.

MR. STEWART

Uh, Mick, perhaps you should check
you work.

MICK

I did, Sir.

Mr. Stewart's eyes squint at Mick.

MR. STEWART

Perhaps a second time would be
good.

MICK

I checked it three times, Sir.
They're all correct.

Mick turns, walks back to his seat.

Mr. Stewart compares Mick's paper to his answer paper. All answers are correct. He shakes his head in astonishment, marks the paper "100". He looks up at Mick.

Mick stares out the window, tapping his pen on his knee as if listening to music.

INT. MICK'S KITCHEN - DAY

Mick races in, gives Mom a big hug.

MICK

Momma, I got a hundred on my Math
test today!

MOM

That's nice, dear. Here's your favorite brownies. Just one before dinner.

Mick carefully picks a corner one from the edge of the plate, which has the most crust. He hugs Mom again.

MICK

You're the world's greatest Mom!

He dances out of the kitchen.

INT. MICK'S DINING/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pop reads on the sofa. Mick hops in. He looks over at Thomaz's Math award, takes a big breath and nods. He clenches his fist and mouths the words, "one day, mine"

He HICCUPS. Again. Again. He giggles.

POP

Come.

Mick comes close, turns around. Pop puts his hands over Mick's ears. Mick squeezes his nose shut, takes a big breath and holds it.

Hiccups stop. He smiles. Pop lets go, Mick hugs him.

MICK

Thanks, Poppa. I got a hundred on my Math test today!

POP

Yeah. And how do your English grade?

Mick looks down, shuffles.

POP

Thomaz does A's in English, too.

Mick bites his bottom lip.

INT. THIRD GRADE MATH CLASS - DAY

Mr. Stewart stands in front. He finishes explaining how to multiply 9 times 4,952 the standard way.

MR. STEWART
 So, that's how to multiply 9 times
 4,952. It equals 44,568.

Mick raises his hand.

MR. STEWART
 Yes, Mick.

MR. STEWART
 Sir, I can do that faster with
 subtraction.

MR. STEWART
 Really? Come up and show us.

Mick comes to the front.

MICK
 Sir, nine equals ten minus one.

He writes 49,520 minus 4,952.

MICK
 So subtracting 49,520 minus 4,952.
 Zero becomes ten minus two is
 eight. Two becomes one becomes
 eleven minus five is six. Five
 becomes four becomes fourteen minus
 nine is five. Forty-nine becomes
 forty-eight minus four is forty-
 four. Answer, 44,568.

Mr. Stewart smiles in awe.

INT. TEACHERS' LOUNGE - DAY

Relaxed. Mr. Stewart talks with the English teacher, SAM
 (40) about Mick.

SAM
 Well, Burly reckoned Mick's a wise
 ass. "Irritated by the kid" is a
 huge understatement.

MR. STEWART
 Jealous?

SAM
 Maybe, but Mick's just scratching
 to get a "D" in English.

Mr. Stewart looks out the window, nods.

MR. STEWART
He'll be fine.

INT. THIRD GRADE MATH CLASS - DAY

Mr. Stewart stands in front.

MR. STEWART
Well, it's been fun for me. I hope
the same for all of you. Good luck
next year in Fourth grade. I'll see
you all around the school.

The bell RINGS. Mick sits as all the kids charge out, some
saying thanks and good-bye to Mr. Stewart. They all leave.

Mick approaches Mr. Stewart.

MICK
You've been my greatest teacher.

MR. STEWART
Thank you, Mick. And you've been my
most outstanding Math student. But
keep in mind that life has more
than just Math. Good luck to you in
all of life.

Mick beams. They shake hands. Mick dances out of the room.

EXT. MICK'S STREET - DAY

Autumn leaves. Mick and Robert ride their bikes.

MICK
Sure miss Mr. Stewart.

ROBERT
Yeah, but we're big Fourth graders
now. Mrs. Caron ain't too bad.
Might have gotten Burly again.

MICK
Thank the cosmos.

Mick turns off into his home.

ROBERT
Catch you tomorrow.

MICK
If you can.

Mick speeds up his driveway, parks his bike against the house, dashes inside.

INT. MICK'S KITCHEN - DAY

An open Brownie mix box, bowl and cooking tray. A knocked over chair lies on the floor next to spilled flour.

MICK (O.S.)
Momma, I'm home.

Mick races in.

MICK
Momma?

He looks around at the mess.

MICK
Momma!

He runs

THROUGH THE LIVING/DINING ROOM

UP THE STAIRS

INTO HIS PARENT'S ROOM

Mom lies on the floor. Mick races to her.

MICK
Momma! Momma!

Mom slowly opens her eyes.

MOM
Mikolaj, I'm tired. Give me a hug.

Tears in his eyes, Mick hugs Mom.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Mick, Pop and Thomaz stand close to an open grave. Forty friends surround them. The MINISTER finishes the service.

MINISTER

May Mrs. Rose Wieczorek rest in
peace.

EVERYONE

Amen.

Pop steps forward, grabs some dirt and drops it in the
grave. He looks to Thomaz and Mick. Thomaz does similar,
turns to Mick.

Mick stands still, stares.

EXT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mick opens his bedroom window, climbs out onto the slanted
roof. Crawls up over the window. He curls himself around the
exhaust pipe.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Kids play before school begins. Jan runs up to Robert.

JAN

Seen Micky yet?

ROBERT

Jan hot on Micky?

Jan blushes. Robert offers her a stick of chewing gum, she
refuses.

JAN

I... I... I'm just a concerned
friend. It's been a week.

Robert checks his iPhone.

ROBERT

Eight days, sixteen hours, thirty-
two min--
(he points)
Checkmate.

SILENCE. All the kids stop playing and watch Mick approach.

INT. FOURTH GRADE MATH CLASS - DAY

Mick enters. The teacher, MRS. CARON (55) pleasant,
matronly, stops him.

MRS. CARON
Mick, how are you?

MICK
Fine, Ma'am.

MRS. CARON
I'm very sorry about your mother.

MICK
Thank you.

MRS. CARON
Did you keep up with your homework?

MICK
Of course, Ma'am.

MRS. CARON
Very good.

Mick sits behind Robert and next to Jan.

ROBERT
You kidding? Since when do you do
Math homework?

Mick shrugs.

MRS. CARON
Okay, pop test today.

ROBERT
Cool.

Mick stares blankly.

JAN
Mick, you haven't been here, you
didn't see the work. Tell her. You
won't have to do the test.

ROBERT
Yeah, right, you're just afraid
I'll finally top you.

Mick frowns at Robert who drops his expression.

ROBERT
Hey, sorry, I'm a shit, wrong day.

MICK
I'll do it.

JAN
But Mick, it was new stuff.

MICK
I'll figure it out.

The clock reads 9:00. Mrs. Caron hands out the tests.

MRS. CARON
You have forty-five minutes.

Robert zooms into it. Mick reads the questions slowly.

The clock reads 9:25.

Mick's paper is half done. He watches Robert stand, take his paper to the teacher.

The clock reads 9:45.

MRS. CARON
Okay, kids, hand in your papers.

Jan looks at Mick's unfinished paper as he hands his test forward.

JAN
Mick, tell her.

Mick looks away.

MICK
It's just a pop test. I'll get hundreds on the real tests.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Lunch break, kids play everywhere. Mick and Robert throw Frisbee, not great, but not too bad for their age. Mick's face is stoic.

ROBERT
You should tell her.

Mick throws the Frisbee down.

MICK
Look, knock it off. I said, it doesn't matter. A pop test is nothing. It's not worth stirring--

ROBERT
That's what your dad says.

Mick's bottom lip quivers. He fights back the emotions.

ROBERT
Hey, I'm sorry, I'm sorry.

Robert races to Mick, puts his arm over Mick's shoulders.

ROBERT
Mick, I'm sorry. I'll buy you an
ice cream.

They walk to the cafeteria.

INT. FOURTH GRADE MATH CLASS - DAY

SUPER: ONE MONTH LATER

Mick walks in, greets Robert who sits at his desk.

ROBERT
Report card day.

MICK
Another "A", eh?

Mick and Robert give each other their personalized "give me five" handshake.

MICK
Hundreds on every test, no sweat.

Mick plunks down behind Robert.

Jan sits next to Mick, "hiding" behind her thick glasses. She timidly opens her notebook, guarding it from Mick's view. It shows, "Mick & Jan" written inside many hearts.

Mrs. Caron hands out the Math report cards.

MRS. CARON
So here's your report cards.

Robert receives his, "B".

ROBERT
What!?

Mick gets an "A".

MICK
As always.

Mick glances at Robert's "B".

MICK
How'd you get that?

They both stare incredulous at Robert's card. Their eyes go to three 100s for the regular tests and one D for the pop test.

ROBERT
This... this ain't--

Mick spots his name on the report card Robert holds.

MICK
Shit!

They slowly swap cards.

Almost a whisper. Mick stares at the "B".

MICK
What... the...

Robert stands up, faces the teacher.

ROBERT
Ma'am.

MRS. CARON
Yes, Robert.

ROBERT
I don't deserve this "A". If Mick gets a "B", then I should, also.

MRS. CARON
Robert, you earned your "A" and everyone else earned what they received.

ROBERT
But Ma'am--

MRS. CARON
That's enough.

ROBERT
But Ma'am, Mick's smarter than me!

Jan stands.

JAN
Mrs. Caron--

MRS. CARON
I said, that's enough. Jan and
Robert, both of you sit down or
leave this room and visit the
principal.

Jan sits. Mick taps Robert.

MICK
Rob, it isn't worth it.

Robert sits.

ROBERT
You should have told her.

Mick picks up his pen. Holds it hard against his paper.
Harder. Harder. It BREAKS.

Jan puts another pen on Mick's desk. He looks the other way.

EXT. ELEMENTARY SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Lunch break. Mick strolls aimlessly, talking to himself.

MICK
Should have, should have told, no,
don't stir anything, not worth it,
worth it, yes, no.

Jan sits with her best girl friend, BETSY (10) redhead.

Mick stops, watches a bully, BILLY (10) butch haircut,
biggest kid in Fourth grade, with two butch cropped buddies,
JAKE (10) and TED (9) approach Jan.

BILLY
Hey frumpy, what's it like to be an
Alien?

He forms his hands to pretend he has on glasses.

Jan tries to stay calm.

BETSY
Billy, you stop that.

BILLY
You stop that, you stop that.

He puts his face near Jan's.

BILLY
Who's going to make me?

Mick stands fifteen feet away.

Jan races away. Betsy follows.

BETSY
I'm going to tell on you.

BILLY
Frumpy bug-eyes Alien, frumpy
sweater, ha, ha, ha.

Mick clenches both fists.

Billy spots Mick, strides over. His buddies surround Mick.

BILLY
Got a problem?

Mick looks down.

BILLY
Maybe you like Alien, ha.

Billy shoves Mick hard, laughs. He and his buddies run off, push some other kids.

Mick bites his bottom lip.

INT. MICK'S DINING/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Pop reads. Mick moseys in, heads to the sideboard, grabs the photo of Lech Walesa shaking hands with an older man. He sits next to Pop.

MICK
Poppa, tell me a story about
Grandpa.

Pop grabs the photo, puts his finger on the man shaking hands with Lech Walesa.

POP

Your Grandpa, my father was very good, strong man. A lawyer. You want be a lawyer?

MICK

No, never.

POP

Good, never be lawyer. Lawyer job too dangerous. Your Grandpa, he helped many, many people, but also stirred too many tigers...

Mick's eyes glaze over.

EXT. MARTIAL ARTS SCHOOL - DAY

Mick stares at the window display, including a video with black belts sparring. A sign reads, "NEW CLASSES, EIGHT WEEKS \$400." He frowns.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Mick browses the boxing, martial art section. He takes three books.

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mick reads a Kung Fu book. He bounces up, attempts the Horse Stance. He glances at the book, makes a hit move. Checks the book, makes a dodge. Again the book, he tries a kick.

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

MICK (17) average build, kicks a stuffed bag on the end of a rope hanging from the ceiling. An Advanced Kung Fu book rests on his desk.

Quite skilled, he knocks two tennis balls hanging on strings next to the bag. As they swing, he dodges them with hits and kicks at the bag.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Mick, regular clothes, bustles with other kids checking their new schedules, heading to their rooms. Mick checks his list, CALCULUS - 10:00 - MR. BURLY - ROOM 201.

He looks at the door number, 205. He walks, 203. He approaches the Calculus room, 201.

ROBERT (17) black turtle neck sweater, the "brain" of the school - except for Mick in Math, strides from the other direction, with BETSY (17) who wears hip clothes and hair.

They give each other a quick kiss, she heads to a different room.

MICK
Hey, senior Robert.

ROBERT
Senior Mick.

The handshake. Robert hands Mick a stick of chewing gum.

MICK
Big time. But what's this?

Mick points at his schedule "CALCULUS - 10:00 - MR. BURLY".

ROBERT
Watch out, it's third grade all over again.

MICK
No!

Robert waves his schedule paper at Mick.

ROBERT
It's on my form, too, dude.

MICK
This... this really ain't the same Burly?

ROBERT
Transferred over from Grove High.

MICK
C'mon, not for Calculus?

Robert shrugs, enters the room. Mick stands, dazed.

INT. TWELFTH GRADE CALCULUS CLASS - DAY

Mick enters, heads to a front seat next to JAN (17) now a hidden beauty behind her thick glasses, long braided pony tail and frumpy clothes. Robert sits behind Jan.

Burly, eight years older, graying, stands arrogantly in front. He holds a clipboard. Writes his name on the whiteboard.

MR. BURLY

My name is Mr. Burly. In order for me to learn your names, you will sit in alphabetical order.

The students GROAN. Burly stares at them angrily. QUIET.

MR. BURLY

Chris Andrews, sit up front, here.

Chris, a boy from the back stands. Mick raises his hand.

MICK

Excuse me, Sir.

MR. BURLY

I am not taking questions now. Chris, come forward.

The kid in the first front seat gets out for Chris.

MICK

Sir.

MR. BURLY

What is your name?

MICK

It's me, Mick, Mikolaj Wieczorek, you taught me in third grade, Sir.

Burly stares at Mick.

MR. BURLY

Um, yes, so it is.

MICK

Sir, if you make us sit alphabetically then I have to sit in the back.

MR. BURLY

Then you will sit in the back. Robert Boren, next.

MICK

Mr. Burly, I'm still the smartest Math kid, like third grade, and I'd like to sit up front, Sir.

Burly walks over to Mick, peers down at him.

MR. BURLY
Are you also still stupid in
understanding English?

Mick shuts his eyes, his fists clench.

INT. TWELFTH GRADE CALCULUS CLASS - LATER

Mick sits in the back corner, solemn, looks out the window.
Jan's in the middle of the room. Robert's up front.

MR. BURLY
Homework is essential - to learn
your lessons well. I expect all of
you to do homework and I will check
on you periodically.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mick, head down, walks along a sidewalk, which runs down the
middle of a long grassy island in between the entrance and
exit driveways.

He passes by a Cannon statue on a large platform. Robert
runs up.

ROBERT
Nice first day, eh?

MICK
What a shit.

ROBERT
Warned you.

MICK
What a shit.

ROBERT
You said that.

MICK
What... a... shit. Calculus! For
crying out loud.

ROBERT
That's not all. He's the new head
of the Math department.

MICK

And the rain in Spain falls gently
on my ass.

INT. TWELFTH GRADE CALCULUS CLASS - DAY

Mick sits at his desk. Burly approaches.

MR. BURLY

Show me your homework.

MICK

I don't have any, Sir.

Burly's eyes go wide.

MICK

I... I've never done Math homework,
Sir. But I'll get A's on all the
tests. Just like third grade, Sir.

Burly turns, heads back to the front of the room.

MR. BURLY

In third grade it was not required.
In this classroom your grade
includes how well you do your
homework.

Mick mouths, "Shit".

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mick sits at his desk, doing Math homework.

THOMAZ (O.S.)

Hey, Mick, seen my old gloves?

MICK

You already took them to your
apartment.

Thomaz, now 26, appears at Mick's door.

THOMAZ

Not the brown ones. I also had a
black pair-- Hey...

He walks over to see what Mick's doing.

THOMAZ
Math? Homework? You?

Mick frowns.

INT. TWELFTH GRADE CALCULUS CLASS - DAY

Burly writes an equation on the board.

MR. BURLY
Here you will see that the function
of X equals two Y plus C squared.

MICK
Excuse me, Sir, but that's three Y
plus C squared.

Burly stops writing, stares at the equation. Frowns.

Quickly acts as if nothing is wrong.

MR. BURLY
Yes, I did that on purpose to see
if any of you were paying
attention.

Mick jots on his paper, "4", scribbles out a "3". He looks
out the window. Autumn leaves.

INT. TEACHERS' LOUNGE - DAY

Face hard, Burly stares at his coffee. Two teachers, BEN and
STEVE (30ish) enter. Ben smiles, points at Burly.

BEN
What's up, Burly?

Burly says nothing.

STEVE
Whiz kid caught you again?

Burly looks up, frowns.

BEN
Why don't you just let him teach
the class?

Ben and Steve laugh.

Burly stands, his cheek twitches.

MR. BURLY

Fuck you.

He stomps out.

Steve shakes his head.

STEVE

That guy needs to relax.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Kids relax during lunch break. Normal teenage activity, flirting, texting. A chill in the air, many wear sweaters.

An uptight Mick and consoling Robert toss a Frisbee. Both are now extremely good, underarm, over the head, side arm, every move including catching behind their backs.

ROBERT

Relax.

MICK

Relax, relax, sure.

Mick throws a sidearm at lightning speed. It stings Robert's hand.

ROBERT

Hey!

MICK

I corrected him four times today. A record. That makes thirty-two times in two months!

ROBERT

Be happy he doesn't send you to the principal.

MICK

What! I'd rather study with Mr. Stewart any day.

ROBERT

How could I be so dumb?

Robert takes a moment, looks around.

ROBERT

He sure was an awesome third grade teacher.

MICK
 Awesome guy. No wonder they made
 him Principal.

Mick frowns.

INT. BURLY'S STUDY - NIGHT

Burly rubs his cheek, writes the report cards. He checks his ledger listing test scores:

Jan Melton, 87, 90, 82, he writes "B".

Don Harper, 83, 82, 78, writes, "C".

Robert Boran, 97, 100, 96, writes, "A".

Mick Wieczorek, 100, 100, 100, writes, "B, did not complete all homework".

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Empty field. Grey skies. The wind blows. Mick Kung Fu kicks the football block dummies. Whack. Whack. He slams with his hands. Spins. Again his feet. Again his hands.

Tired. Super down. Mick sits on the dirt.

ROBERT (O.S.)
 Which team you cheering for?

Mick frowns. Robert sits next to him.

ROBERT
 So he gave you a "B" for those
 first three weeks of no homework?

Mick looks off, shakes his head.

ROBERT
 He's just jealous that you're so
 smart. I told Principal Stewart.

MICK
 Shit, you shouldn't have.

ROBERT
 It didn't help. He said teachers
 can make their own rules for how
 much homework counts.

Mick rises, walks off. Robert yells.

ROBERT

Mick!

Mick stops, but doesn't turn around.

ROBERT

You're still the smartest Math kid,
no matter what Burly does.

Rain. Mick holds out his hands.

INT. LIBRARY - DAY

Snow falls outside the window. Mick and Robert fill out college applications. Mick writes on Stanford's scholarship application form.

MICK

Stanford.

ROBERT

Harvard.

MICK

MIT.

ROBERT

Harvard.

MICK

Yale.

ROBERT

Harvard.

MICK

Are you kidding? Only Harvard?

ROBERT

Gotta think positive.

MICK

Alright for you with straight "A"s.
The scholarship will be a breeze.

ROBERT

Don't worry, you'll get the High
School scholarship, too. You know
they've increased it to \$60,000?

MICK

Rob, I... I just don't trust Burly
will let me have it, and if I don't
get it, I'll be joining my dad.

Robert stands, pats Mick on the back.

ROBERT

You'll get it.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Spring. Trees blooming. Lunch break in the warm sun. Robert
eats at a table with Betsy and Jan.

Mick approaches with a Frisbee.

MICK

Hey.

Jan HICCUPS. Again. Again.

ROBERT

(to Mick)

Do your trick.

Mick shies away.

Jan hiccups.

ROBERT

Come on, the girls have never seen
your magic.

BETSY

Do it, Mick, Robert's told us.

MICK

Okay.

Mick walks behind Jan, whispers in her ear.

MICK

Hold your nose.

Startled, Jan hiccups.

JAN

Huh?

She looks at him, questioningly, hiccups. He nods.

MICK
Hold your nose.

She hiccups, squeezes her nose.

MICK
Take a big breath and keep it in.

She does. He puts his hands over her ears. Moments pass, no more hiccups.

She turns to him, smiles lovingly. He looks down.

JAN
Thanks.

MICK
Uh, right.

He dashes off, waves the Frisbee.

MICK
Coming, Rob?

ROBERT
Sure.

Robert winks at Betsy.

ROBERT
Five minutes, max.

He joins Mick.

Jan alternates eating with gazing over at Mick.

BETSY
So how long, long, long, long?

JAN
Huh?

BETSY
How long are you going to dream
he's your boyfriend, when he only
treats you as platonic as Saturn
and Jupiter.

JAN
Saturn and Jupiter are platonic?

BETSY
Yeah, they never touch.

Jan looks at Mick. She sighs.

JAN

But we just touched. He held my head. He does love me.

BETSY

Aggggh!

Jan's face brightens.

JAN

He just doesn't know it yet.

BETSY

Nine years, he doesn't know anything yet. He's never had a girlfriend and you've only dreamed of him as your boyfriend. Enough, enough, come on.

Betsy pulls Jan away from their food.

JAN

Hey, the food.

BETSY

Try the entrée.

Betsy leads Jan to Mick and Robert.

Robert tosses the Frisbee softly to Jan, who fumbles it. He runs to Betsy.

ROBERT

Betsy, honey, I just remembered, I have the book you wanted.

He hands Jan a stick of gum. She refuses.

ROBERT

Juicy Fruit, no?

Betsy giggles as Robert kisses her on the cheek. She pulls him away.

Mick and Jan look at each other. Jan smiles, picks up the Frisbee, throws, but it splices off to the side. Mick runs to it, picks it up. Shy.

MICK

Really want to learn?

Jan nods, yes.

MICK

Okay, first, your wrist wasn't correct.

Mick comes close and shows Jan a wrist action.

EXT. MICK'S HOME - DAY

Mick's hand pulls letters out of the mail box. Flips through them. One from Stanford.

He rips it open, reads.

"We are pleased to accept you..."

His eyes light up. He smiles. Glances further down the page.

"We are sorry that we cannot offer you a scholarship..."

His face drops.

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mick drags himself in, sits. His bulletin board has three headings pinned: "Rejected", "Accepted no scholarship", and "Scholarship."

A Yale rejection sits on top of four other university letters. Nothing is pinned below the other two. He pins the Stanford letter under the "Accepted no scholarship" sign.

He knocks the tennis balls hanging on strings next to the bag. As they swing, he dodges them and takes his frustration out with hits and kicks at the bag.

EXT. ROADWORKS DEPOT - DAY

Pop arrives for work. He spots the Foreman striding toward Baker. Pop lowers his eyes, turns away.

MOM (V.O.)

Poppa, maybe we should talk to the teacher.

Pop looks up at the passing clouds. A vision of Mom.

In the background, the Foreman shoves Baker.

MOM (V.O.)

Poppa?

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ART ROOM - DAY

Alone, Jan paints clouds.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Mick walks past the Art Room. Stops. He spots Jan painting. He hesitates, walks five more feet, stops. Takes a big breath, heads to the Art Room.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL ART ROOM - DAY

Mick pops his head in.

MICK

Lunch?

Jan shakes her head, no. Mick strolls in, past a spectacular painting. Above it states, ARTIST OF THE MONTH - JAN MELTON. He looks over her current painting.

MICK

Nice.

JAN

I got the Art scholarship to UVA.

MICK

They told you early? Awesome.
That's great!

JAN

They have a good Math department.

Mick looks away.

JAN

Any write you back yet?

MICK

Harvard, Yale, MIT, Stanford.

JAN

And?

MICK
Robert got into Harvard, full
scholarship.

JAN
Harvard wrote you that Robert got
in?

Mick fondles some art supplies.

MICK
I got accepted by Stanford, but no
scholarship. They have enough
Einsteins for next year.

JAN
Do something for me?

MICK
What?

JAN
Apply to UVA, just in case? It's
instate, won't cost so much.

Mick looks down. Jan grabs a UVA application form from her
bag, sticks it in Mick's hands.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Kids relax. Mick catches a Frisbee from Jan. She throws it
fairly well. Mick flips it back but Jan obviously can't see
it coming and drops it.

Again, she throws it well. Again she drops the catch.

The bell RINGS. Mick dashes close and picks up the Frisbee.

MICK
Maybe your glasses just need an
adjustment.

Jan smiles, coyly.

JAN
Maybe.

INT. MICK'S DINING/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mick and Pop eat breakfast. Pop adjusts his glasses as he
reads the sports on a tablet.

POP
Wizards win first round. Hey, upset
Magic, not bad for crummy team.

MICK
Yeah, big surprise. Two o'clock,
remember, Poppa?

Pop continues to read without looking up.

POP
The boss already know I leave early
today, Mikolaj. Thomaz come, too.

Mick looks over at Thomaz's awards. His eyes zoom in on the
Math award.

MICK
I get my award today...
(he hesitates long)
and the scholarship.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GYM - DAY

A packed gym full of students and parents, including Pop,
sit on chairs on the court and in the bleachers. Pop rests
his hand on an empty seat next to him.

On stage the principal, Mr. Stewart sits near a podium.
Behind him are the head teachers of each department,
including Burly.

The seniors are all in one bleacher under a big banner,
GRADULATING CLASS OF 2019. Mick sits three rows in front of
Jan. Robert a few seats away.

Mr. Stewart steps toward the podium.

APPLAUSE.

MR. STEWART
Thank you, one and all. Welcome to
Hunt High School's award
ceremonies. As many of you know,
I've been ill this last month and
just back to work today. So I
haven't seen the list of award
winners yet and I'm just as excited
as all of you to see the results.
So without much ado, the first
award is for Art and this year's
gifted senior student is...

He picks up the Art award, a round, ten inch diameter, wooden board with an engraved metal plaque on the front.

MR. STEWART
Miss Jan Melton.

CHEERS.

Jan's big moment. She jumps with joy, hops down the bleachers. She stops at the bottom, looks up at Mick.

He smiles.

MICK
That's yours. Mine's soon.

She races to the stage.

MR. STEWART
Well done, Jan.

He hands her the award. APPLAUSE. He grabs an oversized check for \$60,000.

MR. STEWART
And by the gracious and wonderful
Hunt Foundation...

Mr. Stewart points toward MR & MRS HUNT, 60's, seated at the end of the stage. They acknowledge more applause.

MR. STEWART
Following the tradition started by
their grandfather, Mr. Louis Hunt,
a scholarship of \$60,000.

More APPLAUSE. Jan takes the check, waves to everyone. Returns to her seat.

Thomaz enters the gym, stands near the doors.

MR. STEWART
And the award for Science goes to
Robert Boren.

Robert jumps down.

MICK
Go for it, well done, Robert. Your
Valedictorian comes at the end.

ROBERT
Yours is next.

APPLAUSE as Robert goes to the stage.

MR. STEWART
Well done, Robert.

Mr. Stewart gives him the award and check. He returns to his seat.

MR. STEWART
And the award for Mathematics goes
to...

Mr. Stewart picks up the Math plaque, stares at it.

MR. STEWART
To...

He shakes his head, looks over at Burly, who nods curtly.

MR. STEWART
To... Robert Boren.

LIGHT APPLAUSE. None of the twelfth graders clap. Pop's eyes drop downward.

Thomaz is stunned.

Many students look to where Robert and Mick sit.

Robert's shakes his head, "No", in utter disbelief. He looks over at Mick.

Mick's face shows no emotion. Shocked. A mirage of thoughts speed through his mind.

FANTASY VISION ONE

Mick breaks down and cries, pulls his hair, beats his chest, falls on the seats.

MICK
No, no, no, no...

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GYM - BACK TO PRESENT

Mick shakes his head.

FANTASY VISION TWO

Mick races down the stands, up onto the stage, straight at Burly.

MICK
You fucking bastard!

He knocks Burly down. Burly rises. Mick pounds Burly with all his martial art skill. SCREAMS. The other teachers race away.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GYM - BACK TO PRESENT

Mick shakes his head.

FANTASY VISION THREE

The students erupt, stomping and clapping.

STUDENTS
Mick's award! Mick's award!

Mick walks toward the doors of the auditorium.

MICK
And the rain in Spain falls gently
on my ass.

He reaches the doors, turns, looks long at the stage.

STUDENTS
Mick! Mick! Mick!

He drops his head and walks out.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL BASKETBALL GYM - BACK TO PRESENT

Mick shakes his head.

MR. STEWART
Robert Boren, please come and get
your award.

Robert stands, then sits, no.

ROBERT
Not mine, Sir.

Burly frowns, cheek twitching, marches to the podium, grabs the mic.

MR. BURLY

Robert, you deserve this award! Now come and get it.

Jan stands.

JAN

Mick!

Everyone looks at her except stunned Mick.

JAN

Mick! It's your award.

Mick's eyes take on a dazed look. Jan turns to Burly and Mr. Stewart. She screams.

JAN

HOW DARE YOU!

MR. BURLY

Miss Melton, you sit down, right now!

Mr. Stewart puts his hand on Burly's shoulder.

MR. STEWART

Burly, I'll take care of this, thank you.

Burly acknowledges, but is clearly angry. He returns to his seat.

JAN

Principal Stewart, you know Mick's the smartest Math student--

MICK

Jan--

MR. STEWART

Jan, I believe things will be okay. Robert, please come forward.

MICK

Rob, go get it, congratulations.

ROBERT

If it was mine.

Mick looks at Pop, whose eyes remain downcast. Mick shrugs, rises, walks toward the exit doors.

JAN
Mick! Wait!

He walks out past Thomaz, without seeing him.

MR. STEWART
Jan, please.

Jan watches Mick leave. She looks at her Art award. She grabs it like a Frisbee.

JAN
Go to hell, you burly bastard.

She hurls the award, as hard as she can. It zooms straight toward Burly. He puts up his hands but it hits him in the head, drawing blood. Some students CHEER.

MR. BURLY
You little bitch!

Mr. Stewart holds back a smile.

Burly sees Mr. Stewart, stomps off the stage.

Mr. Stewart picks up Jan's award, turns to the audience.

MR. STEWART
Now that we've had some fireworks,
let's get on with the awards.
Robert and Jan, I'll just keep
yours here for now. Next, the
History award.

Jan fumes, races out of the auditorium.

INT. MICK'S DINING/LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Mick, Thomaz and Pop eat in silence.

Mick bites his bottom lip, looks over at Thomaz's awards.

POP
Life has disappointments, Mikolaj.
No need to worry or stir tigers. We
accept... move on.

Mick looks at Pop. Then to Grandpa's photo.

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mick enters. Stoic, he looks at his stuffed bag and tennis balls.

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Mick walks to school. He turns off the sidewalk, enters the school's long driveway with parking.

Robert, Jan and all the other Calculus students hang out together halfway down the drive near the school's Cannon statue. Jan sits on the base of the statue.

Mick hesitantly approaches. Eyes everyone over.

ROBERT

Hey.

Robert puts out his hand.

Mick shakes his head, walks by them.

ROBERT

We're going to boycott Calculus.

Mick stops.

JAN

Mick.

Mick turns.

MICK

Ever been kicked out of school?

ROBERT

Everyone's agreed. You in?

MICK

I said, ever been kicked out of school?

JAN

Ever been kicked in your head?

ROBERT

Shit, Mick, we're trying to help you and you--

MICK

Look, great, I appreciate it, but it just doesn't matter, okay, get it? I don't care, so don't get into trouble for me.

Mick walks off toward the school, his free hand clenches into a fist.

Jan hops off the base with a determined look.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Jan walks down the hall. Burly approaching from the other direction, comes around a corner. He has a large Band-Aid on his forehead.

They stop, ten feet away from each other. Both with stern faces.

MR. BURLY

Miss Melton.

(pauses long)

I forgive you... this time.

He walks off.

Jan stands.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

A photo of Nelson Mandela shaking hands with Lech Walesa graces one wall. Mr. Stewart talks with four other Math teachers and the ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL. Burly is not present.

MR. STEWART

I'd like to know what happened when you all approved Robert Boren as recipient of the award.

BEN

Burly showed us Robert's Math grades, straight A's.

STEVE

He even showed us Middle and Elementary school records, all A's.

MR. STEWART

Did any of you ask about Mick Wiczorek?

BEN

Yes, but it seems I'm the only other teacher here who has taught Mick. Ninth grade, Algebra II. Super gifted kid.

MR. STEWART

And Burly said what?

BEN

He showed us that Mick got a B in Calculus and also a B in Fourth grade.

ASSISTANT PRINCIPAL

Seemed fine, so I approved it.

Mr. Stewart looks out the window.

MR. STEWART

Thank you.

They leave.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Empty. The bell RINGS. Kids race out of every room, heading toward their next class. Robert sits down in front of the Calculus room. Another kid sits. Jan sits. More sit.

Others heading toward their rooms stare at the Calculus kids nearly blocking the hallway.

BILLY (18) the same school bully from elementary school, now four inches taller than Mick, thirty pounds heavier, and his buddies, JAKE (17) and TED (17) walk by, laughing.

JAKE

Wow, looky here, rebellion.

BILLY

Naughty, naughty, where's their hero?

Ted spots Mick approaching.

TED

There's loser.

They laugh, walk off towards Mick.

BILLY

Lose your pretty plaque, eh?

Billy bumps Mick hard as they pass.

Mick stops, empty stare, hands open, close, open, close.

He continues to the classroom.

The other Calculus kids block his path to the door.

MICK

Let me in.

The kids closest to Mick turn to Robert and Jan. Jan nods. They part and Mick opens the door, walks into the room.

INT. TWELFTH GRADE CALCULUS CLASS - DAY

Burly sits in front as Mick walks in, shuts the door. Burly bounces his knee at a super fast rate.

Mick sits at his desk as if nothing has happened.

Burly frowns.

MR. BURLY

Okay, where are they?

Mick does nothing.

MR. BURLY

Listen, you. You didn't deserve the award and you didn't get it. Is that clear?

Mick looks out the window.

Burly fumes, rises, marches to the door. He opens it violently, starts to leave, stops. He stares at the kids, all with their backs to him.

MR. BURLY

What is this?

No one moves. He yells.

MR. BURLY

I SAID, WHAT THE HELL IS THIS!

Robert rises, looks straight at Burly. Jan rises, does similar. Each kid, one by one, does the same.

They turn and all walk away.

MR. BURLY
You kids come back here! You come
back, damn it!

The kids disappear down the hall.

Furious, Burly spins, heads up the hall, only to see Mr.
Stewart standing at the end.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

A seething Burly makes his demands. Mr. Stewart sits calmly.

MR. BURLY
I'm not taking this. There's two
weeks left in school. If those kids
don't come back to class, I'll fail
them all.

MR. STEWART
Burly, you can't do that.

MR. BURLY
I can give them "F's" for the last
term.

MR. STEWART
Maybe.

MR. BURLY
Are you going to support this...
this... mutiny!

Mr. Stewart raises his eyebrows.

Burly storms out.

Mr. Stewart hits his intercom.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Students walk to class.

MR. STEWART (V.O.)
(through intercom)
Attention.

Many students pause, cock their ears.

MR. STEWART (V.O.)
 (through intercom)
 Jan Melton and Robert Boren. Meet
 me at the Cannon.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Jan and Robert sit on the base of the Cannon. Mr. Stewart
 approaches. They hop off to greet him.

MR. STEWART
 I assume you two organized today's
 show.

JAN
 It was my--

ROBERT
 It was my--

JAN
 It was my idea.

MR. STEWART
 Very noble, Robert.

ROBERT
 Sir, you know as much as we do,
 Mick deserves that award. I don't.

MR. STEWART
 You've made your point.

ROBERT
 So--

MR. STEWART
 But it's not good enough... yet.

ROBERT
 Huh?

MR. STEWART
 Look at this Cannon. What do you
 see?

JAN
 History.

MR. STEWART
 History based on battles.

Mr. Stewart walks away.

ROBERT
So we fight more, right?

Mr. Stewart glances back.

MR. STEWART
But you must be unified.

Jan and Robert look at each other and nod.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

Mick sits in the otherwise deserted bleachers.

JAN (O.S.)
Hey.

Jan approaches, carrying a large plastic container. She sits next to Mick, taps her container.

JAN
Your favorite.

MICK
You're nuts.

JAN
Only in the Brownies.

She opens the container. Fresh cooked Brownies.

JAN
Eenie, meenie, minee...

Her fingers touch the Brownies from the middle outward. She stops on a outer corner one.

JAN
Mo.

She pulls it out, offers it to Mick. Stunned, he takes it, eats.

MICK
How'd you know?

JAN
It's your mother's recipe.

MICK
You were hot on me then?

Jan smiles, takes a Brownie from the center, without crust. She bites it sensuously.

JAN

Ummm.

Mick's eyes widen.

JAN

There's a dance tomorrow night.

MICK

I, uh, I don't dance.

Jan rises.

JAN

I'll teach you.

She walks away, leaving the Brownies. Mick watches her leave.

He takes another Brownie from the corner. Stops. He puts it back. He takes one from the center, looks long at it. Bites.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL DANCE - NIGHT

The music rocks. Hundreds dance. Robert and Betsy amongst them.

Jan wears a new sweater, stands along the side of the hall. She looks left, right, sighs.

Billy, Jake and Ted strut close.

BILLY

Hey, guys, get a load of Alien and her new frump.

JAKE

Give her a swing, Billy boy.

Billy whacks Jake.

BILLY

Give her a mop. Ha.

They pass by. Jan frowns.

Mick appears at the door. Jan lights up, she waves to him. He mosies over. Awkward.

MICK
Uh, I don't really dance. I, I
don't know...

He looks at everyone gyrating.

JAN
Just think of the function of X.

MICK
Huh?

JAN
Come on.

Jan pulls Mick onto the dance area. The music changes to a slow dance. Jan guides Mick's hands as they embrace.

Mick steps on her foot.

MICK
Sorry, I--

Jan snuggles her head against his.

JAN
The function of Y.

MICK
You said X.

JAN
The function of Z.

EXT. JAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Jan leads Mick up to her front door. Hesitant.

JAN
Thanks, I had fun.

For both, their first real kiss. Short but sweet.

She goes inside. The door shuts.

Mick stands motionless with a silly smile on his face.

EXT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mick opens his bedroom window, climbs out onto the roof over the window. He looks around. He slowly stands.

Still for a moment.

He slips, falls, almost off the roof, but grabs the exhaust pipe. He bites his bottom lip. Determined. He pulls himself up, stands. Spreads his arms wide. Smiles.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Mick approaches the Calculus students sitting in front of the classroom. They move for him to walk through. He passes by some, gets close to Jan.

MICK

Jan, please don't do this. You're going to get into trouble.

Jan gives him a stern, "never give in" look. He shakes his head, enters the room.

Burly struts down the hall. The students move a bit for him to enter. He stops.

MR. BURLY

Okay, students, you had your two days of fun last week. If you continue with this childish behavior, I will give each one of you an "F" for the last term.

He strides toward the door, stops.

MR. BURLY

Furthermore, should any of you continue to refuse to come to class, I will personally report these actions to each college to which you have been accepted to.

He disappears inside.

The students MURMUR amongst themselves. Many look toward Robert and Jan. DON (18), chubby, takes the lead.

DON

Robert, Jan?

ROBERT

Okay, anyone who wants to, can go in. No hard feelings. It's fine. We tried, it didn't work.

One by one, the kids get up, enter the room.

Robert and Jan stay in the hall.

JAN

Robert, you better go inside.

Robert pulls out some chewing gum, offers a stick to Jan.

ROBERT

I was thinking the same for you.

He rises, offers her his hand. She grabs it, stands.

JAN

We have to think of--

ROBERT

Something else.

They enter the room.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Mick looks around the room. His eyes rest on the photo of Nelson Mandela shaking hands with Lech Walesa. A vision of his grandfather appears instead of Nelson Mandela.

MR. STEWART (O.S.)

Mick?

Mick sits with Mr. Stewart. Mick returns from being distracted by the photo.

MICK

Sorry, Mr. Stewart, uh, nice photo... So I'm worried, Sir. If the other guys try something else, then Burly's probably going to tell every college. They'll be screwed, Sir.

MR. STEWART

Remember Fourth grade?

MICK

When you gave me the Fifth grade Math book?

MR. STEWART

I was thinking more of your first test. I remember how surprised I was when you handed in your paper.

Mick fidgets.

MR. STEWART

I've never known such a gifted Math student as you.

MICK

What about Rob?

MR. STEWART

Robert's very smart, but you know better than anyone, he works for it. You have it in your blood.

MICK

So do I get the Math award? That would solve everything, Sir.

MR. STEWART

I can't do that.

MICK

Fuck! Mr. Stewart! Shit, I'm sorry. But-- oh, forget it.

Mick jumps up, heads to the door.

MR. STEWART (O.S.)

Mick.

Mick stops as he grabs the door handle.

MR. STEWART (O.S.)

In this world, there are rules already made. And there rules being made.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Robert pulls out some gum, offers it to Jan, Betsy, Don and Don's girlfriend, PAM (18) as they sit at a table.

BETSY

I don't even have Burly as a teacher and I hate him.

PAM

Me, too.

DON

Let's petition the whole school to kick him out. Everyone will sign--

ROBERT

Don, I--

JAN

Nothing's going to work unless Mick does it.

BETSY

And Mick won't do it.

Jan frowns. They spot Mick.

Jan races to him. He tosses her the Frisbee. She fumbles it, picks it up.

JAN

Mick, we have to talk.

Mick glances up at the sky.

MICK

Nice day.

JAN

Mick, I don't--

MICK

Let's throw some, okay?

Jan backs away, throws the Frisbee hard, spot on.

MICK

Nice one.

JAN

You don't have to take what's not deserving, you can fight for justice, fight against oppression.

MICK

Hey, government class.

JAN

Mick! We're going to petition the whole school.

Mick shakes his head.

MICK

Go out with me Friday night?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Jan and Betsy stroll to school.

JAN
Yes, of course.

BETSY
Awesome, he finally, finally,
finally asked you out.

Jan spins around, on "Cloud Nine".

JAN
Yes, yes, yes.

Betsy laughs.

BETSY
So which frumpy sweater are you
going to wear?

Jan smiles coyly, shakes her head, no.

BETSY
Huh?

Jan grabs Betsy's shoulders.

JAN
Betsy, the most super awesome thing
is soon to arrive!

BETSY
You're going to Jupiter?

JAN
Jupiter/Mick, yes. But something
else. Last night, I'm helping Mom
with dinner and Dad pops in. He
says, "Jan, honey, what do you want
for graduation? You name it."

BETSY
Awesome.

JAN
So I look at Mom. She laughs. I
take off my glasses.

Jan takes her thick glasses off, squints at Betsy.

JAN
I look at Dad and I say, I want to
see you better.

BETSY
Triple awesome. You going to tell
Mick?

Jan shakes her head, no.

JAN
Surprise.

EXT. EYE LASER CLINIC - DAY

Jan, Betsy and Jan's mother, MRS. MELTON (45) stylish, stand
in front of the door. Betsy puts her hand on Jan's shoulder.
Jan fondles her thick glasses, takes a big breath.

JAN
Yes!

They walk in.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Mick and Robert bump into each other on way to class.

MICK
Seen Jan yet?

ROBERT
Seen Betsy yet?

MICK
You think they are--

ROBERT
Up to something.

Robert holds up his cell phone.

ROBERT
Betsy won't answer.

EXT. EYE LASER CLINIC - DAY

Betsy and Mrs. Melton lead Jan out. Jan sports very dark
full sunglasses.

MRS. MELTON

Okay, next.

They head down the street a few doors. Mrs. Melton leads Jan to a beauty parlor.

MRS. MELTON

New eyes, new hair. You sure, honey?

Jan strokes her three foot long braided pony tail.

BETSY

This is so super awesome.

JAN

And overdue.

INT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Jan sits in a chair. The HAIRDRESSER puts a cloth over her, unbraids and combs Jan's long hair.

HAIRDRESSER

Such beautiful hair. Many, many years...

Jan scrunches her face.

JAN

Of braiding.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Kids eat lunch. Mick and Robert throw Frisbee in between looking all around for Jan and Betsy.

EXT. BEAUTY PARLOR - DAY

Betsy leads Jan out with a gorgeous yet natural looking sexy hairdo. The long braid is gone, soft curls adorn to her shoulders. Mrs. Melton trails.

BETSY

Okay, one more.

Betsy waves her credit card, points next door.

BETSY

My present.

They look left, a hip clothing store.

BETSY
New eyes, new hair, new clothes!

INT. HIP CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Jan tries on many outfits. Mrs. Melton and Betsy approve and disapprove.

Betsy grabs a silver bracelet.

BETSY
This?

JAN
Nope. I've never worn jewelry and I'm not going to start now.

She tries on more clothes.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

School's done, everyone leaves. Robert glances over at a down Mick as they pass the Cannon.

ROBERT
Okay, I wasn't supposed to tell you.

MICK
Tell me what?

ROBERT
You get a surprise tomorrow.

MICK
Huh?

ROBERT
Duh. Look, I couldn't have you go home down in the shits. But I can say no more...

Robert smiles wide.

ROBERT
Except, think "awesome".

EXT. HIP CLOTHING STORE - DAY

Betsy exits. She pretends to do a drum roll and hold a mic.

BETSY

Ladies and gentlemen, boys and
girls! All beings in the Universe!
May I present, Awesome Girl!

She waves her arms. Bashful, Jan steps out. Absolutely
stunning.

INT. CAR - DAY

Mrs. Melton drives. Jan fidgets as if ants crawl all over
her body.

MRS. MELTON

You're be fine, trust me.

JAN

I, I'm so different.

She looks in the visor mirror.

MRS. MELTON

Just remember, inside you're still
you. Outside, you're now a beauty.

EXT. CAR - DAY

They turn into the school driveway.

Don and Pam walk along, hold hands. Don points at Jan's car.

PAM

Looked like Jan's mother, didn't
it?

DON

But who was the cute girl?

Pam whacks him.

PAM

Hey, watch your eyes.

The car pulls up in front of school. Jan steps out.

Boys sit on a wall, stare in awe. Girls look on in jealousy.
Billy hangs out with Ted.

BILLY
Who's the new hottie?

TED
You kidding? It's Alien in
disguise.

BILLY
Shit.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Jan walks down the hall. Mick comes from the other way. She stops, watches him walk right by.

JAN
Mick.

Mick turns, looks up the hall past Jan, shakes his head, looks into the closest classroom.

MICK
Jan?

Jan laughs.

JAN
Mick.

He turns, looks straight at her, his eyes go wide.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Mick and Jan eat, sitting opposite each other. Many kids look over at Jan, point and talk amongst themselves.

Mick eats unmindfully as he stares at Jan.

JAN
It's still me.

Mick smiles wide. Jan giggles.

JAN
Come on, stop.

Mick laughs.

MICK
Yes, but...

JAN

But?

MICK

You were hiding.

Jan blushes.

MICK

The most beautiful girl in the universe.

Jan smiles lovingly.

JAN

Throw some.

Jan grabs his Frisbee. They dash to an open area. She flings a nice sweeper.

Mick sends it back underhand.

Jan catches it, bounces with glee.

JAN

I caught it! I saw it! I caught it!

She races to Mick, jumps into his open arms. He swings her around. They kiss.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - NIGHT

Mick and Jan exit, arm in arm.

MICK

I, uh--

JAN

Yes?

Mick bites his bottom lip, high speed.

MICK

I, I know you don't usually wear this stuff, but I wanted to give you, I mean, I wanted you to have, I mean--

Jan puts her fingers to his mouth. She kisses him.

JAN

Yes?

Mick smiles wide.

MICK
I hope you like it.

He pulls out a little gift-wrapped box, hands it to her.

JAN
It's lovely.

Jan admires the ribbon, twirls her finger in it, smiles coyly.

JAN
I love the curls, and the color.

MICK
There's something inside.

JAN
Oh?

Mick tickles her.

MICK
You little tease.

JAN
Okay, okay.

Jan opens the gift. A silver bracelet. She looks at it thoughtfully.

MICK
Do you like it?

Jan picks it out of the box.

JAN
It's beautiful. Help me.

She holds it against her wrist. Mick fastens the clasp.

EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY

Burly checks his watch, prepares to tee-off with Ted.

TED
Same kid from, when was it, about 8
years ago?

Burly nods.

MR. BURLY
 And this girl, shit, you should see
 her now. On a ten scale, she's
 fifteen.

TED
 Brings your memories back, eh?

Burly's face hardens, his cheek twitches.

MR. BURLY
 Well, this time, I've put him in
 his place.

He slams his tee shot.

EXT. MICK'S HOME - DAY

Pop mows the front yard. His twenty year old, paint-faded
 Ford sits in the driveway.

Thomaz drives up in a new silver Mercury. Pop stops mowing.
 Thomaz jumps out, strokes his car.

THOMAZ
 Like it?

POP
 You make that much money?

THOMAZ
 More. Mick home?

POP
 Mikolaj has girl now.

THOMAZ
 No kidding, he's finally human.

POP
 Jan.

THOMAZ
 Jan? Thick glasses, long hair,
 goofy girl?

Pop laughs.

POP
 No, Jan, beautiful swan.

INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Jan's face is aglow as Betsy admires her bracelet.

BETSY
I thought you didn't--

JAN
It's from Mick!

Jan floats.

BETSY
But it's time you pushed him.

Jan crashes.

JAN
I, I can't do it.

Betsy hugs Jan.

BETSY
You have to.

EXT. PARK - DAY

Mick and Jan stroll past benches near a lake.

JAN
So what does your name mean in
Polish?

MICK
Nothing.

JAN
No nothing, I can tell you're
lying.

MICK
You'll laugh.

Jan pokes Mick's soft spot.

JAN
You'll laugh.

Mick laughs.

MICK
Okay, okay.

JAN
Wieczorek?

MICK
"Little evening."

Jan smiles, snuggles up to Mick.

JAN
That's so cute. You're my little evening.

MICK
Hey, come on, it's dumb.

JAN
It's cute.

MICK
You're cute.

JAN
Mikolaj?

MICK
No.

JAN
Yes.

MICK
No.

JAN
I looked it up.

Mick frowns.

JAN
"Victor of the people."

MICK
It's not me.

JAN
It could be. Victor of the people.

Jan stops, hops up on a park bench, holds her hands wide and high, clenches her fists.

JAN
Victor of Hunt High School. The one who defeats Mr. Bur--

Mick shakes his head.

MICK

Mr. Stewart won't change it.

Jan's pissed, she hops down.

JAN

Well then you just keep your shitty self-pity, Mr. Mick Loser.

She stomps off.

MICK

But Jan, it's not me.

She spins around.

JAN

You listen, you thick headed dimwit. If you can't stand up for yourself, don't think I'm going to do it for you.

She takes off the bracelet. Throws it at Mick.

JAN

It's not me.

She races away.

INT. JAN'S BEDROOM - DAY

Betsy consoles a bawling Jan.

JAN

It was horrible!

BETSY

It's okay, he'll still--

JAN

No, he won't. He'll hate me.

BETSY

Jan, he needed a push.

JAN

But I love him!

BETSY
 Look, tell me, how many guys asked
 you out lately?

Jan relaxes, wipes her tears.

JAN
 Eight.

BETSY
 Eight in three days. That's
 amazing! And how many ever asked
 you out before the new you?

Jan frowns, shakes her head, none.

BETSY
 Right. But you want Mick and you
 want him to fight for his award, to
 be strong.

Jan nods.

BETSY
 Simple, because now he has to fight
 for you, too.

INT. MALL - DAY

Mick wanders aimlessly.

MICK
 Should fight, should not fight,
 don't stir anything, not worth it,
 worth it, yes, no.

He walks by a book store. A banner reads, "LAW WEEK".

He glances at the display: *To Kill a Mockingbird, The Rule
 of Law, Twelve Angry Men, Presumed Guilty.*

He walks into the store.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Mick holds *The Rule of Law* and school books, walks down the
 hall, spots Jan and Betsy coming the other way. He stops.
 They come close.

MICK
 Jan?

They pass by, without acknowledging him.

Down, Mick heads to an exit. Meets Robert.

ROBERT
Don't worry, she still digs you.

MICK
Like a shovel.

ROBERT
Shit, forgot something, meet you
outside.

Robert dashes down the hall.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Mick exits the school side entrance where most kids bustle around, boarding their buses.

BOYS
Fight! Fight!

A group semi-surrounds Billy. Billy shoves a smaller kid. The kid tries to run, but Jake and Ted push him back to Billy.

Billy laughs and slams the kid in the stomach. As the kid bends over, Billy knees him in the face. The kid falls to the ground.

Billy and his buddies strut away, laughing.

Mick watches, his free hand closes and opens into a fist, closes, opens, closes, opens, closes.

ROBERT (O.S.)
What was the excitement?

Robert approaches.

MICK
Billy... again.

ROBERT
If only, someone.

MICK
Yeah.

EXT. ROAD WORKS - DAY

The Foreman shoves Baker down. He laughs and struts off.

Pop approaches Baker, helps him up.

MOM (V.O.)

Poppa?

Pop pauses.

Looks toward the Foreman, just as the Foreman glances at them.

The Foreman smirks, gives Pop the finger.

EXT. MICK'S HOME - DAY

Pop and Mick work on fixing the back door. Mick hands Pop the drill.

POP

So, Mikolaj, really think you fight city hall?

MICK

Poppa, it's not city hall.

POP

Sometimes we must take life's pains. No stir tigers. It's trouble.

Pop adjusts a drill bit.

MICK

What if Grandpa said that?

POP

Your Grandpa killed because he stir tigers too much.

MICK

Grandpa saved many people in the war, right?

POP

Yeah.

Pop drills a hole.

MICK
Grandpa helped defeat the Russians,
helped Poland become free, right?

POP
Yeah, too.

Pop drills another hole.

MICK
Grandpa never gave in on his
principles. He risked his life and
he gave his life for what was good
and just...

Pop lowers the drill.

MICK
Right?

Pop sits on the steps.

POP
Mikolaj, I not your Grandpa.

MICK
Poppa, I am so like you...

Mick sits.

MICK
But now I want to be like Grandpa.

MOM (V.O.)
Poppa?

Pop's eyes tear. He nods, smiles.

POP
Okay, Mikolaj, go stir a tiger.
Yeah. Fight the bully. Get award
you deserve.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AWARD HALLWAY - DAY

Large award plaques listing thirty years of top students
line the hall. Placed in the middle of them all is the Math
plaque.

Burly struts down the hall. He stops at the awards. His eyes
narrow in on the Math award with Robert Boren's name for
this year.

He adjusts his shirt as he smugly smiles.

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Mick stands outside of an office building. Nervous. He takes a big breath, walks inside.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - DAY

Mick stands at a RECEPTIONIST's desk as she talks on her intercom.

RECEPTIONIST

Mr. Hunt, Mick Wieczorek from Hunt High School is here to see you.

INT. MR. HUNT'S OFFICE - DAY

Mick sits with Mr. Hunt, whose foundation gives the scholarships.

MR. HUNT

Yes, Mr. Stewart explained to me your situation, but I'm sorry, Mick, I hope you can understand, the foundation doesn't interfere with the school's decisions.

Mick bites his bottom lip, stands.

MICK

Thank you for your time, Sir.

They shake hands.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mick and Robert sit on the base of the Cannon.

ROBERT

Wow, you did that? Without telling me?

Mick shrugs.

ROBERT
Well done, Dude, didn't think you
had it in you.

Mick hesitates in his new role of fighter.

MICK
So, right, okay, uh, no luck with
that. I thought, what about your
cousin?

ROBERT
Cousin?

MICK
Yeah, the one who knows that big
reporter, right?

ROBERT
He's his assistant.

MICK
Good, do it.

Robert smiles, grabs his phone, dials.

EXT. WASHINGTON POST BUILDING - DAY

Mick and Robert stand at the entrance.

ROBERT
They're fighters for liberty,
justice and--

MICK
Sometimes.

They walk in.

INT. JEFF ALLEN'S OFFICE - DAY

Mick and Robert sit across from JEFF ALLEN (55) top
reporter. Jeff picks up his phone.

JEFF
Okay, I can see where you're coming
from. Let me get some advice from
our legal wizards.

Jeff dials.

JEFF
Parker, you hear all of that?
(pause)
Right.
(he looks out the
window)
I was thinking the same.

Mick shakes his head.

JEFF
Yeah, thanks.

Jeff turns around, hangs up.

JEFF
I'm sorry fellows, but this isn't a
story we can print.

ROBERT
Someone gets screwed and you can't
print that?

JEFF
We have our legal limits, sorry.

Mick and Robert rise.

MICK
Thanks, Mr. Allen.

They shake.

JEFF
I have a suggestion.

MICK
Anything.

JEFF
I don't think any news outlets can
touch this, and you don't want to
try using the internet yourself.

ROBERT
But--

JEFF

Yeah, yeah, I'm sure you think that's the way to go, but you might get into libel zones. Best bet, a talk show. And don't just call or email. Send them an express letter, it makes people think more.

EXT. WASHINGTON POST BUILDING - DAY

Mick and Robert exit.

ROBERT

He's not one of the greatest reporters for nothing, but sending letters, shit, he's a dinosaur.

MICK

Allen's 55, right? DeGeneres is 61, Kimmel's 52, Hannity's 58.

ROBERT

Reading trivia lately?

Mick smiles.

ROBERT

Really want to try it?

Mick looks down Pennsylvania Avenue to the Capitol.

MICK

Yeah.

INT. ROBERT'S COMPUTER ROOM - DAY

Mick and Robert surf on different computers.

ROBERT

Got Kimmel's address.

MICK

Hannity here.

INT. POST OFFICE - DAY

Mick places twenty envelopes on the counter. Robert stands behind him.

MICK
Express.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Jan and Betsy eat lunch, farthest distance away from Mick and Robert throwing Frisbee. Jan melts.

JAN
Mick's idea?

BETSY
Awesome, right?

JAN
Can I talk to him now? Please,
please, please!

Betsy shakes her head, no.

BETSY
Let him build more momentum.

Jan sighs.

INT. MICK'S KITCHEN - DAY

Mick and Pop eat breakfast.

POP
Mikolaj, give me your phone today.

MICK
Sure, Poppa, how come?

POP
Show me how to make movie.

INT. TALK SHOW OFFICE - DAY

Talk show host, BART HANCOCK (60) balding, sits at a desk, briefs some papers. His male ASSISTANT (40) enters.

ASSISTANT
Got a weird one today.

Bart leans back in his chair.

BART

Quite frankly, I could really do with something besides politics, wars, celebrities and religious fanatics.

ASSISTANT

Make a new celebrity with this one.

The Assistant hands over Mick's letter. Bart reads, laughs. Checks the paper for phone and email information.

BART

Post address, only? Does he think we're dinosaurs?

ASSISTANT

How much hair do you have left?

BART

Wait till you're my age.

Bart pulls out a postcard, writes.

BART

Mail this.

His assistant takes the postcard, turns to go.

BART

Second thoughts. Personal delivery, with a signature.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Two fellows chat up Jan at her locker.

Mick moseys down the hall, stops about thirty feet away, watches.

The fellows and Jan laugh. The guys walk off away from where Mick stands. Jan shuts her locker, walks toward Mick's direction. She gets close to him.

MICK

Jan?

Jan stops.

MICK

Can we talk?

Jan looks up and down the hall. She quickly kisses Mick on his cheek.

JAN

Not yet.

She dashes down the hall, tears in her eyes.

EXT. ROAD WORKS - DAY

Pop drives the Roller machine. He spots the Foreman approaching Baker. He pulls out Mick's phone, films the Foreman shoving Baker and laughing.

EXT. ROAD WORKS CARAVAN OFFICE - DAY

Pop enters. Through the window, Pop hands the phone to the BOSS (60).

EXT. ROAD WORKS - DAY

Pop greases his Roller machine. Baker and other men sit around eating lunch. Fifty feet away the Foreman sits alone eating. Boss walks over to the Foreman. All the men watch.

Unheard, Boss fires the Foreman, who rants and rages. Boss waves his arm. Two policemen approach. The Foreman grabs his lunch pail, stomps off.

Boss looks over at Pop, nods. Baker notices, walks up to Pop, shakes his hand.

BAKER

You're a good man.

INT. MICK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Mick prepares dinner. Pop enters, his tone is upbeat.

POP

Anyone reply?

MICK

Five no thanks, Poppa.

POP

You stay strong, Mikolaj, keep stirring.

Mick looks up from his pots, questioningly. Pop smiles.

POP
Today's a new day.

He hands Mick his phone.

POP
New, good day. We fight bastards.

EXT. MICK'S BACK YARD - DAY

Mick and Pop eat lunch. Thomaz strolls around the house.

POP
Hey, rich boy.

They hug.

THOMAZ
Here's those papers, Poppa.

POP
Good, now eat some.

Pop hands Thomaz a plate. He makes a sandwich.

THOMAZ
Hey, Micky, I bumped into Robert.

MICK
Knock him down?

THOMAZ
He told me what you guys were
doing. All I can say is, don't do
it.

MICK
You, with your cushy financial job
you got from your straight A's, are
telling me not to fight for my
award?

THOMAZ
You don't have to. Just play the
right game. I'll get you a job at
Mutual. No sweat, pick any local
college, they'll pay you as you
train.

MICK
 So I'll be a brick in the wall who
 never stands up for himself.

THOMAZ
 Micky, listen, I make a hundred
 grand, just doing what I'm told.

Mick rises.

MICK
 I'm impressed. See you around the
 bank.

He walks away.

THOMAZ
 Poppa, what's with Mikolaj?

Pop grins wide.

POP
 Grandpa.

EXT. MICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Bare chest, Mick dresses.

The door bell RINGS.

Mick heads

DOWNSTAIRS

to the door, sliding on his shirt.

DELIVERY MAN (O.S.)
 Mick Wieczorek, delivery.

Mick opens the door, signs. The Delivery Man hands Mick the
 postcard.

MICK
 Thanks.

DELIVERY MAN
 Couldn't help but notice. Looks
 good.

Mick takes the postcard. Reads.

"Mick, call me, Bart Hancock."

INT. MICK'S DINING/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Pop eats dinner as Mick pauses talking on the phone.

MICK
Mr. Hancock wants me to go--

POP
You go, you go!

Mick's face lights up. Pop holds up his drink.

POP
To your grandpa, my father.

INT. BART HANCOCK SHOW - DAY

Bart talks to the camera.

BART
And next is a great underdog story. Mikolaj (Mick) Wieczorek is a senior student at Hunt High School, Alexandria, Virginia. To give you his story, Mick is here with me.

Mick sits opposite Bart.

BART
Mick, welcome to The Bart Hancock Show.

MICK
Thank you, Mr. Hancock.

BART
Please, call me, Bart.

Mick looks down.

MICK
Yes, Sir.

BART
I understand your mother died when you were ten and your dad struggled to earn enough for you and your brother.

MICK
Well, my brother's fine now, but Pop and I get by.

BART
You're a Mathematical whiz, the
smartest Math student at Hunt High
School, right?

Mick nods.

BART
And you've applied to many top
colleges, hoping to get a Math
scholarship. Have you been accepted
by any yet?

MICK
Only one, Sir, but no scholarship.

BART
I'm confused, though, Mick. Doesn't
your high school have it's own
scholarship foundation which awards
a very nice scholarship to the best
students of many subjects?

MICK
Yes, Sir. I was counting on the
Math award to help me go to
college.

BART
But recently the school gave out
their yearly awards and the Math
award was given to another student,
right?

MICK
Yes, Sir.

BART
Are you smarter in Math than the
other student?

Mick bites his bottom lip.

ROBERT (O.S.)
Yes, Sir, he is and has been since
second grade.

Robert walks onstage.

BART
And who are you?

ROBERT

Robert Boren, Sir. I am the student to whom the school is trying to give the Math award.

BART

Trying?

ROBERT

Yes, I have refused it.

BART

Wow, because you know it belongs to Mick?

ROBERT

Yes, Sir.

BART

So great, Mick, is the school going to change the award and give it to you?

MICK

No, Sir.

BART

But they will, won't they? After all, if you really are the smartest Math student and even the student who gets the award says so, then it must go to you, right?

MICK

Mr., uh, Bart. I really appreciate you letting me come on your show. What you say makes a hundred percent sense.

BART

Tell me, Mick, who was the teacher in charge who picked the winner of the award?

MICK

Mr. Burly, Sir.

BART

Your Calculus teacher?

MICK

Yes, Sir.

Bart turns to the audience.

BART

Well, Mr. Charles Burly, Hunt High School Calculus teacher, has agreed to talk with us tonight, from our Washington office.

A large video screen lights up Mr. Burly's stern face.

BART

Hello, Charles Burly, welcome to The Bart Hancock Show.

MR. BURLY

Thank you, Bart.

BART

Tell me, Charles, why didn't Mick win the Math award?

MR. BURLY

Robert Boren has better grades.

BART

Were you aware that Robert rejected the award because he knows Mick is smarter?

MR. BURLY

The award goes to the student with the best grades.

BART

What is the actual name of the award?

MR. BURLY

Best Math Student, Hunt High School.

BART

Best Math Student, very interesting. So why didn't you give it to the best Math student?

MR. BURLY

I did.

BART

But Robert says he isn't the best
Math student.

MR. BURLY

He has the best grades.

BART

Is it possible the best grades
don't always mean the best student?

Burly's cheek twitches, he rubs it quickly.

MR. BURLY

Look, Mr. Hancock, I know how you
push people on your show. I have
already told you my answer.

BART

Charles, no need to get formal, you
can still call me Bart.

MR. BURLY

I have no intention of letting you
try to make a fool out of me. I
believe I've answered your
concerns. Thank you.

Burly walks away from his seat, the camera follows him.

BART

Charles, Burly, hey, no need to go
away mad.

Burly disappears out a door. Bart shakes his head.

BART

Is he always like that?

MICK

That was one of his better days.

Bart laughs.

INT. JAN'S TV ROOM - NIGHT

Jan and Betsy watch the show.

ON TV:

BART

Wow. Well, Mick Wieczorek, thank you very much for being on my show. And I will personally write a letter to your school principal how I feel they've made a terrible mistake. Good luck to you.

MICK

Thank you, Mr. Hancock.

Mick rises, reaches to shake Bart's hand.

MICK

Thank you, Bart.

BACK TO SCENE

Jan and Betsy hug in joy.

BETSY

Super awesome.

JAN

Betsy, Betsy, Betsy! I've got to talk with Mick tomorrow.

BETSY

Charge ahead, woman, you have yourself a fighter!

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Jan closes her locker. Other kids pass by.

MR. BURLY (O.S.)

Miss Melton.

Jan turns to see a stern Burly.

JAN

Yes.

MR. BURLY

I just want you to know that your friend Mick is going to get himself into a lot of trouble. And Robert, also.

JAN

Oh?

Burly heats up.

MR. BURLY

Look, you kids may think you can go
around my decision but it won't
work.

Kids passing, stop, watch.

Jan plays innocent.

JAN

What won't work, Sir?

He comes close, peers down at her, oblivious to the other
kids surrounding them.

MR. BURLY

Don't you be bitchy to me, you
little--

POP (O.S.)

Mr. Burly?

Burly regains his composure, turns to see Pop. Burly towers
over Pop by over a foot.

POP

My name is Wieczorek.

JAN

Bye, Mr. Wieczorek, I have to--

POP

Yes, Jan, that's fine.

Jan leaves. Burly tries to escape, also.

MR. BURLY

Nice to meet you, Mr. Wieczorek,
but I have a class.

He turns.

POP

Mr. Burly, I came to see you.

Burly stops.

POP
You're smaller than I thought.

Burly spins around, anger flares.

MR. BURLY
Look, Mr. Wieczorek, if you're here
to--

POP
I used to be scared of bullies.

MR. BURLY
Fine, now if you're excuse me--

POP
No.

Burly fumes. They stare at each other.

POP
I said, I used to be scared of
those like you, large man, strong.
But now I know you very small and
very weak.

MR. BURLY
Look, you--

Burly waves his finger at Pop, who merely raises his hand in
front of Burly's finger.

POP
Jealous of Mikolaj since he was
eight years old.

Pop walks away.

POP
Shame on you.

Burly stares, rubs his cheek, mouths the words, "Fuck you",
turns and marches down the hall.

Many kids give "victory dances".

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mick and Mr. Stewart sit on the base of the Cannon.

MR. STEWART

Mick, if you make it to my age, you might learn things and maybe not. But winning the Math award won't mean much.

MICK

Sir, if I don't get--

MR. STEWART

Get a scholarship, for the money value, yes, but really as to winning the award, all that will mean is you play the numbers game better than others in High School.

MICK

But isn't that important, Sir?

MR. STEWART

I'd rather you play the game of life better than others after High School.

Mick stares at Mr. Stewart. Mr. Stewart smiles.

MR. STEWART

Get Robert. Be at my office in twenty minutes.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Mick and Robert stand in front of Mr. Stewart's desk. Mr. Stewart leans back.

MR. STEWART

Mick, Mr. Burly had a run in with your dad this morning.

MICK

Here? Pop came here?

MR. STEWART

Yes. The kids who saw it thought your Pop was awesome.

MICK

Hard to believe, Sir.

MR. STEWART
However, as awesome as it was, Mr.
Burly's now threatening to take
legal action against you.

Mick drops his eyes.

MR. STEWART
And you, too, Robert.

ROBERT
What! What for?

MR. STEWART
Slander and possibly libel.

ROBERT
Bullshit.

Mick walks over to the window, gazes out.

ROBERT
He can't do that.

MR. STEWART
Maybe.

Mick looks around the room. Stares at the photo of Nelson
Mandela shaking hands with Lech Walesa.

MR. STEWART
My favorite photo.

Mick nods.

MICK
What if I apologize to him?

ROBERT
What! What the--

MR. STEWART
Robert--

ROBERT
No, no way, you can't. He should
apologize to you.

MICK
Rob--

Robert collapses in a chair.

ROBERT
I'm dreaming, tell me this ain't
real.

MR. STEWART
Interesting suggestion, Mick, worth
thinking over. I convinced Mr.
Burly to wait a few days.

ROBERT
He can cram it.

MICK
I'll let you know tomorrow, Sir.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Mick and Jan walk around the outer perimeter.

JAN
I'm sorry, I got Burly mad.

MICK
It wasn't you.

JAN
Yes, it was. I just get too pig
headed sometimes.

MICK
Join the human race.

JAN
But you don't have to apologize, he
can't--

MICK
Jan--

Jan HICCUPS. Again. Again.

Mick motions. Jan grabs her nose, takes a big breath.

Mick puts his hands over her ears. Moments pass, no more
hiccups.

MICK
My life doesn't depend on that
award.

They kiss.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mick and Robert leave school, approach the Cannon statue.

ROBERT

I can't believe you're giving in to the ass.

MICK

I don't see it that way.

ROBERT

No, you're looking down a one-way street with trucks coming straight at you.

MICK

You ever think that winners don't always have to win?

ROBERT

He's an ass.

Mick jumps up on the Cannon, pretends to shoot it.

MICK

Yeah, yeah, kill the bastard.
Shoot, shoot, bang, bang, kill,
kill. Boom!

Mick falls over the Cannon as if dead. Robert sits on the platform.

ROBERT

Shit, Mick, very funny, but you're the smartest Math kid and you deserve--

Mick jumps down.

MICK

Get it? That's it!

ROBERT

You're fried.

MICK

I'm the smartest Math kid. So big deal.

ROBERT

It is.

MICK

No, it isn't.

ROBERT

But what about the scholarship? It is a big deal.

MICK

No... it's not the award or the scholarship, it's the principle behind the fight.

Mick walks away.

MICK

A bigger deal is growing up.

INT. MICK'S KITCHEN - NIGHT

Pop washes dishes, Mick dries.

POP

So, this time I cause trouble for you.

MICK

No, Poppa, I'm really proud of you.

POP

But this way you don't get award. It's your right and you don't get it.

MICK

Poppa, would Grandpa worry about a Math award if he achieved something better?

INT. ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY

Staff busy themselves. A quiet Mick, a heated Robert and a patient Mr. Stewart wait.

Mr. Burly struts in, nose held high.

MR. STEWART

Burly, although Mick has agreed to apologize on the loud speaker system, he would like a written statement by you that if he apologizes you will not take any legal action against him, Robert or any other kid in the school.

MR. BURLY

You have my word.

ROBERT

He doesn't--

MR. STEWART

Robert-- I've prepared a document.

An assistant hands Mr. Stewart a paper. Burly swallows his pride, signs the paper.

Mr. Stewart checks his watch, talks into the school intercom microphone.

MR. STEWART

Good morning Hunt High School students, we have a special announcement today. Would all of you please give your attention to senior student Mick Wieczorek.

Mick takes the mic. Pauses. Breathes deep.

MICK

Hi... this is Mick and I'd like to take this occasion in front of the entire school to apologize to Mr. Burly.

INT. JAN'S HOME ROOM CLASS - DAY

Many of the students moan, some applaud. Don and Pam have different reactions.

DON

No, shit, he shouldn't do it.

MICK (V.O.)

(through intercom)

I believe some of my actions and those of close friends were not done with... the best wisdom.

PAM
He's so brave.

MICK (V.O.)
(through intercom)
And I'm truly sorry for any harm it
has caused Mr. Burly.

DON
But Burly's a bastard.

One girl cries. A friend puts his arm on her shoulder.

Jan sits in the back, holds a pen to paper.

MICK (V.O.)
(through intercom)
I hope Mr. Burly can accept my
apology and forgive me for anything
I've done in which he felt hurt.

A tear forms, Jan fights it back. She pushes the pen hard
against the paper. Harder. It breaks. She puts her head down
on her arms.

INT. ADMINISTRATION OFFICE - DAY

Mick hands the mic. to Mr. Stewart, who nods. Mick looks
directly at Mr. Burly, who keeps his nose high.

Mick walks out. Robert follows.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Robert heads to class. Mick heads out of school.

ROBERT
Hey, class?

MICK
Yeah.

Mick leaves.

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mick super pounds his hanging bag. Sweat soaks his clothes.

The photo of his grandfather and Lech Walesa rests on his
desk.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

Mick stands. A subdued Jan sits on a bench.

MICK

And?

He sits next to her.

JAN

I was proud of what you did, going to the foundation, to the Post, writing letters, getting on the show. But...

Jan bounces up.

JAN

Oh, Mick! I'm so confused. I, I'm not proud of you apologizing to Burly.

MICK

Jan, listen--

JAN

You're just not a fighter.

Jan runs off toward the parking lot behind the school.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Jan walks aimlessly in the parking lot.

BILLY (O.S.)

Well, looky at this. Ugly Alien, now a beautiful angel.

She spins to see Billy with Jake and Ted.

JAN

Leave me alone.

Billy grabs Jan. She struggles. He pins her against a car.

BILLY

Who's going to make me?

A Frisbee flies into Billy's head.

BILLY

Shit!

MICK (O.S.)

I will.

Billy spins around, holding Jan's wrist tightly. Mick stands with Robert behind him.

MICK

Leave her alone.

BILLY

Ho! Wimpy boy who kisses Burly's
ass.

Sweat pours down Mick's neck.

MICK

Leave her alone, or--

BILLY

Or what, wimp?

Billy hands Jan to his buddies.

BILLY

Hold her till I come back. This
will be a joy.

They laugh.

MICK

Or I'll--

BILLY

WHAT!

Mick's face hardens.

MICK

Beat the shit out of you.

Billy's eyes narrow on Mick. He lunges forward. Mick dodges.

Billy swings. Mick ducks, backs away.

BILLY

Dancing won't help you, wimp.

Billy attacks, Mick dodges and slaps Billy on the ear. Mick takes a Kung Fu pose.

BILLY

What? Some silly slap.

JAKE
Wipe him, Bill boy.

Billy struts, trying to stay confident. He eyes Mick, crouched low.

BILLY
Think you're cool, wimp?

Mick slides left, circles Billy.

JAKE
C'mon Bill, waste of time.

Billy swings down at Mick, who springs off to the right and does a hard chop to Billy's ear, which drives Billy off balanced. He rises, holding his ear, blood dripping.

BILLY
Fuck you.

Billy lunges. Mick dodges, gives a double hand blow to the back of Billy's head. Billy's down.

Mick jumps close, cocks his fist back to slam into Billy's face.

BILLY
Fuck, no, enough.

Billy waves his hand in defeat. Mick steps back.

Billy stands.

BILLY
Yeah, sure...

He turns to Jake, snaps his fingers. Jake tosses Billy a switch blade. He spins, flicks the blade open at Mick.

BILLY
Try me now, hotshot.

Mick steps back, poses, ready.

MR. STEWART (O.S.)
Looks like Mick won fair and square, eh, Paul?

They all look over to see Mr. Stewart standing next to a uniform policeman, PAUL, 40.

PAUL

No question. The bully's finally been put in his place. Well done, Mick. I'll take that knife, Billy. Wouldn't want to see Mick turn it into your gut.

Head down, Billy hands over the knife. Jake and Ted let Jan go, she races to Mick, who hugs her.

MR. STEWART

Paul, did you know I had a fair few fights in High School?

PAUL

Same.

Mr. Stewart takes the knife. Closes it, flicks it open.

MR. STEWART

Nice knife. We had a code amongst all the guys.

PAUL

Like a handshake afterward, conceding who's best?

MR. STEWART

You, too, eh?

Mr. Stewart closes the knife, flicks it open.

PAUL

I considered it an honor to congratulate someone who could knock me down.

MR. STEWART

A sign of growing up, eh? -- Billy, Jake and Ted be in my office tomorrow morning at nine. Bring your mothers.

They turn, walk away.

Billy and Mick eye each other. A long moment. Mick smiles. Billy shakes his head, semi-confused, looks away, back at Mick. Mick shrugs his shoulders.

MICK

I hear you're flunking Algebra. I can tutor tomorrow afternoon.

Mick extends his hand.

BILLY

Shit.

They shake. Billy turns to Jan.

BILLY

I, uh, uh, I'm sorry.

Jan nods. Billy turns to his buddies. They look at each other, like "What now?!"

Billy turns back to Jan.

BILLY

And, and I'm sorry since fourth grade.

Jan smiles compassionately. Billy goes red.

BILLY

Fuck, now I'm the wimp.

ROBERT

Growing up, Billy boy, just growing up.

Billy shakes his head, grabs his buddies and splits.

BILLY

I need four Big Macs, a shake and a thousand fries.

Jan kisses Mick on his cheek.

JAN

I'm a goat who should eat her words.

MICK

Forgiven.

JAN

When did you learn to fight?

MICK

When I found out it was worth it.

EXT. SPORTING STORE - DAY

Robert eyes Boxing trophies in the shop window. His eyes narrow on some with engraving.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Stewart reads. A KNOCK on the door.

MR. STEWART

Come in.

Robert enters, stands strongly "at attention".

ROBERT

Mr. Stewart, Sir, I'd like the Math award now.

Mr. Stewart eyes Robert over.

MR. STEWART

Why the change?

ROBERT

I believe now that it's quite okay if I take it, Sir. In fact, I believe that I must take it.

MR. STEWART

Do you deserve it?

ROBERT

No, Sir... Yes, Sir.

MR. STEWART

No, Sir?

ROBERT

Correct.

MR. STEWART

Yes, Sir?

ROBERT

Correct. I know how to treat that award with the highest respect, Sir.

Mr. Stewart smiles.

EXT. MICK'S BACK YARD - DAY

Mick lays on the ground, watches the clouds.

ROBERT
Hey.

MICK
Piss off.

Robert smiles.

MICK
Very funny. I already know.

ROBERT
Is that right?

Robert's smile opens wider.

MICK
I can't believe you took my award
after all.

ROBERT
You said you didn't care.

MICK
I don't, but I can't believe you
took it.

Mick gets up, turns away.

ROBERT
I figured I was the only one who
could.

Robert holds out the award to Mick.

ROBERT
Someone had to give it to you.

Robert bangs Mick on his shoulder.

Mick spins, ready to smack Robert, who holds the award up so
Mick can read, MIKOLAJ WIECZOREK, BEST MATH STUDENT, HUNT
HIGH SCHOOL.

Mick stares at the award.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL DRIVEWAY - DAY

Mr. Stewart drives in, parks in his spot, near the Cannon. Robert and Jan sit on the Cannon platform. They hop down, approach him.

MR. STEWART

Nice day.

JAN

Sir, uh--

ROBERT

Sir, uh--

Jan and Robert fumble for words. Mr. Stewart smiles.

MR. STEWART

Robert, I believe there was a misspelling on one of the large award plaques.

ROBERT

There was?

MR. STEWART

I understand you know where the engraver is.

Robert grins.

Mr. Stewart walks towards the school.

MR. STEWART

Nice day.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AWARD HALLWAY - DAY

Robert leads the Calculus students, minus Mick, down the hall. They converge on the Award plaques.

A moment while some of the outer students look up and down the hall.

They walk away.

The Math plaque is gone.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AWARD HALLWAY - LATER

Burly struts along. He glances at the awards. Continues walking. Shock. He spins back. His eyes zoom in on the Math award. Mick's name adorns it.

He races down the hall, turns down another hall, full of students.

MR. BURLY
Out of my way!

The students dodge him.

Mick and Robert see him rush into the Administration office.

Mick stares. Robert smiles, puts his hand on Mick's shoulder.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Mr. Stewart sits with MR. GIBBS (55) the school district superintendent.

MR. GIBBS
You okay with telling him?

MR. STEWART
It would make my day.

Mr. Gibbs laughs.

Burly barges in, steaming.

MR. BURLY
Mr. Stewart, have you seen the Math award plaque! That little--

MR. STEWART
Burly, this is Mr. Gibbs, the school district superintendent.

MR. BURLY
Uh, how are you, Sir.

They shake hands.

MR. BURLY
We have this terrible rebellious student who needs to be expel--

MR. STEWART
Speaking of needs, Mr. Gibbs has been talking to me about the need for a third grade teacher in Hollin Elementary School.

MR. BURLY

Huh?

Mr. Stewart looks directly at Burly, holding his gaze.

MR. STEWART

You've taught third grade before so
I've recommended you for the job.

MR. BURLY

This isn't funny.

Mr. Stewart stands.

MR. STEWART

No, Burly, it isn't funny. And it
hasn't been very funny around here,
at all.

He hands Burly a letter.

MR. STEWART

Your transfer papers.

Burly's face turns red, eyes wide, cheek twitching.

MR. STEWART

During the summer you might like to
brush up on multiplication and
division. Though you've had no
trouble with division lately. Do
keep in mind, you will also be on
one year's probation. Please behave
accordingly.

Burly straightens himself, rubs his cheek, snatches the
papers, turns.

MR. STEWART

By the way...

(Burly pauses)

you're excused from the last week
of school.

Burly storms out.

MR. GIBBS

God help those eight-year-olds.

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mick holds his \$60,000 High School scholarship check in one hand, the Stanford acceptance letter in the other.

He puts them down on his desk, next to his grandfather's photo.

EXT. JAN'S HOME - DAY

Mick and Jan sit on the front porch.

JAN
Like the award?

Mick shrugs.

MICK
I remember watching Thomaz get his
when I was 9. From that day on, I
dreamt of getting my own.

JAN
We all knew you deserved it.

Mick smiles.

JAN
You can go to nearly any college
now.

MICK
I always wanted Stanford.

JAN
(subdued)
Three thousand miles.

Jan looks away.

A long silence.

MICK
I could come home every break.

He touches her neck. She turns with teary eyes.

MICK
I would, I promise.

They kiss.

EXT. MICK'S HOME - DAY

Mick walks along the sidewalk, stops at the mail box, grabs the mail. Flips through them. One from UVA. He shrugs, goes inside.

INT. MICK'S DINING/LIVING ROOM - DAY

Mick looks over the UVA letter. He puts it down, heads to the kitchen. He comes out with a Coke, picks up the letter, sits down.

He opens it, reads, "We are happy to inform you that you have been accepted..."

His eyes skip down further, "Due to your financial situation, since you are instate, we can arrange a work scholarship..."

INT. MICK'S BEDROOM - DAY

Mick spars against his hanging bag and balls.

The UVA letter is pinned under the Scholarship sign on his bulletin board.

EXT. JAN'S HOME - NIGHT

Mick races up to the door, KNOCKS. Mrs. Melton answers.

MRS. MELTON

Mick, it's late.

MICK

Yes, Ma'am. It is.

Mick drops his head. Mrs. Melton smiles.

MRS. MELTON

I'll get Jan.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL AWARD HALLWAY - DAY

Mick and Mr. Stewart stroll. They approach the school plaques. Jan stands at the far end of the hall.

MR. STEWART

So now that you have the high school scholarship, which college?

MICK

A lot of thought, Sir. When it came down to what's most important for me and for others, it didn't seem right to take a Math scholarship and not major in Math.

MR. STEWART

Declined the money, eh? The Math whiz isn't staying with Math?

MICK

They say UVA has a great law school.

Mr. Stewart smiles.

MICK

My grandfather was--

MR. STEWART

A hero, I've been told.

MICK

Yes, he was...

Mick looks up the hall, at Jan, smiling.

MICK

A victor of the people.

Mick grins. Mr. Stewart laughs. They come to the plaques. Both stare at the Math award. Mick bites his bottom lip.

MICK

It really doesn't matter for a law degree, does it, Sir?

Mr. Stewart smiles. They pass the plaques. He puts his hand on Mick's shoulder.

They approach Jan. She runs into Mick's arms. On her wrist is Mick's bracelet.

FADE OUT.