

FADE IN

EXT: PARK- DAY

Black and White scene:

From a distance, we see two figures playing basketball. The scene unfolds in a dream-like state, with the two figures moving in slow-motion.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT: BEDROOM- NIGHT

It's decorated with a single poster of Barry Sanders in the hey day of his Detroit Lions years. The rest of the room is bare with the exception of a dresser with three broken drawers and a pile of clothes in one corner. Sleeping on the twin bed covered with a single blanket is a young man named RYAN ANDERSON.

Ryan, 14 years old, African American kid. Tall and muscular for his age. An extremely intelligent kid, born into a poor situation. Has already been leading a life to nowhere with little assistance from his parents.

The door of the bedroom flies open and Ryan's mother enters. JUDY ANDERSON, early 40s, is white, angry and beat down by life. She lives in an abusive relationship with Ryan's father. She enters the room in a hurry.

JUDY
Ryan!! Wake up!

RYAN
Wha..?

JUDY
I said get up! On your feet, we don't have much time.

Ryan sits up in his bed. Judy begins throwing Ryan's clothes into a duffle bag she found in the closet.

JUDY
(handing the bag to Ryan)
Here. Put whatever you want to take in here. We're leaving in 5 minutes.

RYAN
(confused)
Where are we going?

JUDY
Ryan I don't have time for your
shit! Just do what you're told.
Five minutes!

Ryan puts on a T-shirt and sweats slowly. He stands and throws a few more items into his duffle bag. With great care he takes down the poster of Barry Sanders and puts it into a hard cardboard container for protection and puts it into his duffle bag.

Ryan exits his bedroom and goes to the living room where his mother is frantically packing two large suit cases.

RYAN
Mom? Are you in trouble or
something?

JUDY
What kinda question is that?!
You're the one always in trouble!!

RYAN
Why we leaving?

JUDY
Because I said so!

RYAN
I don't...

JUDY
You're going and that's that! You
can't stay with your father!

RYAN
Why not!?

JUDY
Because you're not allowed! The
state would take you away if I left
you with your father. That's why!

Judy still packing.

RYAN
No they wouldn't.

JUDY

Would too. Now get your ass in the car!

Ryan doesn't move

JUDY

Now Ryan!! I'm serious.

He does.

EXT. APARTMENT BUILDING- NIGHT

Ryan is sitting in the car. He turns on the car stereo to find the time. The digital clock reads 3:30 am. He also turns on the radio to the local hip-hop and rap station.

Judy appears and throws her bags into the backseat of their 1990 Nissan Maxima. Judy gets into the driver's seat. She puts the key into the ignition.

A large pickup truck pulls up in front of the car and headlights pour into the cab of the car. We hear a voice before we see anybody.

Ryan's FATHER. Late 40s, African American, extremely large and angry.

FATHER

Get the fuck out the car Judy!!

Father comes around the driver's side of the car. Judy tries to get the car to turn over.

FATHER

I swear to fucking god I will tear this door off the hinges.

Father hits the roof of the car as hard as he possibly can, causing the entire car to shake. Father decides to change his tactic towards Ryan. He walks around the front of the car to the passenger side.

FATHER

Ryan! I want you out of the car. You're staying with me.

Ryan is frozen by fear.

The car starts. Judy slams it into reverse, and peels out of the parking lot.

Judy and Ryan are visibly shaken. They remain silen.

Judy finally speaks.

JUDY

You see why I wanted you to hurry!
Just do what you're told the first
time, we'd never have these
problems.

Long Pause

RYAN

Where we going Mom?

Beat

JUDY

Oregon.

CREDITS ROLL

The credits roll over long, static shots of Judy and Ryan driving across country. Time pass over a few days. Shots in the daytime and the nighttime. Long, static shots of scenery outside the car windows.

Farm country, corn fields, and oil pumps lend to the monotony and overwhelming uncomfortable situation between Ryan and his mother. Both Ryan and Judy focus on anything but each other.

As credits come to an end we hear a voice-over provided by Ryan at 18 years of age.

RYAN (V.O.)

"Oregon". That was the last word my mother said to me for the next three days. We drove day and night, stopping in rest areas for a brief nap when my mother needed it. I didn't know much at that age but I knew that you couldn't find two more different places than D.C. and Oregon. Especially for a young, black kid raised in the shit...To this day, I still don't know why my mother insisted I go with her that night. I knew her story about the state taking me was bullshit. Needless to say, my mother and I didn't have the best relationship.

(MORE)

RYAN (V.O.) (cont'd)

It only takes one time of your own mother referring to you as 'that little nigger,' to understand where she was coming from. Maybe she knew that I stood a better chance of survivin' in Oregon, because I was certainly on the fast track to a short life in D.C.

INT: CAR- NIGHT

Ryan is sleeping.

A song on the radio is coming in and out of tune as we find Judy staring down the highway into darkness.

DISSOLVE TO:

A fist coming across the screen. We hear the fist make contact. A child screams out in pain.

BACK TO:

INT. CAR- NIGHT

Ryan jolts awake.

Judy and Ryan's trip finally comes to a stop in front of a small, run-down house. They both sit in silence.

RYAN

Where we at?

Beat

RYAN

Mom?

JUDY

This is my father's house.

Judy gets out of the car. Ryan follows. They get to the front door and Judy pulls open the screen door and knocks.

No answer.

She knocks again louder this time. We hear a man's voice from inside.

GRANDPA (O.S.)

Yeah, I hear ya. I'm coming.

Grandfather, WILL SIMPSON, mid 60s, beaten down with time, opens the door and stands on the other side of the screen door.

GRANDPA
Who's there!?

JUDY
Hi dad, it's Judy.

GRANDPA
Who?!

JUDY
Judy, your daughter.

GRANDPA
Yeah. Got your letter a couple of days ago. You're earlier than your letter said. Well, come on in.

Judy and Ryan enter into the house.

JUDY
Thought we'd surprise you.

GRANDPA
We? Letter said nothing about a we. Who's with you.

Ryan looks at his mother.

JUDY
My son, Ryan.

GRANDPA
It's cold out there. Nothing like D.C. I'm sure. Where's the boy?

JUDY
He's right here Dad.

Judy shoves Ryan in front of her father. Now close to the old man he sees that something is wrong with his eyes. He looks at his mother.

JUDY
(mouthing the words in
silent)
He can't see.

Grandpa grabs Ryan by his hands.

GRANDPA
How old are you son?

RYAN
Fourteen. Be fifteen in a couple
of weeks.

GRANDPA
Fourteen? My god you are a big
kid. Feel those hands. Bigger
than mine already. How tall are
you son?

RYAN
5'11".

GRANDPA
Really. Take after your mother.
Come sit and tell me about the
trip.

JUDY
I'll just grab the bags from the
car.

RYAN
I'll help you mom.

JUDY
No. You go on with him.

GRANDPA
Fine, fine. Come on son. Have a
seat.

INT. LIVING ROOM- NIGHT

Ryan is getting ready for bed. The couch is covered in
blankets and will be Ryan's bed for the time being. Judy is
watching television. Grandpa has gone to bed.

RYAN
Mom?

No answer

RYAN
Mom?

JUDY
What?

RYAN
How long we staying here?

JUDY
Whatsit matter? As long as we
need. Why?

RYAN
Just wondering.

JUDY
Well, don't. It's annoying.

Beat

RYAN
Have you told grandpa anything
about me?

JUDY
A little.

RYAN
Cause he acts like he don't know
nothing about me.

JUDY
He's old. He's just gettin'
senile. He's always been a little
off anyway.

RYAN
Seems nice enough to me.

JUDY
You didn't grow up with him.

Judy turns off the television and stands up.

JUDY
Your grandfather is getting old and
he doesn't need some kid bothering
him with a bunch of talk. Now get
some sleep. We have to get you
registered for school and I need to
go find a job.

Judy turns off the light. Ryan lays on the sofa looking.
Confused and anxious as he is trying to reel in the new life
that awaits him.

CUT TO:

I/E. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL- MORNING

Ryan and Judy are sitting in their car in front of Ryan's new high school. Teachers and kids are walking around the campus and going in and out of buildings.

They are definitely not in D.C.

JUDY

Let's go. Get out of the car.

RYAN

It's all a bunch of white people.
I ain't gonna fit in here.

JUDY

Now Ryan.

Ryan gets out of the car and slams the door. He and Judy head to the front door of the school.

INT. CENTRAL HIGH SCHOOL- MORNING

Judy and Ryan are walking down the hallway of the school towards the main office.

The scene unfolds in slow motion.

We see staff and students.

They stare at Ryan and his mother. The majority of the faces are indeed white. Some smile, some look confused, some indifferent, but that's not the way Ryan sees it.

RYAN (V.O.)

It felt like every eye was digging into my head, thinking 'who's the new black kid.' Probably thinking I'm some criminal in foster care that got transferred into this podunk town. They were probably just thinking, 'Who's the new kid?' Some probably threw black in there, but I was convinced it was every one. As I walked, my 'pimp walk' increased because if they were going to act scared, then I'm going to give these jokers something to be scared about. Truth is, I was the one scared shitless. '

(MORE)

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