

The Polaroid Kidd or A Period of Juvenile Prosperity

By

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FADE IN:

EXT. BRODIE HOUSE - DAY

ELIJAH BRODIE, 14, is asleep on his back deck. A fly walks across his forehead and were it not for the sweat beaded there we'd think him dead. The fly leaves as Elijah's eyes open and squint in the sun. He reaches to his cheek and pulls out a splinter.

Standing, we get a better view of Elijah and his house, both have seen better days. A beat-up 35mm camera hangs from a leather strap on his shoulder. Elijah steadies himself then turns to go inside.

The door is locked, and Elijah begins to bang on the door.

ELIJAH  
Travis? Let me in!

He stops, listening. After a beat Elijah pounds the door louder. Eventually there is the sound of a lock turning and the door opens to reveal TRAVIS, 43, long-haired and gaunt with sunken eyes, his bathrobe hangs on him like a cloak. Heroin and pain killers have not been kind to him.

Elijah takes a step back, then tries to enter but Travis stops him roughly with a hand in the chest. There's a thin gold band on his left ring finger.

TRAVIS  
I say you could come in?

ELIJAH  
(not making eye-contact)  
This isn't even your house.

TRAVIS  
You shut your thievin' trap.

Travis grabs Elijah's shirt and brings him close. Neither look any better close up.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)  
Now you get to come inside soon as you tell me what you did with that bottle.

ELIJAH  
I ate it.

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS  
Little piece of shit!

Travis throws Elijah back who stumbles and falls backward off the short deck, sending his camera flying.

Sitting up, Elijah produces an orange bottle with white pills inside and throws it at Travis who catches it.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Fine, here. No one wanted them  
anyway.

Travis squints at Elijah, who is still sitting in the dust on his backside now reaching for his camera. After a moment Travis disappears from the door and Elijah begins to stand up.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Travis has shambled into the living room out of focus as Elijah walks quickly across the dingy kitchen to a flight of stairs at the opposite end. He climbs them two at a time.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Breathing heavily on the bed is LINDA BRODIE, 39, Elijah's mother, eyes wide open staring at the ceiling. Elijah stands stock still for a moment, but as she's about to vomit he breaks out of his trance and moves towards the bed.

He turns her to her side, facing the camera, just as she coughs up some vomit.

Linda continues to pant aggressively as Elijah looks through the room for something to collect the incoming vomit with, trying to speak to her calmly all the while.

Rooting through trash, alcohol and pill bottles, cigarette butts, bent spoons, and other drug related paraphernalia, he eventually produces a battered metal basin from under the bed and places it in front of his mother just as she begins to heave again. Before vomiting we cut to...

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - LATER

Elijah has peeled off the vomit and sweat-stained sheets and is laying out a sheet as his mother, slumped in a plastic chair, comes to.

(CONTINUED)

LINDA  
Is that my baby boy changing the  
sheets?

ELIJAH  
Yeah.

LINDA  
Come here.

Elijah goes to her and kneels next to the chair. Linda runs her hand through her son's hair.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
I ever tell you how proud I am of  
you?

ELIJAH  
Yeah.

LINDA  
Do you believe me?

ELIJAH  
I guess.

LINDA  
Well I am, and don't listen to  
whatever it is Travis is tellin'  
you. We're doin' alright.

Elijah stands up and goes back to tucking in the sheet.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
Eli?

A beat as he ignores her and continues with the bed.

LINDA (CONT'D)  
Elijah what's the matter, baby?

ELIJAH  
How is this alright?

LINDA  
We got each other, don't we? We got  
a roof over our heads.

Elijah stops.

ELIJAH  
It's just most of the time I can't  
even talk to you, you know? It's  
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

ELIJAH (cont'd)  
like you aren't even here anymore.  
Do you even remember what just  
happened?

(beat)

I had to sleep outside again last  
night too, did you know that?

(beat)

I just miss you.

LINDA

Eli...

ELIJAH

I miss how it was with you and dad  
and me.

LINDA

Eli, don't get upset. You're  
miss-remembering things, you were  
too little then.

Silence as Elijah moves closer and sits on the bed.

LINDA

I'm sorry, I... I know things could  
be better. I promise to be  
better. I'll start going to those  
meetings like you've been asking me  
I promise.

ELIJAH

You said that last time.

LINDA

Well now I mean it. Okay?

(beat)

You still takin' those photographs  
with daddy's camera?

Elijah eases faintly at the change of subject and brushes  
some dirt off his camera.

ELIJAH

Yeah.

(beat)

I even got one of this woman named  
Linda Brodie looking like a  
super-model.

The two share a small smile.

(CONTINUED)

LINDA

Well I sure would like me meet this lady.

ELIJAH

Yeah, me too.

Trying not to linger on that...

LINDA

You keep takin' pictures, Elijah. Okay? You do it for your mama.

ELIJAH

I don't know... its not real cheap.

Elijah looks down at the camera and we get a sense of its age and use.

LINDA

Well, I think I have some money under the mattress there. You take it.

Elijah stands and lifts up the mattress, retrieving a small wad of ragged bills.

LINDA (CONT'D)

It's yours.

ELIJAH

We should use this for food.

LINDA

Oh go bother Travis for food money, you know how he likes to eat. You take that for yourself.

ELIJAH

Thanks, mom.

LINDA

Come here.

He goes to her again and she holds him.

LINDA (CONT'D)

I love you, Eli.

ELIJAH

Love you too.

Still holding each other:

(CONTINUED)

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Mom?

LINDA

Yeah, sweetheart?

ELIJAH

Do you ever hear from dad?

LINDA

I used to when you were little. But only for a couple years after he left.

ELIJAH

Where did he go?

LINDA

I don't know, baby. Last letter he sent was from Tucson but that was years ago.

(beat)

I just decided to stop worrying about it. And so should you. Wasn't worth the trouble.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Elijah is walking back down the stairs. Travis is seated at the small table, counting out pills.

ELIJAH

Travis? Can I get some money for groceries?

TRAVIS

Ha, that's the best joke I've heard all year.

ELIJAH

We all have to eat, especially mom.

(beat)

I think she's sick again.

TRAVIS

I got all the medicine she needs right here.

ELIJAH

Travis, please. She was just throwing up.

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS

I thought you were some kinda photography hot-shot, huh? You ever sell any of those pictures like you always talk about.

ELIJAH

I've sold a few, but I could sell more if Mom wasn't always getting sick from whatever shit you make her take.

Travis perks up at the expletive.

TRAVIS

Don't you dare talk that way to me again. You can forget about gettin' a cent out of me.

ELIJAH

Fine, I'll... I'll sell my camera next week and pay you back then. It's worth at least a couple hundred.

Together:

TRAVIS

Are you fuckin' kidding me? You have a six hundred dollar-

ELIJAH

And don't- don't, just, Travis shut the fuck up!

Travis, surprised, shuts the fuck up.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

Some guy downtown offered me a few hundred for it once, but I thought making photos could help pay bills and stuff so I kept it.

Travis stands but levels off, thinking. He stuffs his hand into a pocket and pulls out some bills, counts out a few and holds them in front of Elijah.

TRAVIS

You take this here...

As Elijah takes the money with one hand, Travis snatches the camera hanging from Elijah's opposite shoulder and quickly holds it away from the boy.

(CONTINUED)



TRAVIS (CONT'D)

...but I'm taking that camera right now.

Elijah moves to take it back but is restrained with Travis' other arm.

ELIJAH

Travis give me that back. I told you I just need it for another week to-

TRAVIS

To do what, Eli? Take more photos of dead animals? I've seen that darkroom you have set up, half those photos are all white or shriveled up and shit. You don't have a goddamn clue what you're doing up there, do you?

Beat as they lock eyes inches apart.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

Listen up, kid. You come from nothin, you are nothin, and you ain't gonna be nothin. And the sooner you learn that the better. Now take that money and buy some damn food.

Elijah stands down and counts the money. Travis turns and heads back to the table.

ELIJAH

What about the medicine?

TRAVIS

She doesn't need medicine.

ELIJAH

So mom is just supposed to die?

TRAVIS

You're supposed to be grateful I'm giving you anything at all, son.

ELIJAH

You're not my dad.

Sitting, Travis looks up and grins.

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS  
Oh right, nobody is.

EXT. EMPTY STREETS - DAY

Elijah, walking down an empty sidewalk. Many of the houses look like his, faded with peeling paint, a picture of picturesque fallen into disrepair.

Eventually he reaches the convenience store, opens the door, and walks in.

INT. GROCERY STORE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

The aisles are as empty as the streets. Elijah pulls a loaf of bread down from a shelf...

...grabs some eggs out of a refrigerator and opens the carton to inspect them...

...grabs a half-gallon of milk from the back of the fridge...

...picks out a jar of peanut butter.

Walking up to the lone cash register, Elijah greets the CASHIER, late sixties, confused.

ELIJAH  
Hi.

CASHIER  
Huh?

ELIJAH  
Can I buy some film?

Beat.

CASHIER  
Oh, sorry. We stopped selling DVDs last year.

ELIJAH  
No, I meant for taking pictures, like rolls of film.

CASHIER  
Ahhh.  
(beat)  
I don't know.

(CONTINUED)

The cashier turns around and looks up at the shelves behind the register for several moments before reaching up and grabbing two small boxes of 35mm film.

CASHIER (CONT'D)

This what you're looking for?

ELIJAH

Yeah, thanks.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATE AFTERNOON

Travis is drinking at the table with JESSE, 40, who eats often and drinks more, but is mostly put together. Jesse is examining the camera.

JESSE

Shit, Travis, I don't know. We don't get too many cameras in at the shop believe it or not. I think people usually just take em to electronic shops or something.

Elijah returns with the groceries and puts the paper bag on the counter with his back to the two men and begins to unpack it. The others ignore him.

TRAVIS

Well how much do you think they'd pay for it?

JESSE

Well if I were them, I don't know, maybe a hundred? It's pretty banged up.

We watch Elijah as the others talk in the background. He quietly removes the two boxes of film and puts them in his pocket.

JESSE (CONT'D)

Does it all work still?

TRAVIS

He's the one you should be asking.

Elijah gets the rolls in his pockets just before they turn their attention to him.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

You heard him.

Elijah turns, trying to look inconspicuous.

(CONTINUED)

ELIJAH

Yeah, it works. The film advance arm is kinda sticky but it all works.

Travis' gaze doesn't return to the camera as his friend's does. It stays on Elijah.

TRAVIS

They give you a receipt at the store, Elijah?

Elijah makes an attempt to throw Travis off and looks through the bags.

ELIJAH

Um. I don't think so, it doesn't look like it.

He turns back around, Travis has stood up and walks towards the bags.

Taking a look for himself Travis finds the long white paper and begins to read it. Elijah takes a step or two back.

TRAVIS

And what the hell might this be?  
"Fujifilm thirty-five milimeter  
four hundred." Two of them.

JESSE

Sounds like film to me.

TRAVIS

Sounds like film to me too, Jesse.  
Are you wasting my money, Eli?

Travis gives Elijah a hard shove in the chest that sends the boy falling backwards.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

And a grand total of twenty-four dollars and twenty-two cents. If I'm not mistaken I only gave you ten, which means you're either lying or stealing, and I can't say I'm a big fan of either one.

Travis advances to strike Elijah but remembers they're not alone and pretends to calm down.

(CONTINUED)

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

You know I kind of liked the idea of you making a little side money selling photos and whatnot. But I gotta say that's gonna be mighty hard...

Travis takes the camera from the table.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

...without a camera.

On "camera" Travis slams the lens of the camera against the corner of the counter, the shattered glass scatters on the floor around Elijah.

Elijah sits in shock as Travis tosses him the broken camera and sits back down at the table. Jesse pretending not to have seen a thing.

Elijah brushes the glass off, takes the camera and starts up the stairs.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

Yeah go cry to your mama!

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - ELIJAH'S BEDROOM - LATE AFTERNOON

The room is small, dark, and messy, but instead of cigarette butts and beer bottles, it's bottles of developing chemicals and empty film canisters that litter the floor. Photos hang from the ceiling on clothes-lines and we see what Travis meant earlier. Still, some of the photos are good, even striking: Kids on a beach, a deer bleeding on a roadside, the house, his mother, a sunset, etc.

At the same time it's still the bedroom of a 14 year old and old fantasy novels and comics can be seen as well.

Elijah goes to the narrow closet at the far side of the room and opens it.

Inside are a few old coats and things hanging, but Elijah kneels and pushes a box away to reveal a leather satchel.

Elijah grabs and opens it, then pulls something out.

It's another lens and the satchel a camera bag. Elijah removes the shattered lens and fits on the slightly larger, 50mm lens and holds the camera up to his face, takes a photo of the window, advances the film, and seems satisfied.

Now he stands and goes to the bed, turns on an old CRT, stares at the ceiling and closes his eyes.

EXT. EMPTY STREETS - NIGHT - DREAM

The same street as before but now Elijah's running in profile. Not for his life, but at a steady jog, panting regularly.

A heavy camera shutter sounds and we cut to a slightly closer shot, the background behind Elijah moving faster now than he.

Another shutter sounds and we're closer, the background faster.

Again.

And again, until we're right on his head and the background is speeding past as he jogs at the same steady pace. The panting grows louder and louder until...

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - ELIJAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

...he wakes up, still in his clothes, still on his back, but the sun has gone down and panting, now ragged, can be heard through the wall. This is not the sound of love being made, it matches the pre-vomit panting of his mother.

TRAVIS (O.S.)

*Shit.*

Elijah sits up in a daze, making his way towards the door picking up speed.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - MASTER BEDROOM - NIGHT

Elijah opens the door to the master bedroom to find his mother is on her back as Travis, straddling her, is slapping Linda back and forth in his underwear. For her part, Linda Brodie appears to be having a seizure. The bottle from earlier is overturned on the nightstand.

ELIJAH

Mom!

Travis' head snaps around and he stares at Elijah bug-eyed, panting, and glazed with sweat, shaking from nerves and drugs.

(CONTINUED)

ELIJAH  
What's happening to her?!

Travis doesn't respond and Elijah, shaken, makes for the phone on the nightstand.

Travis gets up and intercepts him.

TRAVIS  
*No phone.*

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
What are you doing?!

Elijah is pinned against the wall next to the door, but is able to shove Travis off.

Elijah falls backwards in the struggle and hits his head on the nightstand, knocking the lamp over and out. He reaches up to the small table groping for the phone.

Travis approaches again but as he lunges at Elijah, the boy grabs the lamp from over his shoulder and bashes Travis over the head with it, sending the man staggering backwards, eventually falling with his head landing just outside the doorway.

Travis' cut and bleeding head from outside the room. We can see he's breathing and that Elijah is standing in the background, picks up the phone, and dials as Linda continues to spasm.

Elijah tries to restrain his mother while holding the phone to his head.

ELIJAH  
I think my mom's having a seizure  
or something.

Drool and spit are leaking from Linda's mouth as Elijah begins to break down.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
I don't know. I think um-

He turns around and grabs the pill bottle from the floor.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)  
Um. It says it's for pain.  
(beat)  
921 Blackwood Lane.  
(beat)  
I- um...

(looking at Travis)  
Ok. Just, please hurry.

Linda is wide-eyed and staring at the ceiling as Elijah puts down the phone, runs out and returns moments later with a wet rag for her forehead. He places a pillow under her head, turns her to her side, and rests his head on her side. Eventually the seizing subsides along with her heartbeat as Linda's body gives out.

Elijah's face as he sits in the chair by the bed and stares blankly at his lifeless mother. Snot and tears mix as they run down his chin.

After a moment he stands and with the same blank look begins walking quickly to...

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - ELIJAH'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

...where he grabs a small duffel bag and begins to pack it with some clothes and a water bottle and slings the camera bag over his other shoulder.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Elijah adds the bread and peanut butter to his bag, pours himself a cup of water from the tap and drinks with a shaking hand. In the distance are sirens.

Elijah stands, wipes his mouth with his sleeve, and walks out the back door.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - NIGHT

Elijah walking, barely holding it together.

After a few beats he arrives at a homeless shelter and enters.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - RECEPTION - NIGHT

GEORGIA, forties, is nodding off at the front desk.

GEORGIA  
Elijah? What are you doing back here? What time is it?

(CONTINUED)



ELIJAH

I um- Travis and my mom were just fighting and I so I came here.

GEORGIA

Elijah, you know we can't take in kids without an adult. Let me call child services for you, I know someone who works at a local office that will help with whatever's going on, OK?

Georgia picks up a phone at the desk.

ELIJAH

Please don't call them Ms. Georgia.

(beat)

I'm just tired. Can I please just sleep here for a little while?

GEORGIA

Well...yeah...I guess you could just sleep in my office tonight.

(beat)

But this is just between us, and just this once, OK? And you'll have to be out before anyone else gets here. That means early.

ELIJAH

Thanks, Ms. Georgia.

GEORGIA

Alright, now let's get you situated.

Georgia takes a quick look around and leads Elijah away.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - GEORGIA'S OFFICE - DAWN

Elijah is sleeping on the floor curled up under a well-used blanket, his duffel and camera bag act as pillows. On the desk is a bag from McDonald's. Georgia stands over him.

GEORGIA

Elijah, time to get up. I let you sleep longer than I should have so now we gotta move.

Elijah comes to and turns to face Georgia.

(CONTINUED)

GEORGIA (CONT'D)

Come on now, even managed to get  
you a hot breakfast for the road.

Elijah gets up and folds the blanket.

ELIJAH

Thanks for letting me stay here.

GEORGIA

It's alright, Elijah.

The two exit the office and walk down the hall towards the  
exit.

GEORGIA

Are you sure you don't want anyone  
to come to the house? They'll never  
know you came here. I promise  
you'll be perfectly safe.

ELIJAH

No it's alright. I just needed to  
get out.

Georgia is skeptical as Elijah rarely makes eye-contact and  
seems generally depressed, but she lets it go.

GEORGIA

Well alright. But if you need  
something you come right back here  
OK?

ELIJAH

Yes ma'am.

EXT. PARK - DAWN

Elijah sits on a bench in a park eating his hotcakes and  
hash-browns. On the next bench over a homeless man sleeps.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

Elijah sits at a computer terminal.

We see "Pensacola to Tucson train" written in the search  
bar. After a few moments the search results come up and he  
clicks a link. The prices listed average around \$200.

Elijah sits back and looks at the ceiling.

He then leans over and rummages through his camera bag, taking out and loading his camera with a fresh roll of film.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Elijah stands across the street from a café with a few people sitting in front bathed in sun and takes its photo.

EXT. TRAIN YARD - DAY

Elijah leans over the railing of a foot bridge holding the camera to his face. A train rolls under him. Another click of the shutter.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Elijah watches some kids his age playing baseball. A pitch is thrown, and as it makes contact there's another click.

EXT. BRODIE HOUSE - DAY

Elijah is crouched in his backyard, stowing his duffel and camera bag.

He looks around and slowly approaches the back door.

Upon reaching the door, he tries the knob. It's locked.

Elijah, circling the house and looking in windows.

Eventually he comes back to the door and bangs on it, taking a few steps back afterwards.

When no one answers Elijah puts his ear to the door and then walks to a nearby window. He tries to push it open but it too is locked. He walks away.

He brings his bags up to the house, grabs a flannel shirt from his duffel, and wraps it around his hand and wrist.

He punches the window with his wrapped hand. It cracks, but does not break. After two more punches it does. He unlocks the window then opens it, pushing his duffel and camera bag through before climbing in.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Elijah unwraps his wrist and hand to reveal only minor cuts. The shirt did not fare so well, but he pulls it on anyway.

The house is quiet and empty, Elijah leaves the living room and makes for the stairs.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Elijah stands on the landing and looks at the stain in the carpeting where Travis bled, then looks into the room at the bed. The trash is still there but the drugs and related paraphernalia are gone.

Elijah steps over the stain and into the bedroom, making for the closet.

He opens it and reaches up for the top shelf but can't quite make it.

After positioning a chair in front of the closet he stands on it and reaches deep into the shelf, coming back with a big jar of cash and coins.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - ELIJAH'S BEDROOM - DAY

Elijah sits on his bed counting the money under his breath.

ELIJAH

One-twenty, one-thirty, one-forty,  
one-forty-five, one-forty-six,  
one-forty-seven, one-forty-eight.

When he finishes, he sighs, then stuffs the money in his bag.

Elijah unpins the photos around him and piles them on his bed. He flips through them and we see the one he'd taken of his mother, mostly clean.

He folds it and puts it in his pocket.

Reaching under the bed, Elijah pulls out a series of three gallon jugs with "DEVELOPER," "STOP," and "FIX" written on them in boyish handwriting along with other second-hand developing equipment.

He loads the materials in a laundry basket and takes them back through the master bedroom and into the bathroom where he begins to run the bath with hot water.

(CONTINUED)

Elijah closes the door and looks around sealing himself in the dark. Remembering, he turns on the exhaust fan and begins developing the film...

...un-spooling and re-spooling the film...  
...cutting it to size...  
... removing the jugs from the bath and measuring out the chemicals...  
...shaking the developing canister...  
...counting the time to himself...  
...rinse...  
...repeat...  
...cutting the wet film...  
...hanging the developed negatives...  
...packing up...  
...and leaving.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - KITCHEN - MINUTES LATER

Elijah sits at the kitchen table eating a peanut-butter sandwich with a glass of milk.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - MASTER BATHROOM - DAY

Elijah returns to the bathroom, rolls up the film and packs everything up into the basket.

As he packs we hear the sound of a scanner...

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - DAY

...and we're back at the library as Elijah attempts to scan the negatives. On the screen next to him is a negative image.

As he's working a LIBRARIAN walks up to him.

LIBRARIAN

Excuse me.

Elijah turns as the scanner, lid up, works in the background.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

Hi there. The scanner lid must be closed at all times whenever it's-  
(noticing the film)  
What's that?

(CONTINUED)

ELIJAH

It's film. I developed it myself.

LIBRARIAN

Oh, I think Henry told me about you.

(beat)

How does it work? I'm amazed you're doing this all by yourself. With all those chemicals and things?

ELIJAH

Mhm. There are only three so it isn't too bad.

LIBRARIAN

Who showed you how?

ELIJAH

Um...

Elijah looks at the computer desks.

ELIJAH (CONT'D)

...my dad.

LIBRARIAN

That's so sweet. And that's what you're using the scanner for too I take it?

ELIJAH

Mhm. It doesn't work so good all the time, and I can't print on the right kind of paper, but it's better than nothing I guess. I still get to see the pictures.

LIBRARIAN

Did you take that?

She motions to the computer next to the scanner. Elijah sits at the desk and clicks a few times. Suddenly the image is in positive, a rough but striking image of a little league player in full swing.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)

Oh my goodness. That's really good!

ELIJAH

Thanks!

And for a moment it's as if the compliment comes from his mother. Then:

(CONTINUED)

ELIJAH

I'm gonna try and sell some of them downtown.

LIBRARIAN

On the street?

ELIJAH

Yep.

LIBRARIAN

Is this for a summer program or something?

ELIJAH

No ma'am, I'm just trying to save up so I can buy a train ticket to go see my dad.

LIBRARIAN

Well that's very enterprising of you, young man. How much does one of these pictures cost a lady?

ELIJAH

Um...

LIBRARIAN

How does five dollars sound?

ELIJAH

You want one?

LIBRARIAN

Why not!

Elijah smiles for the first time.

EXT. BRODIE HOUSE - SAME

Travis approaches the front door, unlocks it, and enters. His head is bandaged.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Travis washes his face in the sink, rips off his hospital bracelet, and grabs a beer from the fridge. As he goes to the living room he notices Elijah's plate and cup from earlier and pauses. After a beat he keeps walking.

Sitting on the couch, he notices the broken window.

Travis stands up and walks around the first floor looking things over, then heads for the stairs.

INT. BRODIE HOUSE - SECOND FLOOR - DAY - CONTINUOUS

Travis pauses at the threshold of the master bedroom to look at the bloodstain in the carpet then walks in.

He gives the room a once-over then goes to the closet and reaches up to the top shelf.

He gropes increasingly frantically and eventually pulls the entire shelf down.

TRAVIS  
Goddammit!

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DAY

Elijah stands on the street against a wall where he's taped some of his photos. Another sheet of paper taped up with them says "MY PICTURES, \$5". More can be seen coming out of his bag.

A MAN, fifties, walks up.

MAN  
Hey sport, you take these pictures,  
huh?

ELIJAH  
Yes sir.

MAN  
Well alright then, let's see here.

The man looks over the photos, we see the trainyard, the baseball players, the café, among others.

MAN  
Y'know these ain't half bad.  
(beat)  
You say these are five dollars?

ELIJAH  
Yeah.

The man walks over holding two of the photos and a ten dollar bill.

(CONTINUED)



MAN

I think I'll take these two.

INT. HOMELESS SHELTER - RECEPTION - SAME

Travis walks into the homeless shelter where Georgia is at her post.

TRAVIS

Elijah come in here last night?

GEORGIA

No, Travis, he did not.

TRAVIS

Don't lie to me dammit!

GEORGIA

Am I gonna have to call security Travis?

He stares her down and storms out.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DUSK

Elijah sits against the wall counting his money. Seeming satisfied he puts it away and gets up, leaving his unsold photos hanging on the wall.

INT. PUBLIC LIBRARY - SAME

Travis enters the library, walks up to the empty front desk and looks around.

He spots the librarian from before trying to fix a printer and goes to her.

TRAVIS

Excuse me.

LIBRARIAN

Just a moment, sir.

TRAVIS

Look I'm in a bit of a hurry, could you fix that thing later?

LIBRARIAN

I said just a moment.

The printer begins to work but stops because of a jam.

(CONTINUED)

Travis reaches in and rips out the jammed piece of paper but notices a photo printed on it.

TRAVIS  
Who printed this?

LIBRARIAN  
Excuse me?

Now with her attention,

TRAVIS  
I said who printed this?

LIBRARIAN  
It was a boy who came in here  
earlier this afternoon.

TRAVIS  
What'd he look like?

LIBRARIAN  
I don't know, fourteen maybe  
fifteen years old? Brown hair, had  
a few bags with him.

Travis is looking around, thinking.

LIBRARIAN (CONT'D)  
Can I ask what this is all about,  
sir?

Beat.

TRAVIS  
I'm looking for my son.  
(beat)  
He say where he was going?

LIBRARIAN  
He mentioned trying to sell those  
photos on the street somewhere.  
Said you taught him how to take  
them.

TRAVIS  
Like hell.  
(beat)  
What else?

LIBRARIAN  
Well, he said he was selling them  
so he could by a train ticket to go  
see...

Travis has already begun walking away, leaving the photo crumpled on the floor.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - DUSK

Elijah walks with a smile towards the train station.

EXT. DOWNTOWN - SAME

Travis sees Elijah's photos hanging across the street and hurries over.

Approaching the same photo from the library he rips it off the wall to look at it.

EXT. OUTSKIRTS - DUSK

Elijah walks on a deserted sidewalk, a field on one side with train tracks in the distance. Down the street is the train station.

Reverse on Elijah and we see another figure behind him.

TRAVIS

Where you going you sonofa bitch?

Elijah turns, and seeing Travis breaks into a run.

Travis begins running him down.

A freight-train can be seen running along the tracks in the distance behind them.

Travis is gaining faster than Elijah can get to the train station.

As Elijah turns to check the distance behind him he runs headlong into the side of a muscular young man who was running towards the train-tracks. This is BRICK, 21, tanned and tattooed, wearing a filthy shirt and similar slacks.

BRICK

Woah, easy there, champ.

(noticing Travis)

Who's that beauty?

Another young man, SIMON, 19, similar dress, runs up behind Brick.

(CONTINUED)

SIMON

Hey, Brick, what's going on?

Travis arrives on the scene and makes a grab for Elijah.

Brick jumps in front of Elijah and pushes Travis back.

BRICK

Hey relax, amigo, why are you  
running the kid down?

TRAVIS

Get the fuck out of my way, boy.

Travis shoves Brick away, who is quickly replaced by Simon.

TRAVIS (CONT'D)

I said move!

Travis takes a swing at the Simon who ducks it, then looks  
to Brick.

BRICK

Well then.

Brick punches Travis hard on jaw, Simon slams his open palm  
on Travis' opposite ear.

BRICK

*Book it!*

Simon and Brick take one of Elijah's bags each and take off.

SIMON

Come on!

ELIJAH

Wait, where are you guys going?!

Not getting a reply, Elijah sprints after them, Travis,  
recovering from the sucker-punch, composes himself and  
follows suit.

The four run closer and closer to the train, which soon  
lumbers into detail loud and heavy.

Travis gains on Elijah again, but ahead of the boy Brick  
begins to shout.

BRICK

There!

(CONTINUED)

He's pointing to an open boxcar from which a few others reach out their hands. Brick and Simon change course to intercept the car, Elijah follows, throwing Travis for a moment.

SIMON

All aboard!

Brick and Simon reach the boxcar and climb in, reaching their hands out to Elijah. Travis is right behind him, but Elijah manages to grab hold and pulls away along with the train.

Elijah scrambles on, but his foot snags the duffel bag and pulls it off of the train dangling it dangerously close to the wheels picking up speed underneath.

Elijah gives up on the bag and kicks it off.

INT. BOXCAR - NIGHT

Brick and Simon close the boxcar door and turn to face Elijah and the others.

Around a small propane lamp are GLASS, 21, shirtless, cleaned up, and wearing a large pair of black-rimmed glasses; SIMONE, 19, Simon's identical twin sister; KEET, 22, has a parakeet on her shoulder.

The lamp rests on a pallet of some commodity unidentifiable under layers of shrink-wrap. The group are seated on similar packages.

Everyone stands breathless.

GLASS

Welcome aboard.

BRICK

How ya been, man?

Glass and Brick hug, Simon begins greeting the rest in a similar fashion.

GLASS

Been worse, been better.

BRICK

That's good, I think.

(CONTINUED)

GLASS  
Who's this?

Simon now sits next to his twin sister. Both equally androgynous, they appear almost completely the same.

SIMONE  
Yeah, who's the kid?

BRICK  
Dunno, just ran into him.

SIMON  
(to Brick)  
I thought he ran into you.

ELIJAH  
I'm Elijah.

SIMON  
(to Simone)  
He's Elijah.

GLASS  
Who was the guy running you down,  
Elijah?

ELIJAH  
My step-dad.

ALL  
Ahhh.

Everyone exchanges knowing expressions as if Elijah's answer explains everything, which of course it does.

GLASS  
(laughing)  
Well it looks like today's your  
lucky day. I'm Glass.

Glass leans forward and shakes hands with Elijah.