

INT./EXT. SUV -- DAY

Claude, Nancy and their son JOSH, 18, ride in the SUV. Claude drives. Josh sits in the back, his head against the window. They are all dressed in black, coming from the funeral. Nancy has a splash of red accenting her black.

They sit quietly as the SUV moves carefully down the highway. A faded billboard for a nearby 'ZOO' catches Josh's attention.

NANCY

The food was good.

CLAUDE

Those ladies know how to put off a spread. I particularly liked the pickled eggs.

JOSH

The beans were burnt.

NANCY

Can't you say anything good?

JOSH

I'm just saying.

NANCY

(mocks)

I'm just saying. Just say something good.

JOSH

Dad's eulogy was good.

NANCY

Oh, please! You wouldn't know but they were best friends. Fishing buddies.

JOSH

You looked good. You were the 'elegant one' at the funeral.

NANCY

(to Claude)

Is he patronizing me?

Claude nods 'no'.

Josh watches from the back seat, amused.

JOSH

So, Dad. What are you going to do with all the money?

NANCY

Your father has no idea how much money there is. Or if there's any. Your grandfather was in a coma for three years. You know how much that cost?

JOSH

More than my schooling, I bet. And, yes, Nancy. I know what that cost.

NANCY

Don't get smart with me.

CLAUDE

Please. The two of you. We just buried him.

(adds)

You two want to fight about money.

Claude enjoys his little triumph.

JOSH

I have a theory - about elephants.

NANCY

Is this part of your school work?

JOSH

You know how some elephants reject their babies in captivity - in zoo's - and how they always die without their mother's?

CLAUDE

It just happened. It was in the news.

JOSH

And they have genetic memory - it's proven. During long droughts an elephant that has never been somewhere before will lead a herd hundreds of miles to water. It's like they remember it from the distant past.

NANCY

Your point?

JOSH

In captivity, the mother remembers the vast open plains, but lives in a zoo. She'd rather see her young die, than live there. That's why she rejects them.

(adds)

She must really love them. To do that.

Silence.

NANCY

That doesn't make sense. Why don't all elephants reject their young?

JOSH

I guess it affects each one differently - motherhood.

EXT. SUV -- DAY

The SUV slows and turns onto the dirt rural road, the sign for Waterdown left behind.

They pass the ailing WHITE CHURCH.

As the SUV moves further in the distance, the Church begins to show evidence of repair - new lumber beginning to replace the rotted wood.

In the distance, the SUV turns onto a crossroad and disappears behind trees.

NANCY (O.S.)

If you cared half as much about your studies as you do about daydreaming.

JOSH

I have B's going into all my finals. Everybody can't have A's.

NANCY

You sound like your father.

CLAUDE

Hey.

NANCY

I'm talking! If you'd of done this years ago we wouldn't have this problem.

JOSH

You make up problems.

NANCY

Don't use that tone with me. You think everything's a fluffy ride.
(looks to Claude)
No doubt who raised him.

Claude manages a sideways glance during the silence.

JOSH

If Grandfather left me any money,
I'm going to travel.

NANCY

I swear. If I hear one more word
about money...

(adds)

If your Grandfather left you
money, you'd be invited to the
reading.

CLAUDE

(into the rear view
mirror)

That's true.

NANCY

I'll tell you what. You pull
your grades up - you got three
weeks to your finals...

CLAUDE

Two weeks.

NANCY

Three!

CLAUDE

Two!

JOSH

Three.

NANCY

I'll get you that computer you
want.

JOSH

Is that a bribe, Nancy?

NANCY

It's the better of two options,
trust me.

JOSH

Then it's a deal. What's for
dinner?

NANCY

I'm grilling. We're having Emu.
From the Carters' farm. It's
organic.

Josh goes back to leaning his head against the window.

JOSH (V.O.)

Good. You can help me with a
project - in the name of good
grades.

The SUV turns off the dirt side road onto the paved driveway between the perfect hedges.

NANCY (O.S.)
I think we should get the hedges done.

INT. ANTHONY-BELL HOUSE -- DAY

Claude sits in front of the television, glued to a hockey game, the sound turned down. The room has been set - dinner music plays. Nancy moves back and forth as she prepares for a barbecue. She approaches the barbecue near the open patio doors.

NANCY
I asked you to light it.

Claude, his eyes glued to the television, pulls himself away. Lifts the lid to the barbecue and flicks the switch and returns to the game. Nancy moves back and forth from the kitchen with things for the meal.

NANCY (CONT'D)
(moving back-and-forth)
Can you believe them? The Carters. He must be sixty. She can't be forty. Those kids, running around wild with those big birds. Jumping on their backs.

CLAUDE
I guess it's safe or they wouldn't let them do it.

Claude is again glued to the television. Nancy continues back and forth from the kitchen to the table.

Claude reacts to the action on the television - a near goal.

Nancy approaches the barbecue. She has the meat on a plate in one hand.

NANCY
You couldn't close the lid.

Nancy closes the lid - the handle falls off and it slams shut. The Emu meat falls to the floor.

NANCY (CONT'D)
God damn it! I told you it was broke. I told you weeks ago. Why the hell do I bother? You two are alike. One glued to the television, the other to the computer. Get over here if you want to eat tonight!

CLAUDE

It's overtime!

NANCY

I don't care if it's nuclear war!
You wouldn't know but our
national identity hinges on a
hockey game. What am I going to
do now, with this meat!?

CLAUDE

(stands and shouts at
her, distracted
from the t.v.)
It's only the God-damn floor.
You can eat off it. Fuck! They
scored!

He abruptly turns off the television.

CLAUDE (CONT'D)

Why the hell can't you leave me
alone?!

Both Claude and Nancy are taken aback with Claude's force.

Josh has joined them. He has a digital camera in his
hands.

JOSH

(matter-of-fact)
Is dinner ready? I'm starved.

NANCY

Come witness your newly-empowered
father in action!

She picks the meat off the floor and throws the pieces onto the grill.