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Neil and the Nun

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NEIL AND THE NUN

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
in
The Department of Drama and Communication

by

Nicole Eiden

B. S. C. Ohio University, 1998

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More than anyone, I would like to thank my mother and father, whose shared values and diverse personalities have enabled me to come this far. Also, I would like to thank my grandparents for their consistent support, making the realization of my film possible. Finally, I would like to thank the members of my graduate thesis committee, Mark Morris, Stephen Hank, and Dr. Kevin Graves.

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ABSTRACT

This thesis illustrates the production of the narrative short film *Neil and the Nun*. The various chapters included in this written work delineate the development, pre-production, production, and post-productions stages of this thesis film. In supplement to these four larger chapters, the script, shot list, budget, and script breakdown are included.

Neil and the Nun, written, directed, produced, and edited by me, articulates life through the perceptions of a child. The story centers on the volatile relationship of two fourth graders and their teacher, a possibly closeted lesbian nun. Because they are children, they have different notions than adults of priority, relevance, and the meaning of life's events. The intention of this film is to authentically delve into this child worldview, revealing their shift towards wisdom and compassion. The film took twelve shooting days and involved five primary locations. My larger goal was to create a film that exemplifies my capacity as a filmmaker, thus, steering me towards the next step of my career.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis documents the process of making *Neil and Nun* from germinating idea to finished film. My goal was to create a film that challenged me artistically, technically, and organizationally. I wanted to tangibly realize what I deemed to be beyond my capacity. This notion of attempting a difficult project both intimidated and excited me.

I wanted my project to be more layered and intricate than my previous film, *La Cuoca (the cook)*. More specifically, I intended the film to be about three-dimensional people with psychologically in depth character arcs. I wanted the aesthetic look of the film to mirror its themes and tone in a definitive way. Furthermore, I wanted my camera shots to deliberately parallel the intention of each scene. Finally, I wanted to organize the production in such away that it would undoubtedly succeed.

CHAPTER 1

DEVELOPMENT

The Script

I began my script in the summer of 2002 and continued working diligently through autumn. For me, the finished screenplay is achieved through a series of steps. First, I wrote down my ideas on individual note cards; these ideas consisted of small interactions, major plot points, and visual design. Next, I ordered the cards and began structuring plot. Subsequently, utilizing the cards, I wrote out the entire story in prose. I defined as much detail about the settings, actions, and costumes as possible. Allison Alsup, an English instructor at UNO, helped me develop initial plot concepts. After it was already in script format, Maya Held aided in focusing the screenplay's structure.

The Budget

The large cast and long script warranted a considerable budget. I devised a budget based on my last film, *La Cuoca (the cook)*. In order to cover the cost, I took out extra student loan money. The majority of the budget's money was designated for film stock, film processing and transferring, grip truck and equipment rental, and food for the cast and crew. The rest of the budget was allocated to props, costumes, set design, and shipping.

CHAPTER 2

PRE-PRODUCTION

Crew

The first person I asked to be a part of the film was Allen Parks. Allen was the director of photography on my last film. We have complimentary personalities and share a filmic sensibility. He has both the imagination and technical expertise to capture the images I create. Additionally, I highly respect his creative choices and contributions.

My previous film taught me that having good production sound is arduous, imperative, and inevitably time saving. Consequently, I asked Michael Harvey, of Nashville Ave. Sound, to be the sound recordist and designer. Utilizing Mike was one of the wisest choices I made on the shoot. The main camera assistant was Kaori Maeyama; she is exact, energetic, and hardworking. Other camera assistants included Lisa Lengyel, Josh Trotter, and Ann Swearingen, who all filled in when Kaori was unavailable. Maya Held was the assistant director. There were many other dedicated crew members who displayed commitment to the project.

Locations

The majority of the film takes place in a school building. The main location within the school is the fourth grade classroom. I scouted different classroom possibilities at various schools. However, none of them had the stoic appearance that I envisioned. I contacted Henry Hoffman, a New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts theater teacher, for help. Through his

involvement, it was possible to use the school he taught in, The New Orleans Center for the Creative Arts Academy (NOCCA), for the location. The school was newly converted from a standard public school to an art school for middle school kids. Because it was still in its formation stage, the school was empty much of the time. With only forty students and a dozen teachers, I could utilize the space without bothering many people.

In the pre-production phase, Allen, Henry Hoffman, Lyn Caliva, Darren Stacker and I worked to ensure that the school would support our needs electrically. We determined which rooms and hallways had the easiest access to large amounts of power

Besides the school, I also needed a convent for a location. I anticipated that finding a real, workable convent would be difficult. However, Sr. Elizabeth, at St. Claire's Monastery, was unexpectedly welcoming and flexible. Similarly, Robert and Elizabeth Thompson, the owners of Fair Grinds Coffee House, were also generous regarding the use of their space for the film. I was allowed to shoot at the coffee house during business hours. The other two significant locations were both the houses of close friends.

Cast

The film centers on two unintentionally deviant children and a possibly closeted lesbian nun. I was anxious about finding talented children whose parents were comfortable with the story's premise. My first attempt at finding children was by contacting Julie Condy of Stage to Stage, Inc. I called the parents of these children, introduced myself, and articulated the concept of the film. I visited the children in their homes, in order to increase comfort levels for all of us. I gave all the parents a script. I wanted everyone to be fully aware and at ease about the material in the script. I also visited Henry Hoffman's classes at NOCCA to meet his students and tell them about my film. He promoted the opportunity and encouraged them to audition for the film.

In early March, I held an audition at NOCCA on Constance St. The assistant director, Maya Held, accompanied and aided me. I had a few goals for the audition day. First, I wanted to cast the lead roles and extras. Second, I wanted to meet all the parents in person. It was vital to fully communicate the tone of my film and assure parents that it was appropriate for children. Henry confidently articulated this message to the parents. Subsequently, I passed out scripts, a list of dates, and a list of expectations. Each parent and child was required to sign off that they read and agreed to the expectations listed. All this groundwork was done to avoid any misguided confrontations.

After the introductory meeting, different kids were paired to read different parts. The two main objectives were to gain a sense of their personalities and to observe how receptive they were to direction. Ultimately, I chose, fifth grader, Alexis Browning for the part of Neil and, third grader, Marisa Cuevas for her sidekick, Suze. All of the other kids, who wanted to participate, were utilized in other parts throughout the film. I cast Sandi Williams to play the part of Sr. Mary Myrna. I chose Henry Hoffman to play Neil's father, Matt Borel to play the priest, and Michel Varisco to play Sr. Joselma.

Set Design

The aesthetic look of a film is critical in determining its success as a story. I wanted all the visual aspects to be consistent with and reinforce the larger themes in the film. Therefore, the visual design for the film stemmed from what the story inherently wanted as opposed to from an affected, arbitrary slickness. I believe that by limiting its framework, one can actually expand a work. In concordance, the overall color palette was very simple; it consisted predominantly of red and bright blue. For example, the character of Neil was adorned in red and Suze in blue. I

incorporated the girls' blue and red in other places within the set to support this streamlined palette. The rest of the sets and costumes were uncompetitive, consisting of industrial green for the school and brown for the costumes of Sr. Mary Myrna. The colors chosen mirrored the characters and the way the colors were articulated paralleled their individual arcs.

The classroom I used for the main location was roomy, old, and institutional. Furthermore, the aesthetic appearance and layout of the room was ideal. It was lined with two large chalkboards and contained built in cabinets, both representative of a past decade. Two of the walls were covered with wide, frosted windows, creating impeccable light. Though the room itself was faultless, it needed to be shaped it into the classroom of the film's story. The classroom needed to feel dated and acceptably current, simultaneously. The space had to be familiar to older audiences yet believably house contemporary kids. The classroom was cleaned and painted light green. I wanted to evoke the sterility of white walls without the washed out, unfilmic quality of them. Next, I painted the green chalkboards black and the chipped woodwork a clinical teal. Finally, the classroom was dressed with vintage classroom decorations, old books, and figurines. The modern desks, already in the room, were traded out for wooden desks found in the basement of the school. The space that was created both helped the actors get into character and also looked beautiful on film.

Like the other visual aspects of the film, the costumes had to strengthen the aesthetic, thematic, and tonal positions of the film. They imbued the film with the same dated yet current feel that the set design possessed. The costumes for the school children were blue uniform plaid skirts, enforcing the blue in the film's palette. The most difficult item to find was a pair of wingtip dress shoes, women's size 9, for the character of Neil. A pair was purchased on Ebay.

Film Stock Choices

Allen and I talked extensively about the visual look of the film. Almost all of the scenes were going to be shot in mixed lighting situations where the natural light would play enormously. Allen chose Kodak 320T for everything shot inside. The outside scenes were shot with Kodak 200D.

Rehearsal

Extensive preparation was done with the two children because their parts carry the entire film. In order for the audience to care about such a small story, the relationship of the girls had to be compelling. Both girls selected, Alexis Browning and Marissa Cuevas, were bright, mature, diligent and able to do the necessary groundwork.

Starting four months before production began, we began meeting. The first thing we did together was to go out to lunch. The purpose of this, and other similar interactions, was to get to know each other. I wanted to create familiarity and trust before we started rehearsal. This was a good idea for a variety of reasons. Besides getting to know each other better, the girls were able to develop a real relationship and I was able to get to know their families better. All this information aided us in communicating with each other better throughout the entire shoot.

After the acquaintance process, I arranged official rehearsals twice a week for two and a half hours each time. By working twice a week, continuity was created between rehearsals. Continuity was important to insure that development within the scenes occurred. The purpose of the rehearsals was not the memorization of lines, but the creating of character. By doing so many small rehearsals, we were able investigate the film moment by moment. This approach made each scene real to them and, as a result, they learned their lines without much. After all the

preparation, I felt confident that the girls had internalized their lines and would only need a refreshing during the shoot.

I had one rehearsal with all the rest of the kids in the classroom the weekend before production commenced. The objective of this rehearsal was to allow the kids to meet each other and give them an idea of what to expect during the shoot. It also gave them an opportunity to ask questions and to try on costumes. I focused on scenes seventeen and twenty-seven, the two main ensemble, choreographed, group scenes. Though Allen and I had blocked and storyboarded these scenes beforehand, having the actual kids enabled us to fine-tune the intricacies of the shots.

Equipment

The majority of the equipment was borrowed from the UNO equipment room. However, I decided to rent a grip truck and some supplementary equipment from Coastal Grip and Lighting. I chose this route for a range of reasons. From my experience with my last film, I found a lot of time and physical energy was inefficiently used bringing equipment two and from UNO. This time around, my shoot was to be broken up over a four-week period. I did not have the labor or time to transfer equipment back to UNO every Friday and Monday. Furthermore, I did not have a vehicle large enough to carry the equipment easily. In the past, I rented a Uhaul truck, which ended up being expensive for its relative convenience. Hence, renting a grip van and equipment at a fair rate made sense. The owner was flexible and we could tailor what we rented to fit our needs for the particular day or weekend. The compactness and organization of the van made locating gear and moving locations unproblematic. Though it was costly, renting this van was one of my wisest uses of money during the shoot.

CHAPTER 3

PRODUCTION

Shoot day 1 – May 10

I chose to start the shoot with one the most challenging shots in the film (a three hundred a fifty-degree dolly shot around the classroom). The actions of the kids and the timing of the camera movement were both highly orchestrated. The sound mixer, Mike Harvey, recorded as many as five simultaneous audio tracks through an audio interface directly into his laptop. It took quite some time to get all of the variables (sound, picture, acting) in this particular dolly shot right. However, both the crew and the kids, still fresh and responsive, were excellent. Being able to accomplish such a challenging shot as a group was a great way to begin the entire shoot.

Shoot Day 2 – May 11

In the morning, the other large group scene was shot. Once again, the actors and the camera movement were highly coordinated. Under Allen's guidance, the crew was unified. Consequently, I could give much of my attention to the performances of the kids. After lunch, the climax scene was shot.

Shoot Day 3 – May 17

Day three was a great challenge for a variety of reasons. Nonetheless, everything projected was accomplished. The main scene of the day was scene fourteen, a highly

choreographed scene with a dolly and many different point-of-view perspectives. It took place outside, on the school steps, with an ensemble group of nine. There was a late start because Alexis was late. The scene was supposed to look gray and dreary. Unfortunately, the sun was shining and kept getting brighter every hour the actress was late. When she did arrive, we remedied the lighting situation as best as we could by manipulating the shots to shoot away from the sun. Also, to increase the “post rain” look, the crew continually wet down the set with a hose. Another obstacle on the set was focusing the cast. The combination of shooting outside and the presence of three ten-year-old boys made it hard for the girls to concentrate. I overlooked how these variables would alter the working environment of the set.

Shoot Day 4 – May 18

The crew built study carrels out of plywood that I had already stained while I rehearsed scenes eighteen and seven with Alexis and Marissa. In the afternoon, scene twenty-nine was shot. Though the scene included only one shot, it took a significant amount of effort and time. The shot simultaneously dollyed in and zoomed out on Sandi walking forward. Because the film was ahead of schedule, we could take time to get the shot correct without stress.

Shoot Day 5 – May 24

Scenes five and six in the girls’ bathroom were the primary scenes covered this day. The scene is particularly meaningful to the film because it is the first instance where the volatile nature of the characters’ relationship is manifested. As expected, it was one of the more technically difficult days. To begin with, the space inside the bathroom was very narrow. The power sources were few and far between. There was difficulty locating the off switch for an

industrial fan. This waste of time could have been remedied with a little more scouting at this location. Darren Stacker took care of this problem while we continued lighting the scene. The entire scene takes place inside of the bathroom stall. It was awkward to manipulate the dolly, tracks, and jib arm into the bathroom. After all the equipment was in place, there was little space left for crew or actors. Fortunately, Marissa, Alexis and I had blocked and rehearsed this scene in an actual bathroom stall many times. Consequently, the girls had already worked out how to maneuver in the tight space around the toilet. The soundman, Mike Harvey, had to leave midway through the day. Responsibly, he had hired someone to take over for him. The sound came out very clean while maintaining the naturalistic ambiance of a cold surfaced bathroom.

Shoot Day 6 – May 25

Scene thirty-two, in a small office, was shot on day six. Compared to the rest to the film, this scene was simple. The camera was on the tripod, getting traditional Medium Shots and Close Ups of Neil and Sr. Joselma. The sound recordings for the tight office sounded accurately representative of the small space. In the film, the scene follows a classroom scene. Consequently, the tonal differences between the hard surfaced classroom and the cluttered office reinforce the closing in of the situation.

Shoot Day 7 – May 26

This was the most grueling day of the film because of the terrible heat and the difficulty of the shots in the covered scenes. The morning began early at the home of Jennifer Shaw and Cesar Sousa. Scene twenty-three had an intricate shot design. The shots illustrated the girls' perspective as they moved through the front yard towards the house. Blocking had to be exact to

maintain spatial continuity in the editing room. Additionally, everything was shot out of order so it required a lot of attention to detail. Though Allen and I had done much prep work to ensure proper coverage, script supervisor Amy Sanderson provided a thorough double check of our shot logic.

The shooting of the scene lasted much longer than I planned for and we did not get to the next location until late afternoon. This was problematic because there was not much daylight time left. At the second location, the crew set up the jib arm immediately. However, the lead actress ran into some complications and was late. And soon as she arrived, the jib shot was covered. Without delay, the crew moved the set to the upstairs porch. Upstairs, we prepared for a complicated scene involving a large amount of camerawork in a small space. The sunlight was waning and the shots were not materializing effectively. Instead of shooting something mediocre in low light with a tired cast and crew, I decided to end the shooting for the day. Inevitably, I reworked the approach to the ineffective shots and covered it at another time.

Shoot Day 8 – May 31

Sandi Williams was returning to Los Angeles in two days. Therefore, it was imperative to finish her scenes. On Saturday morning, an abbreviated crew went to St. Claire's Monastery. The goal was to cover only one half of the scene one, the girls' point-of view shots of Sr. Mary Myrna on the convent balcony.

Shoot Day 9 – June 1

I planned another short shoot day for day nine. Because NOCCA did not have a proper cafeteria, McDonough 15 on Royal Street was used. This scene had to be inter-cut with NOCCA

footage. More specifically, Neil had to walk down a NOCCA hall and then into the McDonough cafeteria, seamlessly. Because of the way the set was dressed and the shots were designed, the transition between the two buildings is not noticeable on film

Shoot Day 10 – June 2

Shooting at Fair Grinds coffee shop was demanding. It was challenging to keep details (costumes, props, times of day) straight amidst the commotion of the operating coffee shop. Regardless of our intrusion, the owners of the coffee shop could not have been more accommodating. At the start, we configured the café tables for our purposes and hung paintings on the wall. We started the shooting with the most intricate scene and shot. Following the remaining coffee shop interiors, the wide exteriors were shot. To get the exteriors, the street had to be blocked off. It was a bureaucratically arduous process to make this happen. An officer did, inevitably, arrive and she did a decent job of controlling traffic.

Shoot Day 11 – June 8

On the last day of principle shooting, a small crew set up for the remaining section of the convent scene. The scene involved Neil perched up in a tree and Suze below. The difference in their positions required attention to the camera's angle and point of view. Though, the shot list was followed, it would have been helpful to have shot more cutaways for editing purposes.

Shoot Day 12 – June 13

The last day of shooting was used for pickup shots. Allen and I converted a window into one that resembled the convent window. This setup was used for cutaway shots in scene one.

Also, simple stop motion animations of paper dolls moving across a notebook were shot. These animation vignettes introduce some of the scenes in the film. It was smart to save a day to shoot only these two things. Though they were both straightforward in themselves, they required patience and concentration.

CHAPTER 4

POST-PRODUCTION

The Lab

With Allen's advice, I chose Fotokem as my processing laboratory. Fotokem is not only responsible for many Hollywood films, but also their student rates are half of other labs. With the money saved, Allen and I went to Los Angeles to sit in on the transfer of the film to video. My initial experience with Fotokem was positive. Though they were a huge operation, they promptly returned my calls and answered my questions. Unfortunately, I am not sure my film was fully cleaned and prepped for transferring as I noticed some dust and hairs on a few shots. This was disappointing because I paid them a substantial amount of money.

Unable to schedule the video transfer in house, Fotokem sent the film out to Magic Film and Video. At this point, the process got confusing. I was to edit with Final Cut Pro on my personal Mac G4. Because it was a new procedure for me, I was not sure about all the technical variables of which I had to be aware. Quite quickly, I realized I would have to take my film somewhere else to do the online edit because my computer, even if I had enough storage space, was not powerful enough to handle uncompressed information stably. If I wanted to equip my computer for such an edit, it would be an expensive endeavor. However, I still needed to get my compressed footage onto my computer for the offline edit.

Most people have easy access to video decks, so it was hard to get another workable, affordable solution from anyone. After many talks with the staff at Magic Film and Video

Works, I decided to have the transfer house put my footage onto a portable hard drive. The film was first transferred onto matching digiBeta and DVcam tapes. The transfer house, then, transferred the DVcam tapes onto the portable hard drive. By doing it this way, all my media was stored on a compact, but powerful, portable drive that connected to the computer via fire wire.

The video transfer process at Magic Film and Video was noteworthy. They made subtle color adjustments to the footage, creating a more cohesive look. Though the thirteen consecutive hours in the dark transfer room were long, it was worth it to have specialized control over the film's image.

Editing

Editing is a gradual, sometimes lonely process. As stated, I used the software Final Cut Pro to edit the film on my Macintosh G4. Initially, this was a challenge. Besides learning the editing program, I had to navigate a new, Macintosh computer. It took me awhile to feel comfortable with both the software and the computer.

The first task of editing was to synchronize the picture clips with the sound clips. Not only did organizing them make for a systematic edit, but also it gave me the opportunity to refresh myself with the particulars of the each shot. After the tedious, but methodical, work of synching was complete, I moved on to the satisfying, creative part of editing.

In order to move steadily toward the goal of finishing the film, I created an editing routine for myself and stuck to it. At the beginning, the notion of editing the thirty-five scenes of the film seemed overwhelming. However, by addressing each scene separately, I increased the manageability of the whole. By maintaining this schedule, I began to see progress, which, in

turn, kept me motivated. For the more visually and audibly complicated sections, I ignored the sound all together and worked with the picture first. Too many overlapping audio tracks made it difficult to concentrate on the purpose and pacing within the particular scene. By making a picture only pattern, I could focus on the true intention of the scene. After I felt like the scene was starting to materialize, I made a duplicate, letting the individual sound tracks run long and intrude onto each other. Leaving sound takes long and overlapping complimentary takes was ultimately timesaving. For example, during the sound edit and mix, I had easy access to many choices, enabling me to choose the most seamless takes.

After the initial rough cut was created, there was more detailed work to do. The next step involved combing through the film, over and over, slowly extracting the unnecessary. Often during this procedure, I had a visceral response to an ineffective edit before I could pinpoint intellectually what was amiss. This gradual process went on for months. Though I knew some sections were not working, I could not imagine ways of modifying these scenes. Because of familiarity, my mind had grown rigid in its conception of the scenes. Feeling stymied, I asked trusted friend and editor, Amy Sanderson to come watch the cut. The simple act of watching a cut with another person drastically changes how one sees the work. It is as if all the senses become hyper aware and the film becomes an objective work. Accordingly, one notices both problems and identifies solutions that were hidden before. In this way, Amy gave me some fresh thoughts regarding problems and helped me generate ideas for reworking scenes. This process happened for a while with a few different people. For example, Tim Watson, my online editor and source of technical support, also sat in on the edit before the picture was locked. Having competent input helped me recognize plot logic problems, shave needless scenes and frames, and rejuvenate my energy for the project.

The next step in postproduction was exporting both the picture and sound files from my project to take to Mike Harvey's audio studio. I exported all thirty-two of my audio tracks as one .omf file. This allowed Mike to see all the audio edits and work nondestructively. I, also, exported my picture cut as a QuickTime file. This permitted the picture to be viewed simultaneously with the audio.

I asked Susan Young to be the composer for the film. She possesses an in-depth knowledge of many types of music and can write for a variety of instruments. Such versatility makes it exciting to work with her. Susan was a part of *Neil and Nun* from the script stage. As a result, our discussions about the style and tone of the score in the film began early.

When the film's fine cut was on the verge of being locked, Susan and I viewed the film repeatedly. Since the film was now its own physical entity, outside of my imagination, it was much easier to discuss which parts needed music. I created a working timeline that included various deadlines for both the process steps as well as the finished project. By setting deadlines along the process, the task of composing the entire score seemed much more realistic, alleviating last minute stress. With scheduling, taking into account developmental steps in such a concrete manner gave value to the whole process, not just the product, of art making.

The last step of the post-production phase was the online edit. Tim Watson, of Ariel Montage, was the online editor. Tim color corrected the film shot by shot. Additionally, he removed pieces of dust from certain frames by copying information from similar frames and putting that information over the dust areas. Together, we did some detailed last minute editing, adjusting frames and verifying sound synchronicity throughout the film. Because I did not have a Beta deck and my computer could not handle a full resolution image, I printed the final version of the film out on Beta tapes at Ariel Montage.

Overall, I am pleased with the final film. I am especially satisfied with the aesthetic look of the film. Specifically, the classroom set looked similar to how I initially conceived it. However, I was surprised about the ultimate pacing of the film. I had anticipated a more languorously paced film. Nevertheless, the film lent itself towards a quicker paced edit. Oppositely, there are certain elements that are disappointing. For example, some of the subtler actions of featured extras placed in the background of the coffee shop are completely lost. Also, in some scenes, I wish I had shot more cutaways to utilize in the edit. Despite these regrets, I am proud of the film as a whole.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

The fact that the film is finished continues to astonish me. This reality should not amaze me because it was not chance that all the elements converged. This film moved from a seedling idea to a fleshed out work through imagination, preparation, hard work, and a bit of synchronicity. The challenges of this entire process forced me to stretch my capacity as a person and improve my craft as a filmmaker. I am thankful for the opportunity to make *Neil and the Nun* and will move forward from here.

APPENDIX A
ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY

1. EXT. CONVENT - DAY

Opening shot -Shaking tree. Convent through binoculars.

Train your friends in the art of investigation. You could save their lives if they remember your teachings. P.48

NEIL, 9, short and stocky, hangs from a tree, binoculars in one hand, and notebook in the other. She is dressed in overalls and a red t-shirt. Her brown hair frames her face in a mushroom like way.

SUZE, 9, wears a floppy blue skirt and a blue silk scarf tied around her neck in a mature knot.

Suze stands below the tree warily watching Neil, prepared to catch her if she falls. Neil, while trying to look through the binoculars, precariously hands down the spying notebook to Suze.

Suze takes the notebook and begins scribbling and drawing a picture of Neil hanging off the tree. A stamp of an eye looking through a magnifying glass adorns the corner of every page.

Neil continues to watch the Sr. Mary Myrna through the binoculars. POV - nun walking through frame and out, doing nothing.

The nun walks across the room, sits in a chair, gets up, leaves the room. She comes back and sits with a glass of water. She gets up again and quickly exits the room.

NEIL

Increased gate. Possibly plotting.

Suze stops drawing and writes with attention.

NEIL (CONT)

I've gotta pee.

Sr. Mary Myrna walks back through the room again sits down and hits the remote. She picks up a notebook. The T.V. plays *Night of the Living Dead II*. The main female character is on the screen.

NEIL

Suze...Suze. Send up the camera.

Suze, alarmed, pokes her head up.

SUZE

We didn't bring it. We don't have one.

Church bells ring signaling 6:45 pm. Animated Cutout clock.

POV through the binoculars—Sr. Mary Myrna taking notes on the film.

Neil moves the binoculars revealing Suze's face up close, out of focus.

NEIL

If I don't pee right now, it's all over.

Neil shimmies down the tree and behind a bush.

SUZE

Nancy Drew would wait until she got home.

Suze slides behind a tree, out of view, and continues her drawing.

Neil emerges from the bushes with the bib of her overalls wet. She points to her wet overall strap.

NEIL

I need to meet my dad in ten minutes.

SUZE

You can't come into my house with those on. You know my mom's from Oxford.

2. EXT. DINER - DAY

It is early evening. The diner looks small compared to the sky.

Neil, wearing Suze's blue flippy skirt and wingtips, rustles into the diner. She is wearing the same red T-shirt.

3. INT. DINER - DAY

Neil's eyes quickly scan the feet of the room, resting on battered, retro wingtips that resemble her own. The camera pans up to DAD, 41, sitting at the table, books to one side, with a cup of coffee.

Dad is robust but gentle looking. He has wispy facial hair, somewhere between a shave and beard - a few straggling hairs on his neck. He wears a buttoned down soft oxford with the sleeves slightly rolled up.

MISS MARCIA, the waitress, 40, a sizeable, "natural" blonde, brings over a cup of coffee before Neil sits down.

Neil walks up to table and puts her books directly opposite his and sits. He, also, has a cup of coffee.

In the background, two women feed their child.

Neil itches her nose.

Dad hands her a handkerchief from his pocket.

Neil rolls her eyes, takes the handkerchief, and starts to blow.

Miss Marcia sets a huge plate of pancakes in front of each one.

NEIL

Dad, maybe I didn't want pancakes.

DAD (with a smirk)

Oh, come on.

Neil picks up her knife and fork and starts cutting the pancakes.

4. INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Neil fastidiously draws in the spying notebook.

Sr. Mary Myrna violently pulls on the pull down map of the United States. It clamors and spins up in a disturbing manner.

SR. MARY MYRNA

P.E. time. Single file for the lavatory.

Hastily, other girls assemble into line. The camera pans down the line revealing a sea of brown shoes and long white socks, all bunched at the same place. The camera pauses on Neil and Suze.

Neil is wearing her worn wingtips and stretched out tube socks with red stripes. Suze is wearing blue tights and blue buckle shoes.

5. INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The sound of padlocks spinning and being pushed shut resonates on the echoing walls.

Two girls come out of a bathroom stall wearing the uniform gym outfit. Other girls change clothes and mill about, gabbing and laughing.

6. INT. BATHROOM STALL - DAY

Suze has her gym shorts on over her tights.

Neil pulls her shirt over her head.

NEIL

And then Nancy Drew comes flying out of the mansion window. Maybe we could attach a pulley system to you or something for that part.

SUZE (laughing)

Why am I the guinea pig?

NEIL (sarcastically)
You're a perfect Nancy Drew.

Sr. Mary Myrna's brown shoes stomp in with a reverberating clomp. She looks down and sees the two girls' feet. She beats on the stall door.

Suze hops onto the toilet to hide.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Neil, who's in that cubicle.

(Pause)

NEIL
I am, sister.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Neil, who's in the cubicle *with you?*

The girls look at each other, paralyzed. Suze crouches down tighter onto the toilet seat.

Sr. Mary Myrna starts vehemently pushing on the door.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Open up that door in three. One...two...

Neil aggressively, defiantly switches back the door latch, revealing sister, nostrils flared, in attack mode.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Cynthia Strait!

NEIL (politely rolling her eyes)
Suzanne.

Sr. Mary Myrna looks over at Neil, confused -- her timing has been thrown.

NEIL (CONT)
This is Suzanne Strait, Sr. Mary Myrna.

Suzanne looks dumbfounded.

SR. MARY MYRNA

Neil, (looking to Suze) Suzanne, what is going on inside this cubicle?

NEIL

We're changing into our gym uniforms, Sr. Mary Myrna.

SR. MARY MYRNA

Why didn't you change in the main area with the other girls?

NEIL

Would you like to change in front of twenty people.

SR. MARY MYRNA

(challenging)

Neil, what is wrong with being in a cubicle with another person?

Suze looks intimidated and stands behind Neil for strength. Neil stares defiantly at Sr. Mary Myrna and then rolls her eyes.

SR. MARY MYRNA

There are two paths in life. One leads directly to our Lord. And the other...well the other is the way of transgression.

Sr. Mary Myrna motions them to get out of the stall with a severe point.

SR. (CONT)

I think you two must be tired of each other and want to be in separate classes.

Suze rushes out. Neil gives her the "one day I might kill you look."

Bold, vertical handwriting usually belongs to a literary person, and jerky, slanted -to-the right letters are a sign of nervousness. p.123

7. INT. STUDY CARROLS - DAY

Neil is sprawled out dramatically, mildly knocking her head against the wall.

NEIL

What's that quote from The Parent Trap.
What's that quote from The Parent Trap.

SUZE

What quote?

NEIL

It's by Gilbert and Sullivan— you know, the annoying camp counselor says it.

Neil picks up her pen and begins to scrawl words out.

SUZE

This essay's pointless. I know Sr.
Mary Myrna is going to put me in Mrs.
Rolfer's class, anyway.

Neil continues to bounce her head.

SUZE (CONT)

What if I'm in "the Big Puke's" class.
What if we get kicked out of school
for this?

Neil continues to write nonsense. Suze puts her head down in her folded arms.

NEIL

This isn't helping. I need that quote.

Neil gets up.

SUZE

Where are you going.

NEIL

I'm calling my dad.

Suze grabs her.

SUZE (CONT)

Let's vote and decide.

They get the spy notebook out and flip to a page entitled "Vote and Decide". There is a column for Neil and one for Suze. There are magnifying glass stamp marks in the columns from various other decisions.

They stamp their columns - stop motion animation. Suze's column says No. Neil's says yes.

Neil apologetically shrugs her shoulders and walks away, taking the notebook with her.

SUZANNE

Well, I'm going to write mine now so
I can eat lunch.

8A. INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY-DAY

Neil stands outside of the MRS. INTERP'S office. Mrs. Interp, 35, wears an early 1980's dress and feathered hair. Neil hears the voice of Sr. Mary Myrna.

SR. MARY MYRNA (through the door)

No, I'm positive its tater tots on Wednesday.

MRS. INTERP (through the door)

Yes, I'm sure that is true. But I'm
looking at this lunch schedule and it
appears that today the sides are corn and
potatoes au gratin.

SR. MARY MYRNA (through the door)

We'll see what God provides.

Sr. Mary Myrna abruptly walks out. Neil presses herself against the wall to hide. Sr. Mary Myrna does not notice her. Neil inches into the office.

8B. INT. OFFICE - DAY

MRS. INTERP

Well, Neil. What can I help you with?

NEIL

May I call my dad.

MRS. INTERP

Sure, dear, dial nine.

She slides the phone over in Neil's direction. Mrs. Interp goes back to typing.

Neil quickly dials the phone.

The phone rings. Neil nosily glances around the office.

NEIL

Hi dad...no I didn't forget my lunch... Will you look up a Gilbert and Sullivan quote for me...yeah, yeah, I'll tell you about it at dinner.

Mrs. Interp looks over to Neil and smirks. She goes on typing.

9. INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Sr. Mary Myrna sharply pours ketchup next to her small dishes of potatoes au gratin and corn with disgust. She sits across from the PRIEST, 40, who yammers on and on.

10. INT. OFFICE - DAY

Neil is at the telephone. Mrs. Interp continues to type.

NEIL

That's it. "Let the punishment fit the crime." Thanks Dad.

Neil hangs up the phone.

11. INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Neil gets a drink of water from the water fountain. And subtly looks down the hallway, left and right. Neil goes over to the door of the cafeteria and peeks her head in.

She sees Sr. Mary Myrna sitting across from a middle-aged priest. The priest yammers on. Sr. Mary Myrna obligatorily nods her head in agreement.

12. INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

A cute nun walks up to the table. Sr. Mary Myrna scoots down to make room for her. Her body and head turn to talk with the nun. The priest keeps yammering on.

13. INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Neil scrawls some notes in the notebook about the two nuns and the priest.

Neil sees Suze sitting alone, eating applesauce from a cup.

14. EXT. SCHOOL STEPS AND OUTSIDE - DAY

A young lady with some judo skills can take care of unwanted advances in short order p.30.

It is a grey day.

The camera begins on four twelve-year-old boys skateboarding across the street. They are showing off, attempting tricks, and falling on their butts.

The camera moves past ANNE, 11, ANGIE, 11, and Courtney sitting on the steps eating caramel candies. Neil and Suze are in the background, behind the other girls. Neil wears a red raincoat. Suze wears the same one in blue. **maybe Neil and Suze are in soft focus in the background.**

Anne is shy, cute, simply polished, and ardently trying to get the caramel candy out of her teeth. Angie, who probably already uses too many styling products, sits in the middle. Angie's shoes are very trendy, feminine. Courtney sits on the other side.

Angie is gabbing to the air, not looking at anyone. Courtney is attentive out of obligation. She does a lot of eye batting, and

head shaking. Anne is satisfied picking caramels out of her teeth and popping another one.

An SUV, driven by SOCCER MOM, 38, pulls up. Her light blue jeans are pleated and high waisted. She has a knit polo shirt that is neatly tucked into her pants, secured by a braided brown belt. Her hair is short.

SCOTTIE, 12, a dorky, wiry skateboarder leaves the pack of boys and walks across the street towards the girls.

He awkwardly comes up to Anne, not acknowledging the other girls.

SCOTTIE (factually)

Do you want to go with Chris Sprinter?

Anne's teeth sink into her caramel. She looks to Angie for an answer. Angie is concentrating on her own appearance. Angie crosses her legs deliberately.

All the boys are lined up, watching the scene.

ANNE

Yuck, (turning to Courtney) he's your cousin.

Courtney shrugs. Angie flips her hair. Suze and Neil laugh at her.

Sr. Mary Myrna walks with a determined gate in front of Neil and Suze, wearing similar jeans as the soccer mom, and pops open a black golf umbrella. Sr. Mary Myrna is carrying two horror film videotapes and a small box. She realizes it is not raining and puts down her umbrella. Neil and Suze give her kid-like mean faces.

Scottie immediately turns to Angie.

SCOTTIE

Do you?

Neil and Suze turn their attention back to the girls.

ANGIE

Sure.

Scottie waves over to the boys and nods his head. The boys immediately start skating, as if that's what they have been doing the entire time. Angie gets up to walk across the street to the boys, leaving a gaping hole between Anne and Courtney.

SOCCKER MOM gets out, popping open her black golf umbrella. She motions to Courtney and then, realizing it is not raining, puts down her umbrella.

Courtney runs to get into the SUV. Anne, with no one left to talk to, takes her caramels and leaves.

The camera pulls focus to Neil and Suze sitting, between them, in the background. They get up and leave.

The school steps look lonely and wet from the rain.

Never sleuth on an empty stomach. P.42

15. INT. FRENCH BAKERY - DAY

Neil and Suze, still wearing raincoats, stand behind a young couple in line. Neil and Suze count out their money, putting it together. Suze opens three different coin purses to get money.

FRENCH WORKER

You must be newlyweds.

MAN

No.

FRENCH WORKER

But you know the story of the olive bread?

WOMAN

No, sir.

FRENCH WORKER

Well, a man is supposed to share the olive bread with the woman he loves...no other man, no animal, no dog...

The worker carefully, seductively slips the bread into the bag.

FRENCH WORKER (CONT)

...only with the woman he loves.

Neil and Suze stand austerely behind the couple.

MAN (embarrassedly laughing)

Thank you.

The couple walks out of the store.

Neil and Suze step up to the counter.

FRENCH WORKER

Ah, my baguette girls. Let me see if we have any fresher ones.

He pops around the corner. Neil and Suze smile at each other.

The French worker comes back with a perfect baguette and slides it in a bag.

NEIL

And an olive bread.

The French worker gives Neil a paternal smile.

16. INT. FORT - DAY

Neil and Suze sit inside their fort, which is the dilapidated screened in porch of an abandoned old house.

They both tear off chunks from the oily, twisted olive bread and stuff it in their mouths.

Neil slides different construction paper made eyes and noses in and out of different shaped face outlines, forming different looking people. Cut out animation.

Suze is stamping business cards with the magnifying lens stamp. The business cards read, "The Spies Eyes Crew - have mystery will travel."

Neil slides brown eyes and a big nose into one of the face outlines.

NEIL

Look...

Suze turns to look at the face.

NEIL (CONT)
It's Sr. Mary Myrna

Suze gives the face a violent stamp and laughs.

17. INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

CU- Neil makes punches into paper with a pencil, making Braille.

A girl reads in monotone out of the history of Louisiana book.

The book, "Nancy Drew's Guide to Life" lays inside Neil's black spying notebook. It is open to a quote that reads, "when trying to investigate a property that's off limits, consider putting your flying lessons to good use and fly over the area". A Braille alphabet translation paper is also on her desk.

COURTNEY, 9, sits next to Neil, headband in her hair, pulling it back, painfully tight. Courtney counts the number of people in front of her to read. She counts down the corresponding number of paragraphs in her book.

Courtney sneaks a glance over onto Neil's space and sees the spy notebook and the Braille. She looks mischievous.

Neil continues to punch holes in the paper.

Courtney practices her paragraph, silently talking to herself.

The girl reading pronounces a word wrong. Suze grimaces. But Neil hardly looks up. The girl finishes.

There is an awkward pause. Neil doesn't notice that the entire class is starrng at her.

Courtney gloats.

Sr. Mary Myrna quietly comes up behind her.

Suze stares over at Neil, using her eyes to get Neil's attention.

Neil pushes the notebook into her desk just in time.

Sr. Mary Myrna confiscates the Braille note and walks to the front of the classroom.

SR. MARY MYRNA (disgusted)
What's this?

NEIL
Braille, Sr. Mary Myrna.

SR. MARY MYRNA (embarrassed)
I can see that. Neil, what does the Braille say?

NEIL
We read Helen Keller's biography in class and I thought it would be useful to know Braille.

Sr. Mary Myrna dramatically puts the note in her desk drawer and points towards the door.

SR. (higher than thou)
Neil, which path will you choose?

Neil eagerly grabs her notebook and leaves the classroom. The student body is mixture of snicker and fear.

SR. MARY MYRNA (CONT)
Courtney Romanoff will you please take Neil's paragraph.

Courtney looks horrified.

COURTNEY
But sister. I've prepared the fourth paragraph.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Oh shush.

Suze snickers.
School bell.

when checking out a suspect's lair, note that it is illegal to open any drawers or closets. P.50

18. INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Bell continues.

The girls all file out of the classroom behind Sr. Mary Myrna. The girls walk past Neil sitting at the carrels without even noticing her. Suze rolls out of line and stops to talk with Neil.

SUZE

We've got to get the note back.

NEIL

That note is evidence against us.

The girls peek down the hallway. The line of girls disappears down the stairs. The sound of their feet decreases.

They sneak back into the classroom.

19. INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

The girls try to open the desk but it is locked.

SUZE

Shit.

NEIL

Cussing is considered a *transgression*.

Suze looks down and sees a Post-it note with "bota~o de punho

SUZE

Look. It's a clue.

Neil traces the letters with her finger.

Neil quickly takes out the notebook and copies the word. She looks up curiously.

NEIL

I think its Spanish.

20. EXT. WAVELAND BEACH - DAY

Sr. Myrna, in her regular brown teaching clothes, lies out on a beach chair drinking an umbrella cocktail. She uses the same black golf umbrella as before to ward off the sun.

21. INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Suze looks at Neil who is spacing out.

SUZE

Neil?

Neil comes out of her daydream.

NEIL

Come on.

The girls scamper out.

22. EXT. SCHOOL STEPS - DAY

Sr. Mary Myrna walks by with two videotapes and a small box.

Neil and Suze are sitting on the steps.

NEIL

Let's follow her.

Suze flips open their notebook.

SUZE

Let's vote and decide.

They each make a stamp in the book. Stop motion animation --
They both vote yes.

Neil shuts the book and throws it into her backpack.

23. EXT. STREET/ HOUSE - DAY

When investigating a building with a fellow sleuth, look ahead and to the right whilst our companion looks behind you and to the left. Clever! P.52

Sr. Mary Myrna is down the street. The girls duck in and out of trees.

Sr. Mary Myrna turns the corner and walks up to a house. The girls follow her.

Sr. Mary Myrna knocks on the door and twitches nervously.

The girls stand behind trees. They look at each other—curious and anxious.

The door opens.

Sr. Mary Myrna's face lights up. She leans in to hug.

The door blocks the view of the woman in the house from the girls. All that can be seen is her brown deck shoe.

Two lesbian women come up to the door behind Sr. Mary Myrna, holding a potluck type of dish.

So engrossed in the woman in the house, Sr. Mary Myrna almost shuts the door in the other women's faces.

Neil motions "C'mon" to Suze with a wave. Suze is drawing the woman's shoe sticking out of the door.

Neil tries to inch up to the side window.

The church bells ring, 6:45. An animated graphic reads 6:45.

NEIL (CONT)

I've gotta go.

SUZE

You can't go. This is too good.

NEIL

You know my dad thinks being late is a sign of moral chaos.

SUZE

Come on. You're in the fourth grade—when are you going to start doing what you want.

They stop being inconspicuous. They spat directly in front of the window.

NEIL

Your lucky I don't bite anymore.

SUZE

Oh shut up—you know it's true.
You'd drop anything for him. It's
almost like you're in love with him.

NEIL

Eww! You're the one who's afraid to go
home with a hair out of place because
your parents are...freaks

Sr. Mary Myrna, hearing the raucous, comes to the window. The
girls roll to either side of the window in fear and silence.

Sr. Mary Myrna looks around and, seeing nothing, leaves the
window.

SUZE

(whisper)

see you at the fort later.

Neil scampers away.

NEIL (indifferently)

All right.

SUZE

Don't forget to ask your dad
about that Spanish word.

Neil keeps running away. Suze stays for a moment and then walks
the opposite direction of Neil.

24. EXT. DINER - DAY

Church bells ring denoting seven. Animated graphic.

The shot of the diner is wide with a lot of sky/ negative space.

Neil runs into the diner, trying not to knock over the lesbian
couple with a stroller and a baby. They give each other a
familiar "hello".

25. INT. DINER - DAY

Dad sits at the same table as before, eating pancakes. Neil slides into her seat, spying notebook in hand, open to the page with the Spanish word.

Dad points to his watch. There is a plate of pancakes at Neil's seat.

26. EXT. FORT - NIGHT

The fort is lit up with a Coleman lantern and candles. They hold up the page that says "botao de punho" up to the Coleman lantern. Underneath the word, it reads "Portuguese for cufflinks."

Neil wears a red Nancy Drew T-shirt with jeans. Suze wears a light blue, soft cardigan. Her hair is in braids with light blue ribbons.

Neil traces the word on the page with her finger.

NEIL

So it means cufflink.

SUZE

How very suspicious. Don't men wear cufflinks. (laughing) Do you think she's a man?

NEIL

She does have some hairy legs.

SUZE

I'm going to shave my legs as soon as I'm old enough.

NEIL

When we're international spies we won't have time to shave.

SUZE

I'm going to shave.

NEIL

Fine, shave.

The girls look at each other.

SUZE (abruptly)

I bet she had cufflinks in that box she was carrying. I bet she was going to give them to that woman.

NEIL

I bet she has tons of cufflinks that she keeps hidden from the other nuns.

SUZE

Yeah, the convent is like jail and everything you have above a toothbrush is like gold...Why would anyone want to live like that?

Suze sneezes.

NEIL

Guesuntight. Do you think Sr. Mary Myrna got a call from God like Sr. Ambrose?

SUZE

I don't know.

NEIL

Sr. Ambrose didn't know if she should be a nun. And then she went outside in January and -

SUZE

(interrupting in the voice of Sr. Ambrose)
"and there was a crocus sprouting through the snow"

NEIL

Do you think our sr. Mary Myrna is what my dad calls a Lesbian.

Suze leans back, pensive and thoughtful.

NEIL (CONT)

Just think about the other women

who came to the house.

SUZE
I thought they looked kinda cool.

NEIL
Well...me too, but, you get what I'm
getting at, huh.

SUZE (mockingly)
Yeah, I get it, Neil.

Suze pulls out the notebook.

SUZE (CONT)
Could this be a *possible* scandal?

Suze sneezes and coughs.

Neil pulls out a handkerchief from her pocket and hands it to
Suze. Suze blows her nose into it.

27. INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY

Sr. Mary Myrna lectures in front of the pull down map.

Neil looks over to Suze's empty seat.

Neil wears a red terrycloth sweatband as a headband.

Courtney drops her pencil and it rolls underneath Neil's desk.

COURTNEY
Ah-hem.

Neil isn't paying attention. Her head is slouched over a Nancy
Drew book.

COURTNEY (CONT)
(louder)
Neil, get my pencil.

Neil looks up and over at Courtney.

NEIL

(irritated)

What?

Sr. Mary Myrna's nostrils flare.

SR. MARY MYRNA

NEIL!

Sr. Mary Myrna violently pulls the map down so it flings up. The chalkboard underneath the map reveals Neil's name with two large checks next to it. The board also says Anne and Grace, each with one check.

Sr. Mary Myrna whips a third check onto the board next to Neil's name.

Neil's face is of disbelief and disgust.

NEIL

Do you think I was talking to a myself.

She gives Courtney a look from hell.

NEIL (CONT)

My voice is just louder. (mumbles)
You just like Courtney because
she's pretty.

Sr. Mary Myrna turns angrily, nostrils flared. She composes herself.

SR. MARY MYRNA (calmly)

Neil, you'll be having "punished
lunch" today.

Sr. scans the room, her eyes resting on Courtney.

SR. MARY MYRNA (CONT)

Courtney, will you please gather
Suze's history and science books.

Courtney nods enthusiastically. Neil looks distraught.

SR. MARY MYRNA (CONT)

Single file for lunch. Neil, get

in the punished lunch line.

All the girls put away their books and line up along the wall.

Camera pans down line, revealing Neil alone, without Suze. All the other girls are talking to each other. Neil stands in a separate line, alone.

The bell rings.

Courtney goes to Suze's desk and pulls her books out. She looks around - the other girls are filing out the door under the watch of Sr. Mary Myrna. She gives them a subtle hair and uniform inspection as they leave the classroom.

Courtney opens the spying notebook, her eyes get big, and she places it on top the pile of books. She joins Sr. Mary Myrna, who is standing by the door. Courtney hands Sr. Mary Myrna the stack of books with the spying notebook on top.

Sr. Mary Myrna awkwardly touches Courtney's shoulder, as they walk out of the classroom, and shuts the door.

SR. (CONT)

Thank you Courtney.

28. INT. NURSE'S OFFICE - DAY

Suze is lying in a cot. Except for the tip of her forehead, she is completely covered by a blanket.

Neil comes in and gently puts her hand on Suze's covered body.

29. INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Sr. Mary Myrna walks down the hallway, reading the spying notebook. Her eyes rapidly scan the pages. Her eyes get closer to the page. She rapidly turns pages. Because she is not watching where she is going, she almost runs over a small student. The student says nothing -- just gets out of the way and keeps going.

Bluffing about questionable information can often lead people to reveal juicy secrets."

30. INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Neil sits three rows back, still wearing the red sweatband. Sr. Mary Myrna sits behind her desk.

The sounds of students leaving school are in the background.

Sr. Mary Myrna puts down the notebook.

SR. MARY MYRNA
If I spent my youth doing *this*, do
you think I'd be a nun now?

Neil stares out the window.

SR. MARY MYRNA (CONT)
I don't think separating you and
Cynthia-Suzanne-- will resolve your discipline
problems.

You've left me no choice, I must
turn this situation over to Sr.
Joselma. I am asking her to remove
you.

NEIL
(sarcastically)
Remove me?

Sr. Mary Myrna purses her lips and continues.

SR. MARY MYRNA
I don't know where you got your
behavior style, but it doesn't work
here. Your father certainly -

Neil points to the surface of her desk.

NEIL
I'm ready for my notebook.

Sr. Mary Myrna slaps the notebook on her desk. She shakes her
head.

SR. MARY MYRNA
I wish for your soul that this was
plagiarism.

NEIL
(sternly)
I'd like my notebook back.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Neil, it is my responsibility to
give this to Sr. Joselma.

Still seated, Neil's body and head focus in on Sr. Mary Myrna.

NEIL
If you don't give my notebook back,
I'll tell *Sr. Joselma* that I've
seen you at a house with a woman.

Sr. Mary Myrna subtly grabs a pencil on her desk and holds on
for her life.

SR. MARY MYRNA
I don't know what you are talking
about. Sr. will decide what is -

Sr. Mary Myrna grabs a random sheet of paper from each side of
her desk and stacks them together with a fraudulent
deliberateness.

NEIL
Suze saw you too. We know everything.

Sr. Mary Myrna staples the pages together. The sound of the
staple is prominent against the quiet classroom.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Oh you must be talking about Terry.
I bring her communion.

NEIL
Communion - huh? Communion and R-
Rated horror movies?

Sr. Mary Myrna gets up from her desk and sits next to Neil.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Horror movies? No. (laughing) Well
yes. I am...we are watching horror movies. Terry
and I are writing an article for the journal
Feminist Motion about how women are portrayed in
horror films.

Neil hides a dumbfounded look.

NEIL
Give me my notebook or I'll tell
everyone that you are a lesbian.

SR. MARY MYRNA
Do you even know what *that* means.

NEIL
Do you know what it means to not
teach in a Catholic school anymore?

SR. MARY MYRNA
I'm the teacher here.

NEIL
We'll just see about that.

Neil picks up her books and stomps towards the door.

SR. MARY MYRNA
I'll see you tomorrow, Neil.

31. INT. FORT - DAY

Suze has a thermometer her mouth. Neil takes the thermometer
out and checks it.

NEIL
Do you think Sr. Mary Myrna was
ever in fourth grade? (looking at
the thermometer) Your okay.

SUZE
No. She was never a kid.

Neil laughs.

NEIL

Do you think your mom was a kid?

Suze pauses.

SUZE

She's been "mom" her life...well, when my aunt died- she cried. It was weird.

NEIL

I'm starting to feel that way about Sr. Mary Myrna - maybe she's not the devil.

SUZE

She did take our notebook.

NEIL

I know.

32. INT. SR. JOSELMA'S OFFICE - DAY

Sr. Joselma, 38, is a soft-spoken, fragile nun in a white polyester skirt, white cardigan, and white turtleneck.

NEIL

I saw Sr. Mary Myrna.

SR. JOSELMA

Today?

NEIL

No, I saw her outside of school...
with women.

SR. JOSELMA

Our Sr. Mary Myrna is always donating her time to "Women Against Abuse", "Women Helping Women", "Women Advocacy Initiative" - so many groups.

NEIL

No, they hugged and there were videos.

SR. JOSELMA

Ohh, honey, that's her women's prayer group.
They even bring food to housebound women.

NEIL

Housebound -- I bet.

SR. JOSELMA

You know, dear, when my mother was in her last
days, Sister and her friends brought her meals
and comedy movies.

Neil sits in her chair perplexed.

SR. JOSELMA

We are lucky to have such a selfless
nun and (gesturing to Neal) teacher
among us.

Neil looks around Sr. Joselma's office and sees a picture of
Mary looking very, very holy.

33. EXT. DINER - DAY

Wide shot of Neil standing impatiently outside the diner. The
church bells signal 7:15. animated clock.

Dad walks up to her, rumpled, carrying books.

Neil points to an invisible watch on her wrist, feigning
irritation.

They walk into the diner together.

34. INT. DINER - DAY

Dad's swirls his finger around the lip of his coffee cup.

Dad is eating pancakes. Neil is eating a pasta dish and salad.

DAD

You can't change a man, Neil. Many
women have tried to change me...
Changing a man is like water on rock..

Neil semi-rolls her eyes.

DAD (CONT)

Very slow, over a long period of
time, and only if he wants to.

NEIL

Anyway, Dad, can Suze spend the
night tomorrow?

35. EXT. SCHOOL STEPS - DAY

The school bell sounds. Girls pour out of school from every
direction.

Neil and Suze come out together.

SUZE

Okay, here you go.

She hands Neil her backpack.

NEIL

And here you go. Clean it well.

SUZE

If you find my blue carrot barrette
Don't throw it out.

NEIL

No special requests.

Suze gives Neil a fake mad look.

SUZE

Yeah, yeah, yeah, if you throw
it out, your dolphin eraser just
might disappear.

The walk away from school, carrying each other's backpacks.

NEIL

Do want to spend the night tomorrow?

SUZE

Yeah, sure.

NEIL

My dad said he'd take us to get the
stuff for Nancy Drew's pulley system.
He thinks it's for science class.

APPENDIX B

SHOT LIST

SAT. MA10

Scene 17

CLASSROOM

- A. CU notebook
- B. 360 degree dolly shot
- C. WS class
- D. MS neil and Courtney
- E. CU neil
- F. WS nun to desk
- G. MS drawer/ nun's hand
- H. WS class/Neil exit

SUN. MAY 11

Scene 27 – Pencil

CLASSROOM

- A. WS Scene (up to girls getting in line)
- B. MCU Sr.
- C. 2 shot Neil, Courtney
- D. OTS Courtney
- E. MCU Sr.
- F. WS classroom
 - a. “Courtney, will you please gather books.”
 - b. Cam. Pulls back revealing Neil in punished lunch line/ girls exit
- G. Jib arm – above Courtney at Suze’s Desk/ moves to door
- H. OTS Sr.

Scene 30 – Showdown

CLASSROOM

- A. WS profiles
- B. MCU Neil staring out window
- C. LS Sr. at desk.
- D. CU notebook
- E. Circle Dolly
- F. OTS Sr.
- G. ROTS Neil of Sr.
- H. WS Neil exits

SAT. MAY 17

Scene 14 -- steps

- A. dolly
- B. WS Angie, Anne, Courtney
- C. CU Anne
- D. CU Angie
- E. CU Courtney
- F. MCU Scottie
- G. POV Neil and Suze
- H. MCU Neil and Suze see Sr. MM
- I. MS Sr. MM follow
- J. WS high angle/everyone exits

Scene 4 -- Classroom

- A. OS/Neil, Rack to map, girls line up
- B. Girls walk/ Dolly cam. R

Scene 18 -- Hallway

- A. Overhead carrels/ Suze in classroom/ kids filing out
- B. WS stairwell

Scene 22 -- Steps

- A. jib shot

Scene 35 -- Steps

- A. WS

SUN. MAY 18

Scene 14 -- Steps

K. WS high angle / everyone exits

Scene18 -- Carrels

A. Overhead shot

B. ?

Scene 29 -- Hallway

A. Dolly nun and notebook

SAT. MAY 24

Scene 9

- A. CU ketchup
- B. WS/ Sr. MM, Priest

Scene 11

- B. through glass door
- C. OS/ Neil writing in notebook

Scene 7

- A. WS/ carrels
- B. CU Neil
- C. MS/ Shooting across of Neil
- D. MS/ Shooting across of Suze
- E. CU Suze
- F. CU notebook

Scene 18

- A. Scene the top/ Suze enters FL

SUN. MAY 25

Scene 11

11A. MS/ N at water fountain, exiting CL

Scene 8A/B

8A

- A. WS, dolly CL/ N at water fountain
- B. POV/ Neil
- C. MS, dolly/ N behind door

8B

- A. OS/ N of Mrs. I
- B. CU/ N
- C. MWS, pan/ Neil sitting
- D. OS/ N of Mrs. I

Scene 10

A. MCU Neil at phone

Scene 32

N-pony tail

MON. MAY 26

Scene 23

- A. LS/ Sr. MM (N, S in background)
- B. Dolly POV
- C. Dolly/ into girls holding binoculars
- D. Binoc POV
- E. MS/ N on FL and exits, S tilt up
- F. MCU/ N turning
- G. MCU/ S enters frame
- H. MCU/ S getting down
- I. MCU/ N farther down street
- J. MCU/ lower N
- K. CU/ Sr. MM at window

Scene 16

- A. jib from st.
- B. Stairwell

Scene 31

- A. empty stairwell/ old bread

Scene 16

- C. jib from porch/ Montage on jib
- D. Montage jib
- E. Construction paper faces
- F. 18fps faces, stamping
- G. MCU/ N
- H. MCU/ S
- I. CU/ Stamping face

Scene 31

- B. Jib/ CU s, truck to N with thermometer

Scene 26

- A. jib/ book to Neil
- B. LA/ S
- C. HA/ N on bucket
- D. MS/ 2 shot, S enters frame
- E. CU/ Neil
- F. CU/ Suze

SAT. MAY 31

Scene 1 – Convent

- A. POV
- B. POV -- binocular

Scene 5/6 – bathroom

- A. Dolly shot
- B. MS/ girls inside stall
- C. MS/ girls
- D. CU Suze
- E. CU Neil
- F. MS Sr. MM
- G. CU Sr. MM
- H. CU Sr. MM's shoes

Scene 28 – Nurse's Office

- A. jib shot

SUN. JUNE 1

Scene 4 – Lining Up

4A. CLASSROOM – 1 shot

A. OTS Neil (left shoulder, drawing in notebook)
TILT/RACK to Sr. pulling up map
pull back, DOLLY RIGHT

4B. HALLWAY – 1 shot

A. DOLLY RIGHT, girls SL
Girls bump each other
PAN UP revealing Suze/ Neil. Girls exit frame

Scene 19/21—Get the Note Back

A. Point glance/ door opens

B. LS empty hall

C. Jib shot – 1 shot

- a. Feet shuffle in
- b. Hover on lock/desk/ note/ faces
- c. Camera floats up to Neil's eyes

Scene 21

A. Jib shot – 1 shot

- a. Camera floats at Neil's eyes
- b. 2 shot
- c. girls exit through door

Scene 4 – Lining Up

4A. CLASSROOM – 1 shot

B. OTS Neil (left shoulder, drawing in notebook)
TILT/RACK to Sr. pulling up map
pull back, DOLLY RIGHT

4B. HALLWAY – 1 shot

B. DOLLY RIGHT, girls SL
Girls bump each other

PAN UP revealing Suze/ Neil. Girls exit frame

MON. JUNE 2

FORT

- A. Tracking shot/ notebook handoff
- B. Neil POV from tree
- C. Suze POV up
- D. CU notebook
- E. Neil POV looking down
- F. WS Neil runs behind tree
- G. 2 shot Neil and Suze

SUN. JUNE 8

Scene 1

- A. jib – Neil hands notebook off
- B. MS – Neil in tree
- C. OS/ Suze of notebook
- D. MS – Suze writing
- E. LA of Neil
- F. HA of Suze
- G. Binoc POV
- H. LS – Suze, Neil enters frame
- I. LS – Neil running in skirt
- J. Notebook/Quotes

APPENDIX C

BUDGET

Budget Summary

	Cash	In Kind	Total
Production Department Total	1600	400	2000
Art Department Total	400	400	800
Camera/Lighting Total	480	6600	7080
Audio Total	270	1000	1270
Film and Lab Total	3420		3420
Post Production Total	3000	3700	6700
Contingencies	682	1210	1892
Total	9852	13,310	23,162

APPENDIX D
SCRIPT BREAKDOWN

SCENE 1				
CAST				
Neil Suze Sr.				
PROPS				
binoculars	remote			
notebook	TV-horror			
pen	backpacks			
stamped page				
WARDROBE				
Neil -- #1	overalls	Suze -- #1	blue flip skirt	Sr. -- #1
	red T-shirt		blue silk scarf	
	wingtips			
EXTRAS				
SPECIAL EFFECTS				
Quote	binoculars			
clock				
SOUND EFFECTS				
church bells				
tv show				

SCENE 2	
EXT. DINER -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil	
PROPS	
red backpack	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- # 2	blue flip skirt red T-shirt wingtips
EXTRAS	
people inside diner	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 3				
INT. DINER -- DAY				
CAST				
Neil				
Dad				
Miss Marcia				
two lesbians and child				
PROPS				
2 cup of coffee				
books				
stroller				
handkerchief				
pancakes				
silverware				
Dad's work				
WARDROBE				
Neil -- # 2	blue flip skirt	Dad-- #1	wingtips	Ms. Marcia -- #1
	red T-shirt		oxford	
	wingtips		pants	
EXTRAS				
people inside diner				
SPECIAL EFFECTS				
SOUND EFFECTS				

SCENE 4	
INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil Sr. Suze courtney?	
PROPS	
pen notebook pull down map	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- # 3 uniform	Sr. -- #2
socks with red stripes wingtips	Suze -- #2 uniform blue tights blue buckle shoes
girls --	brown shoes white socks
EXTRAS	
girls in class	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
map sound	

SCENE 5		
INT. BATHROOM STALL -- DAY		
CAST		
Neil Sr. Suze 2 girls coming out of stall		
PROPS		
lock on locker		
WARDROBE		
Neil -- # 4 gym uniform	Sr. -- #2	Suze -- #3 gym uniform
socks with red stripes		blue tights
wingtips		blue buckle shoes
tennis shoes		gym uniform
gym uniform		
girls -- gym uniforms		
EXTRAS		
girls in locker room		
SPECIAL EFFECTS		
SOUND EFFECTS		
lock spinning clanging lockers sr. stomping		

SCENE 7	
INT. STUDY CARROLS -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil	
Suze	
PROPS	
pen paper notebook, Vote and Decide stamp	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Suze -- #2 uniform
socks with red stripes	blue tights
wingtips	blue buckle shoes
uniform	uniform
gym uniform	
EXTRAS	
person walking by in hallway	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
quote vote and decide	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 8	
INT OFFICE -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil Mrs. Interp Sr.	
PROPS	
phone typewriter notebook	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Sr. -- #2
socks with red stripes	Mrs. Interp #1
wingtips	80's dress
uniform	feathered hair
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
through the door	

SCENE 9 INT. CAFETERIA -- DAY	
CAST	
Sr. priest	
PROPS ketchup potatoes au gratin corn dishes tray	
WARDROBE	
priest -- #1	Sr. -- #2
EXTRAS people in cafeteria	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS cafeteria sound	

SCENE 11	
INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil Sr. Mary Myrna priest	
PROPS	
water fountain 2 lunches --potatoes au gratin notebook	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform socks with red stripes wingtips uniform	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 12	
INT. CAFETERIA -- DAY	
CAST	
neil cute nun Sr. priest	
PROPS	
3 lunches ketchup potatoes au gratin corn dishes tray	
WARDROBE	
priest -- #1 Sr. -- #2 cute nun -- #1 neil -- #3 uniform	
EXTRAS	
people in cafeteria	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
cafeteria sound	

SCENE 13	
INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil suze	
PROPS	
applesauce cup/ bagged lunch notebook pen	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Suze -- #2 uniform
	socks with red stripes wingtips uniform
EXTRAS	
people in cafeteria	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 14	
INT. SCHOOL STEPS AND OUTSIDE -- DAY	
CAST	
neil	4 boys
Suze	anne
Sr.	angie
Scottie	Courtney
PROPS	
caramel candy (rolo) 2 black golf umbrellas two horror films small box back packs skateboards nice car -- SUV ?	
WARDROBE	
suze -- #2 uniform	neil -- #3 uniform
blue raincoat	red raincoat
Soccer mom -- #1	Sr. -- #3
light blue pleated jeans, knit polo, belt	
Scottie --#1	Anne -- #1
and boys	Angie -- #1
sloppy khaki uniform pants	Courtney -- #1
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
Quote	
SOUND EFFECTS	
street sounds	

SCENE 15	
INT. FRENCH BAKERY -- DAY	
CAST	
neil Suze French worker man woman	
PROPS	
change 3 change purses 1 baugette 2 olive breads back pack other bread	
WARDROBE	
suze -- #2 uniform	neil -- #3 uniform
blue raincoat	red raincoat
Man -- #1	
slicker	
old hat	
Woman --#1	
classic dress	
blue scarf around neck+B55	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
Quote	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 16	
INT. FORT -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil suze	
PROPS	
Olive bread construction paper faces stamp business cards blue, red raincoats	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Suze -- #2 uniform
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
construction paper faces stop motion animation	

SCENE 17	
INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil suze Sr. Courtney	
PROPS	
Nancy Drew's guide to life notebook pencil white paper braille alphabet school books note with nany drew quote	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Suze -- #4 uniform
Courtney -- #2	Sr. -- #4
	headband
	lace socks
EXTRAS	
other girls	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
school bell girls snickering	

SCENE 18	
INT. HALLWAY -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil suze sr.	
PROPS	
notebook pencil	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3uniform	Suze -- #4 uniform
	Sr. -- #4
EXTRAS	
other girls	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
quote	
SOUND EFFECTS	
school bell girls walking down hall	

SCENE 19	
INT. -- CLASSROOM -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil suze	
PROPS	
post it note with spanish pencil notebook	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Suze -- #4 uniform
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 20	
EXT. -- WAVELAND BEACH -- DAY	
CAST	
Sr.	
PROPS	
beach chair cocktail with umbrella sungalses black golf umbrella	
WARDROBE	
Sr. -- #4	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
serene waves	

SCENE 21	
INT. -- CLASSROOM -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil suze	
PROPS	
post it note with spanish pencil notebook	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Suze -- #4 uniform
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 22	
INT. -- SCHOOL STEPS -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil suze Sr.	
PROPS	
two videotapes small box notebook 2 backpacks stamp	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	Suze -- #4 uniform
SR -- # 5 jeans	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
stop motion--vote and decide	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 23		
INT. -- STREET/ lesbian house -- DAY		
CAST		
Neil suze Sr. 2 lesbians woman in the house		
PROPS		
two videotapes small box notebook 2 backpacks stamp potluck rainbow		
WARDROBE		
Neil -- #3uniform	Suze -- #4 uniform	Sr. -- #5 jeans
lesbians	woman in the house deck shoes	
EXTRAS		
SPECIAL EFFECTS		
quote clock		
SOUND EFFECTS		
church bells - 6:45		

SCENE 24	
EXT. -- DINER -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil	
lesbian couple and baby	
PROPS	
notebook red backpack stroller	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform	
lesbian couple and baby -- #2	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
quote clock	
SOUND EFFECTS	
church bells --7 CLOCK	

SCENE 25	
INT. -- DINER -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil Dad lesbian couple and baby	
PROPS	
2 plates pancakes notebook/ spanish word red backpack stroller watch	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #3 uniform Dad -- #2 lesbian couple and baby -- #2	
EXTRAS	
other people eating	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 26	
EXT. FORT -- NIGHT	
CAST	
Neil Suze	
PROPS	
notebook 2 Coleman lanterns candles handkerchief	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- #5	red nancy drew t-shirt pants
Suze #5	light blue cadigan braids and light blue ribbons
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
map going up school bell	

SCENE 29	
INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY -- DAY	
CAST	
Sr. student	
PROPS	
notebook blanket school books	
WARDROBE	
Sr. -- #6	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 31	
INT. FORT -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil Suze	
PROPS	
thermometer	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- # 6 school uniform red sweatband	
Suze -- #4	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 32	
INT. SR. JOSELMA'S OFFICE -- DAY	
CAST	
Sr. Joselma	
Neil	
PROPS	
picture of Mary	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- # 6 school uniform	
Sr. Joselma -- 1	
	white polyester skirt
	white turtleneck
	white cardigan
	cross necklace
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	

SCENE 35	
EXT. SCHOOL STEPS -- DAY	
CAST	
Neil Suze	
PROPS	
2 backpacks	
WARDROBE	
Neil -- # 7 school uniform	
Suze -- #4 school uniform	
EXTRAS	
SPECIAL EFFECTS	
SOUND EFFECTS	
school bell	

VITA

Nicole Eiden was born in Columbus, Ohio. She received her B.S.C in Telecommunications from Ohio University in Athens, Ohio. In May 0f 2004, she expects to obtain her M.F. A. in film production from The University of New Orleans.