

5-15-2009

Realizing the Mentally Challenged Character of Oscar in My Friend, Oscar

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Realizing the Mentally Challenged
Character of Oscar in
My Friend, Oscar

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
Film, Theatre and Communication Arts
Performance
Acting

by

Blake Balu

B.A. Southeastern Louisiana University, 1999

May, 2009

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Acknowledgements

It is strange that my time in graduate school is near the end. It really feels like I have only begun. I have so many people who have helped me along the way. First, I would like to thank The University of New Orleans and the Department of Film, Theatre and Communication Arts for giving me the opportunity to earn my degree. Thank you to the entire faculty and staff in the Department of Film, Theatre and Communication Arts, and my thesis committee- David Hoover, Kevin Griffith, and Tony French. Also, I want to thank all of the graduate and undergraduate students for making my time at UNO enjoyable and beneficial scholastically, creatively and personally.

I want to state a special thanks to my major professor David Hoover for his guidance and the incredibly important role he played in my education as a teacher, mentor and director. I have learned a great deal from him. Big thanks to him for encouraging me to pursue this film opportunity as my thesis production and also making an appearance in it.

I began this program after returning from exile after Hurricane Katrina. Upon returning, I discovered that I no longer was employed by Louisiana State University in the department of Psychiatry and decided to return to school. Before this, I had a desire to go back to school for my MFA in acting and was encouraged by my bosses Dr. Edward Morse and Dr. Patricia Morse to do so. Until my return from exile I never summoned the energy or the courage to do it. I want to thank Dr. Edward Morse and Dr. Patricia Morse for encouraging my acting pursuits and scholastic endeavors while I worked for them. And thank you Hurricane Katrina for my kick in the pants!

Thank you to my friends, mentors, and family for all of their support and encouragement- the late Charles Kerbs, David Hoover, Martin Covert, Sharon Smetherman, Michael-Chase Creasy, my brother Brett Balu (who is recently a proud husband and father!), my parents Darlene and Jerry Balu for all of their tremendous support, and many other of my friends and family not mentioned. You have all been great influences in my life and made me the person I am today.

Big thanks go out to Luis Q. Barroso for being a great friend and mentor in my life. He has taught me so much, and not just about acting and theatre. He is a great example of someone who knows how to treat people and lives with a gracefulness and consideration for others we should all want to set as goals, both professionally and personally. Thank you for this, and for portraying my character's father in my thesis production. If the world is your stage, Luis, don't worry, you've found your light, and it is spectacular!

I want to thank my friend Brian Kaz for his friendship, creative inspiration and partnership, patience, genius, hard work, honesty, vision, perfectionism, understanding, clarity of thinking, time, personal and financial investment, etc. He has been the greatest friend now for over 20 years of my life. My thesis project would have never have been finished being written, much less produced, without him. You da man, Brian!

And finally, thank you to my partner of 10 years, Charlie Farve Hayes. Charlie was the person who encouraged me to begin acting ten years ago, sacrificed so much for me and supported my decision to go back to school. I love and respect him for that (and for many other reasons). I would be nowhere near where I am today. Words can never express how in debted I am to him and the amount of gratitude I owe him, but it is all ok because he knows my heart. I love and thank you, Charlie.

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Abstract

This thesis serves to document and define my creative process and efforts to perform the role of Oscar in *My Friend, Oscar* which was written by me and Brian Kaz. It contains my research, how I put my research into use in the role, my production journal, and my project evaluation. *My Friend, Oscar* was produced by Reyo-San Pictures whose members are Brian Kaz, Charlie Farve Hayes and me. The film was shot from early November of 2008 until April of 2009. After post-production, the film is projected to be ready for screening in September of 2009.

Keywords: Blake Balu, My Friend, Oscar, Reyo-San Pictures, UNO, University of New Orleans

Introduction

In the beginning of the fall semester of 2008 the Department of Film, Theatre and Communications at UNO had a guest artist, Rodney Hudson of Syracuse University direct part of our theatre season and teach an acting class. As a result of this, the department decided that our first show would be the musical revue, Cole. This revue was to be my thesis production, but due to the need of male actors who sing far outweighing the males who auditioned, the show was cancelled. Professor David Hoover approached me and asked me what I would like to do as my thesis project. We came up with the idea of doing a role in a film. The film company that I am involved with had a few ideas for roles appropriate for me. One of the roles was in a film about a mentally challenged man in his mid thirties who befriends a troubled twelve year old girl. Their relationship faces hardship and demise after he wakes up one day and is no longer mentally challenged. At that time, the project did not have a name and had not been written. I pitched the idea to David, and he loved it. I pitched the idea to him because I knew this role could be very challenging and rewarding and was something that I was passionate about. I have always had a fascination with the challenge of representing a mentally challenged person in a well rounded manner and have him be a believable character. I think Professor Hoover saw my passion for the project and wanted me to pursue it even though no graduate acting student had ever used a film for his/her thesis role.

I began right away writing the screenplay with the co-writer and director, Brian Kaz, of Reyo-San Pictures. We worked for about a month and a half almost daily for about eight hours a day to complete the script. It was originally supposed to be about a forty minute film, but after fleshing out the story, we began to realize this story needed to be told through a feature-length

film and ended up with the now eighty-four page script. We began shooting the film at the beginning of November of 2008, and are finishing shooting in April of 2009. The film is called *My Friend, Oscar*, and I am playing the role of Oscar.

This document contains a detailed examination of the process I went through to create the role of Oscar. It is also a reflection of some of the skills I have gathered and sharpened during my graduate studies in the acting program at UNO.

Research

The research I did for this thesis project was extremely important for the execution of my performance as Oscar since it provided me with the tools I needed to make him come to life. In addition to the research that I put together for the basis of my process for this role, I had to do research for the physicality and vocal representation of the character of Oscar. This was tremendously important because the physicality and vocal representation of Oscar has to have purpose as well as be believable. I had to not only find intentions and motivations for Oscar, but I had to find the right physicality and also the style and pattern for his voice. In this portion of my thesis, I will discuss these two areas of my research.

I wanted to make Oscar a believable and three-dimensional character giving him depth, appropriate vocal work, and appropriate movement. In order to achieve this I needed to make the physical representation and vocal style have reason and feel natural for my portrayal. I employed a few different sources as the basis for my research.

Research Sources for Oscar's Mental Challenge

The documentary *Yellow Brick Road* was an invaluable tool for me in my search for physical and vocal work. Directed by Keith Rondinelli and Mathew Makar in 2006, *Yellow Brick Road* documents the month long preparation and performance of the play The Wizard of Oz, which was sponsored by A.N.C.H.O.R. (Answering the Needs of Citizens with Handicaps through Organized Recreation). A.N.C.H.O.R. is a year round program in Long Island, NY for mentally disabled children and adults providing them with activities such as sports, summer camp, dances and a drama program. The coordinator said they started the drama program because a lot of the “kids” were so dramatic, social and funny.

At the beginning of this documentary, all of the handicapped participants are sitting and waiting to be told what their roles will be in the production. All of them were excited to be there and proud to be a part of this production. Most of them were adults but were very childlike in their enthusiasm. When they were being assigned their roles, they were jumping up and down and some were so happy that they even cried. One girl went out in the hallway and phoned her mother to tell her she had gotten the part she hoped she would get which was the part of the Wicked Witch. The girl cried and was almost breathless with excitement. Watching the scene of them getting their roles assigned was like watching children opening their presents on Christmas morning. The director of the drama program, Sandy Braun, said that even though they are adults she refers to them as her “kids” because it feels as if they are her children. She says they are a constant reminder of the child in all of us and how we do not want to lose that part of us. She even was talking about one of them whose parents died and said, “There is something so sweet and genuine about him” and she wished she could take him home with her to be a part of her family.

Many of the mentally handicapped participants were very animated with their hands, arms and faces and were very intense about whatever it was they were trying to express or speak about. It was as if they had to concentrate even harder to get their points across. Everything they spoke about seemed to be such a huge deal to them and their faces were extremely expressive. One could see the struggle in their faces as well. Also, some of their coordination was underdeveloped it seemed. This uncoordinated behavior seemed to happen when they were concentrating on something and were not really conscious of what parts of their body were doing much like a child who is not yet fully coordinated physically. Some of them, such as the man who played the Mayor of Munchkin Land, had trouble annunciating and pronouncing certain

words. These cast members had trouble getting their points across because of this impediment. I noticed some stuttering in a couple of the cast members as well. A variation of a lisp also seemed to be a commonality in a lot of the players especially in the man who played the tree.

Braun said they never get perfection in a show, but it is ok because “the great stuff comes in the possibilities, not in the guarantees.” This is great because it is another reminder that life does not give us guarantees, only possibilities, no matter how much is planned or thought to be a certainty. The mother of one of the girls who played a witch said that she thinks the kids enjoy acting in a play because they get satisfaction from doing their best, doing something creative, and they get respect from doing this. She says this makes the cast eager to work even harder.

One portion of the documentary showed Braun as she was taking the kids to New York City to see a Broadway show. She said she does this because it “broadens their horizons” and “it’s all about integration.” Braun went on to explain that they sometimes get funny looks from people, but “there are people that look funny to us as well.”

Another film which I used as a source is called *Charly*. This film was made in 1968 and was directed by Ralph Nelson starring Cliff Robertson as Charly, a mentally challenged man. In this film, Charly is a student at a night school learning how to read and write. Cliff Robertson portrays Charly as very childlike. His speech, coordination and handwriting are all underdeveloped. His movements are slightly clumsier than a “normal” man his age. The first shot in the movie is Charly playing in the park with children. He has a job working at a bakery and his fellow coworkers pretend like they are his friends but really only like to be around him because they can make fun of him. Charly starts to have a special friendship with his teacher and at the same time Charly is going under cognitive testing to see if he is right for a new radical

surgery to make him more intelligent. This surgery has been used and tested on mice and seems to work. The doctors and researchers are not sure if he is right for the surgery, but with the help of Charly's teacher, they are convinced to let him undergo the surgery. At first, the surgery seemed to do nothing, but after some time and mental exercises, Charly slowly becomes smarter and eventually becomes a genius. He displays how smart he is at work and his so-called friends don't like him anymore and get him fired. During this time, Charly has never really progressed or matured emotionally or socially. He begins to become attracted to his teacher. His life is now complicated because of this new intelligence. He gives his friend, the teacher, an expensive gift to try and win her and then tries to kiss her. The kiss turns violent as she fights him off of her. She calls him a "stupid moron" and he leaves. There is then a montage of Charly going off and living a wild life, and we assume learning about life, maturity and gaining social graces. When he returns, his teacher becomes his girlfriend. He slowly becomes disheartened at the world around him and the state of the world once he has the intelligence to understand it. He then discovers the effects of the operation are temporary and realizes he will soon lose his intelligence and return to the way he was. Since he knows this he tells his girlfriend she must leave. The last scene in the movie is Charly back playing in the park with the other children as he has become childlike again.

Another source I have to draw from for this role is my personal life. Growing up I had a great aunt who had Down's syndrome. She was very childlike and used to like to play with toys with my brother. At that age, I was scared of her, partly because of her size, but also because I had never been around anyone like her. She was very loud and seemed to be in her own playful little world. I remember her speech was very childlike and underdeveloped and she seemed a bit careless when she would be handling anything. For instance, she was a very sloppy eater and we

would always have to watch where she would put things because they would usually end up where they were not supposed to be or even in a precarious or dangerous place. I remember her always laughing loudly and being happy.

There was also a mentally challenged girl who used to frequent the pizza restaurant where I used to work. She worked at a nearby supermarket, and I used to see her being teased by the teenagers who worked there. She was very sweet and polite but was very cautious around people. She would frequently think that when people were laughing they were laughing at her. She would ask if we were making fun of her and I would have to explain that someone just said something funny. She spoke very loudly and was very careful and you could see how hard she was concentrating to do simple tasks like getting money out of her purse. I remember when she would count her money to pay me; she would count out loud very slowly, I think, to make sure she was getting it right but also to make sure I knew she was not cheating me. Many times she would have to start counting over again when she would get distracted or confused.

Externals (Outside-In Process)

Since the purpose of this project is to make Oscar a believable character and give him life on screen, I have employed these previously stated elements of my research to compile the necessary parts of Oscar to bring him alive. Oscar is mentally challenged in the first half of the movie. He suffers from a traumatic brain injury from a car accident that causes him to be this way, but the symptoms suggest that he was this way since birth. Since there is no case of something like this happening to anyone, we have been able to take certain liberties with the type of mental challenge Oscar has and how it manifests itself. Oscar's mental disability is unique, there are no documented cases of someone who has had a traumatic brain injury and suffered a

loss of intelligence and then woke up one day ten years later and been totally recovered (except for a leg injury that has left Oscar with a limp favoring the right leg throughout the entire film). Doctor Morten addresses this in the script when he says that he and the “brain boys upstairs” have no idea how it happened and he calls it a miracle. I made physical and vocal choices based off of what I observed in my research that I thought best served the script and character.

Oscar has no memory from before the accident. He is childlike in the way he communicates and has difficulties with speech. This is a necessary trait to set since Sophie’s parents are set at ease with his childlike nature when they meet him and do not feel uncomfortable with their daughter hanging out with him. Oscar is used to people making fun of him and this affects not only his communication but how he handles himself physically. For example, Oscar has trouble forming some words properly, pronouncing the letter “S” with a lisp and the letter “R” as a “W,” and stuttering when struggling to make a point. He is slightly clumsy and is not always aware of what some of his body parts are doing when he is concentrating on something. For instance, he has his mouth open most of the time even when he is not speaking. He precariously places the toothpaste back and it always falls off the counter. He is also somewhat of a sloppy eater. Oscar has a resilient and sweet spirit and is eager to do a good job when he sets out to do something. He is loud when he speaks and usually is not concerned with who is around him. It is obvious that Oscar has had experience with people making fun of him, since in the script at one point he accuses Sophie of making fun of him when she first meets him, even though she is not. This conflict demonstrates that he is slightly gun-shy of this type of thing happening to him.

Using these externals did not only benefit the presentation of this character in the story to the audience but also worked outside-in for me in my process as an actor. I do not always work

this way, from the outside-in, but for this role this method seemed to work for the part of filming when Oscar is mentally challenged. As I took on these particular physical and vocal characteristics, I was easily able to cue into the frame of mind of someone who may be mentally challenged in this way. I was carefree. I was vulnerable. I was green and childlike. I was Oscar.

The costumes of the mentally challenged Oscar in the first part of the movie were put together based on the fact that Luis, Oscar's father, had begun buying Oscar's clothes for him after the accident. It is Luis' taste in clothes that Oscar is wearing when he is mentally challenged. He does not mind wearing them and likes them since he has no other real point of reference in style, since he has no memory and not much of a social life. This is another childlike aspect of Oscar.

Internal Process (Inside-Out Process)

I have compiled research for this thesis project that serves to demonstrate a lot of what my process was for acting in this role throughout the entire making of the film. Konstantin Stanislavski, Sanford Meisner, David Mamet and A Practical Handbook for the Actor will all be used in the discussion of my process. This portion of my research will explain what my process was for this role and any other role I take or have taken on.

In terms of acting, an action is defined as the "physical pursuance of a specific goal, often referred to as the objective." (Bruder 8) In the book A Practical Handbook for the Actor there are nine elements of what an action should be. These are elements that I try to use when creating actions for my character. These elements are invaluable for someone who wants their portrayal to be true to the script, the moment and the character.

When choosing an action, one should remember that it must be “physically capable of being done.” (Bruder 14) This is to say it is something which the actor can do while they are on stage. It does not have to be physical either. Someone can be chastising someone and not moving their body. The action must also “be fun to do.” (Bruder 14) If it is a really interesting choice and something you would enjoy, it is more likely it will stick with you and you will remember to do it while doing the scene. “Be specific” (Bruder 15) with the action you choose. If you choose an action that is vague, your execution of the action will be vague, and sometimes confusing. If you are specific, your action will be specific and will offer a clear and defined path for you to try and achieve your objective. You will not look or feel like a lost actor. You will have a clear and defined purpose in your performance. Next, your action must “have its test in the other person.” (Bruder 15) When you are performing a scene with someone, you should always be able to gauge how far you are away from getting what you need from them in the scene. This will tell you what tactics you need to use next to get to where you want or need to go, and thus give you your next action. The action “cannot be an errand.” (Bruder 16) This is simply because there is no test in the other person with which you have the scene. You cannot just be delivering something to someone. If you are doing this, it is simply a tool by which your action is being carried out. The action you choose also “cannot presuppose any physical or emotional state.” (Bruder 16) This is to say that when you choose an action you do not choose an emotional state to go along with it or make your emotional or physical states your action. For instance, you cannot play the action “to be happy.” Any emotion must come as a result of playing the action and not predetermine it. An action “cannot be manipulative” (Bruder 17) either. An action cannot be implemented simply to get someone to cry for example. The action must be performed to get what your character wants in the scene. If your action is to force your lover to see the truth and they in turn cry then the

crying is a byproduct and how that person reacts to your action. The action you choose must “have a ‘cap.’” (Bruder 17) This means that whatever action you choose must be something that you can see the results of in the scene. The goal must be attainable and within grasp. It cannot be something so grand as to achieve world peace in a single part of a scene. Finally, the action must “be in line with the intentions of the playwright.” (Bruder 18) The script must always be the basis of the action you choose. You need to make the choice your character would take him to where he/she needs to go in the script. If you do not, you have begun writing your own script and the scene will not make any sense. Your job as an actor is to stay true to the script and character.

Konstantin Stanislavski says that “the human psychological life – moods, desires, feelings, intentions, ambitions – is expressed through simple actions.” (Moore 17) I held this idea close to me and reminded myself of this quite a bit during the filming of this project. This is especially important working in the medium of film. In theatre, it is easier to be focused on your performance and the actions your character is playing since, aside from a technical rehearsal, you are left to just do your job and concentrate on acting and playing out your actions. In film, there are a lot of breaks for technical reasons and you are usually performing a scene out of the order it is intended for the film. The order of the scenes shot are for the convenience of the shooting schedule, not the convenience of the actor. Given circumstances constantly have to be reviewed since they do not present themselves in a logical pattern. Aside from having many other responsibilities on this project, I had to keep reminding myself of my actions I needed to play and the given circumstances and how they affected how I would play the actions. It was easy to forget what the character needed to accomplish in the scene when we had to stop so I could ask someone in the street to please keep moving, help move a light or wait for the director to switch lenses or focus.

“Stanislavski reversed a human process: in life, we experience an emotion, and the body expresses it. Stanislavski achieves the experience of an emotion through a physical action.”

(Moore 19) This is always something I strive for – not to play an emotion, but to play an action and just let the emotion come out of the experience of playing an action that moves towards an objective or goal (the sixth element of A Practical Handbook for the Actor’s elements of an action). I find that when this happens, the emotion is more easily achieved and sometimes much more interesting, unexpected and more appropriate than ever imagined. For example, when we were filming the scene when Sophie’s father comes over to tell me to stay away from his daughter after I have lost my mental challenge, my objective was to hang on to our friendship. When he caught me off guard and told me to stay away from his daughter my reaction was to begin to laugh because I assumed at first he must be joking and, of course, I would want to laugh at his jokes to be agreeable. But when I realized he was not joking, I stifled myself from laughing and felt confused and hurt. This was not rehearsed but happened while shooting the scene. The director said he liked it and wants to use it in the cut of the film. This is what Sanford Meisner was talking about when he said, “The foundation of acting is in the reality of doing.” (Meisner 16) He is saying that if you are in the moment of playing an action and doing what the script is asking for in the scene, whatever comes from it is truthful and creates the reality of the scene. This is acting.

I believe that even though David Mamet says the “Stanislavsky ‘Method,’ and the technique of the schools derived from it, is nonsense,” (Mamet 6) the two have more in common in their approach to acting than he indicates. Just as Stanislavski believes actions should be played and not emotions, Mamet has the same opinion and says, “The very act of striving to create an emotional state in oneself takes one out of the play... The response to an emotional

demand is antagonism and rebellion. There is no exception. If one were truly able to command one's conscious thoughts, to summon emotion at will, there would be no neurosis, no psychosis, no psychoanalysis, no sadness." (Mamet 11) I believe that the truth of acting comes from playing the actions that are dictated by the script and all that follows such as physical and emotional reactions are part of that truth, however they may manifest themselves. The moment you start to dictate those emotions you are taken out of the scene and locked inside yourself. Meisner says, "To transfer the point of concentration outside yourself, is a big battle won." (Meisner 26)

I do not believe to play the actions you need to actually believe what is going on in the scene is actually happening. The scene provides a set of circumstances that are not real that require the actor to react truthfully under these imaginary circumstances. "Stanislavski did not think that an actor could honestly believe in the truth and reality of events on stage, but he said that an actor can believe in the possibility of events." (Moore 25) He believed the actor should ask himself/herself the question, "What would I do if I were in this person's position?" This was his "magic if" that "transforms the characters aim into the actors." (Moore 25) To do this with the intentions of the playwright for the script is to be truthful as an actor. When performing the role of Oscar I constantly had to ask myself how I would react to what was going on as Oscar. After 10 years of being essentially a child in so many ways and with no memory from before becoming that way, how would someone react to waking up one day essentially as an adult having regained all his memory? How overjoyed or emotionally devastated would he be? How would he deal with 10 years of lost time working on his career? How would he deal with the abandonment he felt from his former friends who had no use for him after his accident? How would he deal with coming to terms with the knowledge that his father's alcoholism was the cause of the accident that made him mentally challenged? There were so many issues to tackle

playing this character and the use of the “magic if” played a major role in deciding how to react. Using the given circumstances of the script and who my character is, I was able to play the truthfulness of each moment of the script to the best of my ability.

Mamet says that the actor’s “challenge is...to open the mouth, stand straight, and say the words bravely – adding nothing, denying nothing, and without the intent to manipulate anyone: himself, his fellows, the audience.” (Mamet 22) I think he says this to make a point about the truthfulness and purity of the script and speaking the words of the script, but I also think this is an oversimplification of what it is to act. The character of Oscar is mentally challenged and requires this represented in his physicality and speech in the film. These externals have to be manipulated by the actor. Otherwise, the movie would not make any sense. I would hope that Mamet means that an actor should not invent anything that is not in the script or implied by the script such as giving the character an Italian accent when he is defined by the script as Irish.

Journal

10/15/08

I have come to the conclusion that one of the themes of the screenplay with regard to my character, Oscar, is when something is lost, there is something gained. When our life is not cluttered with many things, we are left to concentrate on the things we do have, face them, and appreciate them for what they are.

10/18/08

I originally wanted the manifestation of Oscar's mental handicap to be represented more in the script and less in any "external" I could create, but through working on the script and discussing it with Brian (co-writer and director) I discovered that certain pivotal moments of the script rely heavily on the vocal and physical manifestation of the handicap. For example, in the beginning, when Oscar first wakes up, his handicap needs to be immediately established. The first words, if spoken without any affectation, would not suggest any mental problems. Also, when Oscar first meets Sophie's parents they need to get the impression that he is mentally handicapped and childlike. If there wasn't a childlike way in which Oscar presents himself to them and they just saw him as a strange 36 year old man then they probably wouldn't allow him to hang around their daughter. Also, this allows his handicap to cover a broader scope of mental handicap characteristics. His unique artistic perspective can be considered a characteristic of autism. His developmental shortcomings and his apparent low IQ is similar to someone with Down's syndrome or someone who suffered from prenatal brain trauma. His loss of memory is

because of his brain trauma due to the car accident with his father. Oscar is a representation of many types of mental handicaps and challenges.

11/2/08

I had a discussion with the director about the externals of the character of Oscar. He definitely wants the childlike, underdeveloped speech of Oscar. He also wants the character to have a limp because he says that in the accident he probably suffered a broken hip or leg. He says that Oscar should have the limp all throughout the movie, even after he recovers from his mental problems. He says that this is one of the external reminders Dr. Morten is speaking of when he says “aside from a couple of external reminders, it’s as if the accident never happened.” He says that the other is a scar which is on my head which may or may not be seen.

11/4/08

I’ve been trying to read the screenplay and imagine what it would be like to be in this situation. Oscar says when he is interviewed on the news “It’s like I just woke up from a long dream.” I would imagine that if this were to happen to someone (they got in a car accident, became severely mentally challenged having no memory of before, then woke up and had full memory) it would be quite confusing. I would imagine that there would be a sense of mourning for the loss of years and the loss of friends, but also, there might be a joyous sense of a new beginning and happiness that would allow them to see all of the capabilities they have and not take them for granted. Also, given the circumstances of Oscar losing his friends, but gaining more of a father and gaining a new true friend, someone might feel like they are able to see with new eyes, clearer. Then there’s the issue of the responsibilities. With this new opportunity comes

the pressure of being an adult all of the sudden again and having to do it after 10 years of lost time chasing a career or life path.

11/7/08

We begin filming tomorrow and I am nervous about how all of this will come together. On this film, there has been no real time for rehearsal up until the day of the shoot and we must rehearse as the set is being dressed and the camera and lighting equipment are being set up. I have begun rehearsing and memorizing on my own, choosing my actions and keeping in mind all of my externals. Also, I have to be keenly aware of given circumstances, since I will be thrust into scenes which are out of order and will have to prepare for where the character is in the course of the screenplay and keep with his appropriate intentions at any given point in the script.

11/8/09

(Scenes 1, 11, and 53) Today we shot the waking up scenes which are 3. In the first two Oscar is mentally handicapped and in the last one shot, he wakes up for the first time in ten years and is not mentally handicapped. On the first two shoots, I woke up and put my glasses on. The first one, I had the line “Okay I’m up now” to my father who just came in and blasted light on me from opening the shutters in my room. His voice did nothing to wake me up, but when the light blasted through onto my face I could feel it hit my face with my eyes closed, and this was to wake me up. It was annoying to be so relaxed, in the fetal position, and then to have light blasted on me. But this is something that happens to Oscar every day so at first, my eyes squeezed shut as tight as they could then I slowly began to get up and slowly open my eyes and adjust to the light. Before we shot this, I tried to lay there as relaxed as I could where I was almost asleep so my eyes would twitch and I could get the most realistic reaction from my body. I did this slow

adjustment to the light and sitting up. On a couple of takes I even stretch, not because I really thought about it, but through becoming relaxed then telling my body it was time to get up, the urge to stretch came over me and I did it. When I delivered my line, I used the relaxed jaw and under pronounced delivery that I have chosen for Oscar. It is an underdeveloped speech style. The director also wants me to use my eyes differently with mentally challenged Oscar by keeping them wide open to give him a more childlike, innocent, and wide eyed “everything is so new and fascinating and a huge deal” look. I used this as well.

(Scenes 2, 12, 18 and 54) Today we also shot the bathroom scenes of Oscar brushing his teeth and his father shaving him. Oscar is very childlike and careless when it comes to small tasks that aren't important to him like putting his toothbrush back and such. The director wanted Oscar to carelessly place his toothbrush so it would fall off into the sink every time, except for when he wakes up mentally recovered. Then he wants care to be taken of placing the toothbrush in its proper place. He wants toothpaste to be coming out of his mouth as Oscar is fully focused on cleaning and scrubbing every tooth thoroughly and it doesn't bother him that he is making a mess. That is something that can be cleaned up. I did this just as described with utmost concentration, using up and down, side to side, and circular motions to scrub my teeth. I did this for both the first two scenes. We even got a shot of Oscar's father shaving his face and he wanted this because Oscar apparently doesn't do a very good job, because it's not usually a priority for him. Also, it is for the character of Luis, his father, since his is still living with the guilt of making him this way and is constantly making it up to him. I had to change pajamas for the third scene, because it was the next year and the director wanted new pajamas. The third scene was a tooth brushing scene, but it is set in the story right after Oscar wakes up and is slowly realizing he is “normal” as memories flood back to his mind and is coming to the realization that he is not

dreaming and that he is awake and not slow anymore. This is symbolized by the care he puts into putting the tooth brush back on the shelf. He looks into the mirror as if to say, “Yeah, this is really you man! You are awake, after 10 years!” We did a few different takes of this each with a different degree of excitement and wonderment. We also did some shots of mentally challenged Oscar getting dressed and being excited about his new bright blue pants he got to go with his beautiful Hawaiian blue shirt. We did a few takes of these different ways. My character is excited about getting dressed to go take his Polaroid pictures; something he cherishes and does all the time.

11/9/08

(Scene 7) We started off by filming the scene where Luis and Oscar have dinner and Luis is cooking Spam a la Luis. Oscar enters and greets him having just come back from meeting Sophie for the first time at the park and becoming friends with her. Luis says Oscars timing is impeccable and Oscar apologizes, misinterpreting the meaning as something bad. Luis asks Oscar if he wants some of what he has made, knowing that Oscar only eats Kooky Puffs for dinner. Oscar wants his Kooky Puffs because that is what he eats for dinner and is surprised that Luis is trying to get him to eat something else, especially something like spam, which to him is so inappropriate for dinner, something more suited for breakfast to Oscar. Luis finally lets him in on the joke and gives up the Kooky Puffs and they both share a laugh. Luis asks Oscar how his day in the park was and Oscar tells him that he made a friend named Sophie and she makes him happy. Luis says he should invite her over and Oscar agrees. Luis speaks a quote about how in everyone’s life an inner fire goes out then it bursts into flame by and encounter with another human being. Oscar seems to not really get the meaning of it. After this Luis tells Oscar that he is ten years sober and asks Oscar to attend an Alcoholics Anonymous meeting with him. Oscar is

so focused on his wall, as it is his priority, that he apologizes and declines the offer. In his simple mind he doesn't grasp the significance of the meeting to Luis. Also, I think there is possibly some avoidance because he may have been to meetings with him in the past and found them boring. To him 10 years is no more important than any other day of sobriety. Then Luis offers to get ice cream as a celebration of his ten year mark. Oscar is overjoyed and suggests "choco chip" as his flavor of choice and chants it, then is struck by an ingenious idea to have it on a sugar cone with whipped cream. Luis agrees with him and Exclaims "Yes. Brilliant!" I was ecstatic as a child would be about the prospect of ice cream.

(Scene 55) The next scene we shot is the morning Oscar wakes up and discovers that he is "normal" again. It is when he enters the kitchen holding his glasses. He has just come from going through a process of realization that he has his memory back and is functioning on more of a developed adult level. He has gone through a flood of emotions of being excited, scared and wondering if he is still dreaming. When he enters the kitchen he is holding his glasses that he wears as "mentally handicapped Oscar" since, as him, he cannot deal with putting contacts on and Luis and gotten these for him to wear because it's easier. He walks in and asks Luis if he knows where his contacts are. This is his way of telling his dad "I'm back to normal." We shot it a few different ways. The director wanted some variation to choose from as far as the delivery of the line. Since what I'm really doing is telling my father "I'm back to normal." I thought a compelling choice would be to ask Luis to verify if this is actually real, as if he speaks to someone it would prove, or disprove this question. So, the first one I did, was that of "Dad, I'm back to normal" in sort of wonderment. In fact, that's what the director called the take, the "wonderment take." The next take we did was one of joyousness and I did it with a tinge of excitement, like "I'm back to normal, can you believe it?!!" as if expressing to him how

overwhelmed with the enormity of the situation. Then he wanted a more even and “monotone” delivery. So I gave myself the intention of just informing Luis of my mental status and playing down the excitement, so Luis’ surprise would be on his own and Oscar wouldn’t lead him to any sort of reaction. It was “Here’s the information, react how you however you feel.”

(Scene 66) The next scene we shot was the one where Sophie has just discovered a couple of days ago that Oscar has recovered but he hasn’t called her. Her father has talked to Oscar and told him that he doesn’t want him around Sophie anymore. He then went and talked to an upset Sophie about how Oscar was more of an adult now and probably doesn’t want to hang out with her. He told her it’s ok because everyone loses friends sometime. The scene begins in front of Luis and Oscar’s house as Oscar is taking out the garbage. He tells her that he is different now and asks her how she thinks people would feel about them hanging out now. The intention behind this is to get her to draw her own conclusion about it not being a good idea to hang out anymore. I thought I played this well. She argues with him trying to make him understand that if he is a true friend, he wouldn’t do this. All Oscar can do is apologize at this point, since he cannot reveal what really happened. Sophie turns and leaves on her bike calling him an “ass-wad!” We rehearsed this scene like the others, right before we shot it as well as two nights before the shoot. The more I did the scene with Taylor, the girl who plays Sophie, the more I realized how guilty he feels and how guilty she is making him feel for abandoning her. His conflict is between doing what her father wants and not seeing her anymore and still being friends with her.

(Scene 63) The last scene we shot for the day is when Oscar is normal after they are home from the doctor’s office and just before Oscar is paid a visit by Brett, Sophie’s father. We rehearsed this scene a few times this day before we shot it. This scene is about Luis and Oscar

adjusting to the new Oscar. Luis offers Oscar Kooky Puffs after Oscar makes a small back handed joke about his Spam cakes au gratin, and Oscar says he'll just have what Luis is having, since he is an adult and wants more "adult" things. He takes a jab at Luis as a passive aggressive maneuver since he is now of the knowledge of the root of Luis' sobriety. In this scene Oscar struggles with the knowledge he regained that he has already lost his old friends and doesn't want to lose his new and only other friend, besides Luis. He also addresses the fact that he must take on more adult responsibilities like getting a job. He wonders how Sophie will take to the new Oscar and says he is actually scared to talk to her. Luis reassures him, saying that "she'll be fine with it." Oscar worries because the last time he "changed" everyone around him did too (deserted him as a friend) and he is worried Sophie may also. When he talks about people changing he says, "Including you, it seems" as he pulls out Luis' ten years of sobriety coin indicating that he knows that Luis became sober after the accident and therefore he knows why Luis decided to become sober. It is his way of letting Luis know he is aware of Luis' motives for getting sober and that Luis was the cause of him losing 10 years of his adult life and his friends. Oscar has a little anger about this and uses this moment to let Luis know. But he loves Luis and appreciates what he has done after the accident, so this is just a small way of letting him know.

11/14/08

(Scene 13) Today we filmed Luis sending Oscar off to go take photos at the park and then meet Sophie at school. Oscar is very excited about his day, and we did a few different takes of different degrees of excitement while Luis wipes his mouth, since he just has eaten breakfast. I always have the external of a limp as a result of Oscar's car accident which has also caused his mental disability. I always have to have this as part of my physicalization of Oscar.

(Scene 16) We shot the scene where Oscar takes Sophie to his house for the first time after they hang out at the park together. He shows her his wall of Polaroid photos since she asks to see them. He is proud of his work. He realizes he needs to take a shower because it is five o'clock. Although not in the script, I have decided that every day when Oscar gets home from taking pictures in the park, his dad makes him take a shower. His father gives him a hard time if he does not. This is why he leaves her so abruptly after he introduces her to his home.

(Scenes 38, 39, 40 and 44) This evening we shot the scene in the tent on Halloween night after Sophie and Oscar have been trick or treating. They had been harassed by some bullies who threw an egg at Sophie and then Oscar chased them down. Both Sophie and Oscar have eaten so much candy they are beginning to get sick, but it does not stop Oscar from eating more when Sophie cannot. His feeling sick does not stop him from taking the piece that Sophie cannot eat. This is another manifestation of his childlike ways. His sweet tooth overrides his need to quit eating since he has no memory, he has to relearn these simple life lessons that adults take for granted. It is an opportunity to get more candy. Sophie thanks Oscar for chasing the bullies away, and Oscar thinks it's great because in the process of chasing the bullies, they dropped their candy for them to pick up. They both share a laugh and remember the funny look on their faces when Oscar scared them. Then Sophie's laughter turns to tears when she thinks of how she is treated on a regular basis. We worked on this part for a while; I worked with Taylor, the girl who plays Sophie. The director wanted her to cry and have tears after coming out of laughter. At first she was hesitant, and I told her to imagine something happening that would cause her to be very hurt enough to cry. I suggested imagining if she found out her mother was dead if that would take her to that point. I'm not sure what she used, but on the next take, I said that we would just laugh and laugh until she felt it hit her (whatever she had used to get her to cry). On that take we

laughed in character for a while then I heard her get quiet so I looked at her and she was crying. I continued with the lines and so did she. Oscar is concerned about his friend and asks her what is wrong, because he wants to help her so she will not be upset. She explains that everybody treats her as if she is from another planet. Oscar can relate to this and does not want her to feel alone, so he tells her that people think he's different too. This spurs a reaction in Sophie to let me know that people are wrong because she does not see me as different. It empowers her and she tells Oscar not to let anyone tell him otherwise. He, in turn, feels empowered and says "maybe I'll tell them THEY'RE from another planet." A couple of takes I got a bit choked up as well, using my own experience of being picked on growing up and being touched by seeing someone else (Sophie) in pain because of it. I used this in the scene for Oscar. Also, the struggle to keep ones dignity in these situations is not easy, but when someone is with you in the same situation you have this commonality which is the basis for any relationship. This is a basic need of humans. We are social creatures and need human connection. Commonality creates connection. This is why it hurts to be rejected, especially by one's peers who we feel we should have the most in common with. Oscar and Sophie in this scene share these feelings of rejection with each other and lift each other up. We played this very well in this scene, seeing each other in pain and lifting each other up with laughter and sound advice. After Oscars empowering moment, Sophie shares with him that when things get "too heavy" for him that he should do what she does and imagine she is somewhere else. Oscar loves this idea. This commonality of their love of imagination is something else that strengthens their bond. At the end of this scene, Sophie hesitantly tells Oscar "good night" as if she wants to say or even ask something else and they go to sleep having bonded further, reaffirmed their friendship and proved that they are there for each other for support. We rehearsed the scene beforehand mainly for the lines and did not really start

to flesh it out until we shot it, mainly because there were a few people around and it was difficult for Taylor to invest completely in the moment. Many of the initial takes were somewhat rehearsal in nature. We did a few takes of this as wide shots and then close ups for each of us.

11/15/08

(Scenes 71 and 78) Today we shot Oscar and Sophie working on a painting together for the Southern Art Festival. This scene takes place after Oscar has woken up from his 10 years of being mentally challenged. It is when he and Sophie decide they will sneak around behind her parents back to hang out together. We did a few dolly shots of us with no sound as Sophie and Oscar decide how they are going to paint their picture. Then we did the actual scene when Oscar is telling jokes and laughing with Sophie, showing how they are enjoying each other's friendship. The scene finds them almost finished with the painting. Then at the end, Oscar tells her to stop painting and they are finished and both excited about what they have created and the prospect of entering the piece into the festival. It took a few times to warm up and get some laughter going since we didn't have much time for rehearsals and also, the people that catered for us were in the room watching. I think this may have made Taylor uncomfortable. Most of the takes seemed forced and I never really felt a total connection with her during the shooting of this scene. Throughout this scene, Oscar is helping Sophie to finish the piece of art while maintaining his friendship with her. He tells her a joke, which is somewhat abstract and not completely clear and she gets it. Then he tells her another joke that is crystal clear and she has no clue what it means, but rather than keep explaining to her what the joke is about he focuses on what is more important, the painting. At this moment he notices that it is complete and no more should be altered on it as it might mess it up. He tells her to stop painting and they both enjoy their work as

Sophie exclaims, “Southern Art Fest here we come!” They have worked together and bonded with their words and their work and have something to show for it.

(Scene 9) Later in the day, we shot the scene when Oscar answers the phone after the first time he meets Sophie. Oscar is in the middle of putting the days Polaroid photos on his wall. As he speaks to Sophie, he is focused more on thinking about the photos. When he first picks up the phone he does not immediately recognize her voice. Sophie asks Oscar if he wants to hang out the next day and Oscar says yes. She asks if he knows where Jefferson Elementary is and Oscar only answers with saying, “My dad says I went to Jefferson Elementary.” This is because he is excited to relate to her by telling her he went to the same school as her, but forgetting to answer her question. He then answers “yes” after she asks him to clarify the answer. After this part of the conversation, Luis comes in somewhere off camera and declares he has ice cream. Oscar is side tracked by this and just leaves the phone unattended while he goes to get the ice cream. After a few seconds he remembers the phone and comes back. With ice cream still on the mind he picks up the phone and says “ice crea..Okay, bye!” In the script, it just says “Okay, Bye!” but the director wanted me to try it by starting to say ice cream, as if that’s all that was on my mind. We shot it the way of the script a couple of times and then shot it with his new idea a couple of times. Oscar is very focused on what he is doing with his pictures when Sophie calls so is not as focused on the conversation as Sophie would like him to be. His art is held in the highest esteem. Then when the ice cream arrives, something which he absolutely loves, his art can wait a few minutes. His friendship isn’t as developed yet so his lack of focus on the conversation with Sophie is understandable. Sophie’s end of the conversation was not read by Taylor, but by someone on the crew, so I did not have the luxury of playing off of the other actor. Her part of the conversation will be shot at another date.

11/16/08

(Scene 99) The next scene we shot was after Sophie's father beat Oscar up for hanging out with her behind his back and Luis comes in while Oscar is reading the paper and is a depressed. Luis offers to take Oscar out to dinner to celebrate Oscar's new job. Oscar declines his offer as he is too depressed. Luis knows why he is depressed and tells him he doesn't like seeing him this way, to which Oscar replies, "Then stop looking at me." He is depressed and just wants to be left alone. He's emotionally drained and feels he doesn't have the energy to deal with anything at this time. But all he really needs is some perspective which is given to him by his father, who explains that Oscar and Sophie share a bond that should be maintained in some way. Luis explains that he should find some way to do this, because he says, "Trust me, the last thing you want is to live with regret." He is referring to the fact that he was the cause of the wreck that caused Oscar's 10 years of being mentally challenged. Oscar knows this and this strikes a chord in him and gets him to start thinking that he maybe does not want to live with the regret of giving up a great friendship and turning his back on Sophie as his friends turned their backs on him years ago. The scene ends with Oscar left by Luis to ponder the possibility of regret. When we filmed this scene Luis and I went over our lines before shooting. I made a discovery during about the 3rd or 4th take. When I was playing the avoidance of Luis in this situation, on the line "Then stop looking at me" I experienced a change in my intention. Instead of just playing avoidance in that line I found a cry for help. I was asking him to notice how helpless I was by saying this. I am too pitiful to lay eyes on, so I must need help. It gave a different read for Luis and gave me another choice in what I'm doing in the scene. His next line is a suggestion to see Sophie. He is giving me the kick in the pants that my character needs to do something to solve his dilemma. Luis tells Oscar, "Why don't you go see her?" Oscar almost can't believe he would suggest such

a thing and sarcastically says “What?”, as if to say, “Are you sure you want to go there?” Then Luis says, “Go talk to her.” Then Oscar reminds him of the “ass whipping” he just received for hanging out with Sophie. Then Luis explains that it’s not that they had a relationship, but that maybe they (Oscar and Sophie) can have a relationship that “all parties can agree upon.” This has gotten Oscar thinking but he still puts up a wall when he then says, “Dad, we’re not the United Nations here.” Then Luis explains that Sophie is a true friend and “a true friend is worth fighting for.” He then drives his point home by saying his line about regret. Oscar is left with his thoughts.

(Scene 99b) The next scene that was shot was in the “office” of Luis and Oscar’s home. Oscar comes in still in thought about what to do about his and Sophie’s friendship. He is thinking (even though no words are spoken) of entering his and Sophie’s art work into the Southern Art Fest and as he walks into the room he notices the painting and immediately walks over to it, looks at it and then carries it out of the room, as he has plans for it. We did about 3 takes of this shot from just one angle.

11/22/08

(Scenes 45 and 46) The scenes we shot this day are the scenes that take place at Sophie’s Grandmother’s house for Sophie’s birthday party. These take place the day before Oscar wakes up from his ten years of being mentally challenged. The first scene I was in was when everyone is singing to Sophie and she blows out the candles on her birthday cake. We did this scene a few times from different angles and at the end of the song Oscar says, “and you smell like one too!” this is not in the script but we felt it was fitting and a good representation of Oscar’s comfortable relationship he has with Sophie and her family.

(Scenes 47, 49 and 51) The next scene for me that day was the scene where Sophie's Uncle Mel has taken me out on the lake with him in the paddle boat and is telling off color stories about himself involving prostitutes and getting his testicles blown off during the war. Uncle Mel is obnoxious but obviously just needs someone to talk to or bond with. He has Oscar as a captive audience out on the boat. There are two parts to this scene and Oscar has no lines. We shot both of these scenes a few times from far away and up close getting close ups of Oscar and Mel. When we shot it, Brian the director, had to cut a few times because he couldn't help himself from laughing. It was fun. My job as Oscar was to pretend as if I'm listening to Mel as to not hurt his feelings but at the same time just wanting to be anywhere else but there with him. I think I did a pretty good job of it. It was very difficult because we had somewhat of a current in the lake to deal with and we were not anchored in any way so we had to keep paddling and steering and shooting when we were in the right spot. Another tail end of this lake scene we shot is when Oscar and Mel are sharing a peaceful and quiet moment out on the lake and Uncle Mel breaks wind. Oscar is somewhat disgusted as Mel says, "I love the smell of napalm in the morning." Oscar catches a whiff and turns away in disgust. Oscar has a tamed disgust as if he is disgusted but does not want to offend by being offended. I think I accomplished this in this scene. Then there was a little scene we shot when Sophie comes to rescue Oscar from Uncle Mel. She asks him if she can borrow Oscar and Mel replies, "So you're sayin' I gotta give up another nut?" Oscar and Mel paddle to the dock and Oscar gets out to meet Sophie there and says goodbye to Mel. Oscar and Sophie are walking to the golf cart she took there to leave and she asks him, "How's it going?" Oscar is honest with her and says "Not too good, Sophie. Uncle Mel's weird. He talks really A LOT about his privates." I did this and tried to convey surprise and disgust that Uncle Mel would do this and also, I was relieved to be out of the boat. I believe

this was accomplished. We only did about 3 shots of this, more so to make sure the focus was right than anything else. Sophie shares in his disgust and he is relieved to be with her as they take off in the cart. Sophie almost runs over a couple of relatives, but Oscar puts his trust in her to drive. We only did a couple of takes of this one, because I think the first one was the best. The actors who played the relatives really were frightened that we might hit them. It was very real and pretty funny as well (especially since no one was hurt.)

11/24/08

(Scenes 22, 23 and 24) The scenes shot today were shot at a residence in Lakeview, Metairie, LA. I was in the scenes when Sophie, Brett and Angela (Sophie's parents) have Oscar over for dinner. The first scene shot was when Sophie answers the door and I'm standing there ready for dinner and say "I brought my spoon!" excitedly, as I hold up my spoon. Oscar has come to Sophie's house with his own spoon, because he wants to make a good impression by being prepared. It is also the spoon Oscar uses to eat Kooky Puffs, and since it is dinner time he assumes he will be able to have them. The next part of this scene we shot was when Oscar first meets Sophie's parents, Brett and Angela Badeaux. Oscar is very excited to meet Sophie's parents and very proud to be Sophie's friend and I played it that way when I as Oscar was introduced to them on every take. The dinner scene was done next and was a little more involved because we had to make sure we had every angle and close up needed to present the scene to capture how everyone was dealing with the awkwardness that was there. The awkwardness being that Brett and Angie were not expecting Sophie's friend to be a mentally challenged man in his 30's and having to decide how they felt about it. Throughout the conversation they gradually warm up to Oscar, especially Brett who even asks Angie to get Oscar some Kooky Puffs since he is not into what they have for him to eat at the table. Brett sees that Oscar is completely harmless

and childlike. Oscar is trying his hardest to impress them when Brett asks him to tell a little about himself. Oscar begins to give all his information eagerly to please Brett, even though it is not really the information he is looking for. I love this part of filming as I thought my and Lucas' timing was perfect together in his struggle to get the information he wanted and my eagerness to get the information out. Then when Brett clarifies by asking him what he likes to do, Oscar is very excited to tell him that "I LOVE to take pictures!" Sophie then begins to explain how they work together to make their art work from taking pictures with his Polaroid camera and then drawing on them. Oscar then says "But, Sophie's better at it." After sharing a form of a high five that only her and Oscar can do, Angie wonders why Oscar hasn't touched his food. Oscar feels bad about not eating the food, but was kind of expecting cereal for his dinner as usual. He asks if she has any Kooky Puffs and then even says he brought his spoon so as to alleviate any extra effort she would have to expel to provide it for him. Then Brett tells Angie to get Oscar some Kooky Puffs, obviously won over by his innocent charm. Oscar feels bad he has caused this but is excited about the prospect of Kooky Puffs after wondering how he would get around eating what was in front of him. This scene was very fun to shoot and the uncomfortable feeling was there at the beginning of the conversation as it should have. Gradually the scene began to lose that uncomfortable feeling it through the childlike and eager way Oscar dealt with the parents and Sophie. Oscar was charming Sophie's parents and putting them at ease. We see the beginning of their relationship blooming. It really felt as though it was coming across this way even when the camera wasn't on me. The first few times we rehearsed before we shot, it was more about the lines, but once we started shooting, it seemed to click and the scene built the way it should, I felt. It always felt as if this scene was building this way whatever angle was being

shot. I felt I (Oscar) was winning over Sophie's parents, which is my objective in the scene. I was not in the other scenes shot this day.

11/25/08

(Scene 25) Today's scene we had to rehearse a bit before we shot, since Sophie had most of the lines and we wanted to get the blocking down with the lines so the camera angles could be nailed down before we shot. During rehearsal I found myself as the character very excited to be at Sophie's house and very proud to have met her parents and hoping that I made a good impression on them. Sophie jokes that I could take them home with me if I like them so much, I inform her that I can't do that as I find the suggestion funny and ridiculous. Sophie then brings up the subject of Halloween, a day that I find scary. It is a very scary holiday for me (Oscar), and I treated it as such. I tell her so and she is surprised that I never go trick or treating. She then begins to try to sell me on the idea of Halloween and how "Complete strangers shower you with tons of candy. And for one day out of the year, you can be whoever you want to be. Nobody knows who you are." This speech really makes a great impression on me and changes my mind, as well as the fact that I really want to join Sophie in what she enjoys since she is my best friend. So, even though I may have some small reservations about this holiday, I am sold. I then make the decision to go trick or treating with her and I tell her. When Sophie gave her moving speech about Halloween, I was captivated by her passion and I could feel myself wanting to be a part of it. I treated the moment that I was making the decision to join her as if I overcoming the fear of heights and deciding to jump out of a plane with her. A rush of excitement came over me, and I high fived her with both hands (even though it was not in the script and the director did not tell us to do it.) We kept it as part of the scene and did it that way for every take. Right after the high five between us, Angie comes in and asks us "Who's up for some party games?" At this moment,

I was so excited and up for anything so I thrust my hand into the air and volunteered. This gesture is written in the script, but seemed to feel even more right after the rush of the last moment. It seemed to build nicely for me. Oscar would have volunteered anyway, but with the added excitement of the previous moment, it definitely added to the enthusiasm of the act of volunteering. This was a fun shoot and I enjoyed finding these moments of the scene of wanting to please, fear, overcoming the fear, and then excitement and joy of taking a chance with a friend.

12/06/08

(Scene 88) The scene shot tonight was a scene where I am questioning who and what I am at this point in my life as I watch a fire burn in the fire pit. I have just been beaten up by Sophie's father who found me and her camping together, unbeknownst to him. I have gone against his wishes (Sophie and I ceasing to be a part of each other's lives.) In the scene I am talking to my father, Luis. I am trying to adjust to the huge change in my life (suddenly not being mentally challenged.) I recognize the irony that when I was mentally challenged, everything seemed so simple to understand and clear, but now that I am no longer "challenged", I seemed to have more trouble now making sense of everything. Now, I am truly challenged. Oscar feels lost and doesn't feel "normal" like society might now label him. I feel as if I have lost the last ten years of my life in a way and lost the only friend I have. I feel like I screwed up Sophie's life in addition to my life being screwed up. After I explain all this to my father, he says "You were just following your heart, son. There's no shame in that." This does no good and does nothing to ease my pain and confusion. I reply, "Look where it got me." I then grab a bucket of water and extinguish the fire, which is a symbol of Sophie and my friendship. As we filmed the scene, I was overwhelmed with the feeling of loneliness. I felt lost and confused. Frustration took over

for a few seconds when I said “I don’t know who I am or who the hell I’m supposed to be.” This happened on a few takes, but then on other takes there was just a sense of loss or mourning. The director liked the takes we did at the beginning that were filled with deep frustration and mourning, but he wanted a “toned down” version as it may have been too much for the tone of the film. I kept all of these emotions as part of my struggle to understand the circumstances, but I kept it more inside and just tried to say the lines without falling apart. I think a couple of those takes felt really good, as I felt as though I was protecting my father from the true wrath of my pain in addition to communicating my predicament to him. I have no idea how this will come across in the context of the movie, but I do know that I was sincerely playing the truth of the moment.

12/07/08

(Scene 4) One of the scenes we shot today was the first time Oscar is seen off by his father for the day at the front door of their house. It is a simple shot and really Oscar is just excited to start a new day of taking pictures. His father, who he loves, wipes the crumbs off of his face and says goodbye to him and Oscar says goodbye back to him, and we wave to each other. No sound was recorded and I think we only did about four, or so, shots of this. I felt good about these shots because it is a simple scene and I could really make sure my externals were strong and solid, since I really had to do was be excited, happy and eager to start a new day of picture taking. I was tackling the day with joy.

(Scene 67) This was a short scene with no dialogue. Originally it was supposed to be after Sophie has confronted him about not contacting her after his miraculous recovery. Oscar is perusing photos on the wall of himself when he was mentally challenged. We changed the scene

to Oscar sweeping the floor in his room and discovering some old pictures of both mentally challenged Oscar and pre-mentally challenged Oscar with friends. He has fond memories of the pictures, but there is one picture of him and his best friend Reuben, and girlfriend Lisa from before the car crash. As he looks at the picture he remembers back to right after the accident and how they stopped wanting to be around him. I don't want to do the same thing to Sophie. I don't want to abandon her. I went through all of this in my mind about how they treated me after the accident and how I would be doing the same thing to Sophie now, after the recovery. We only did a couple of shots of this, since it was such a simple shot.

(Scene 64) This scene was a difficult one to shoot. It wasn't because of anything technical or the other actor, but it was just the nature of the scene. This is the scene when Brett comes over to meet Oscar for the first time after his recovery to confront him about ceasing any relationship with his daughter. It is a very uncomfortable situation for Brett and Oscar. Both people want to do what is best for everyone involved. Brett wants what's best for his daughter and so does Oscar but this involves severing a close relationship they have had for a year. Brett, even though he cared for Oscar, sees him now as a different person. Oscar has had a relationship, not only with Sophie, but with her whole family, which adds to the stress of the situation. He wants what's best but also doesn't feel like his relationship is inappropriate. He also feels that he must respect the wishes of Brett as he understands how people may see their relationship now. Oscar first asks where Sophie is, since it is odd that Brett would be there by himself. Oscar asks what brings him there. At first, Brett comes in and addresses the change in Oscar and congratulates him. This sets me at ease since I think this must be the reason he is at my house. Then Brett goes right into saying he doesn't want Oscar hanging around his daughter anymore because he doesn't think it's appropriate. It kills Oscar that Brett has asked this of him, but he is

powerless. I tried to contain myself and not break down as Brett was telling me this within the scene as Brett was keeping the whole conversation on somewhat of a matter-of-fact wave length so I was trying to contain myself until he left. After he finishes and leaves, I let my emotions come through because I am by myself and can no longer contain them. Not only what has happened, but the way it has happened in this matter of fact way, has stunned me and caught me off guard. Once again the director liked the way I did it but wanted to do a couple more shots that did not have my character unleashing his pain and surprise as much. He wanted a more “toned down” take. So I did a couple of takes for him where these struggles were more internal and hidden from Luis.

12/13/08

(Scene 59) We shot this scene at a training center for medical professionals. The scene takes place after Oscar has recovered from his 10 year mental challenge. He is at Doctor Morten’s office having just had many tests run on him to see how this could have happened. Oscar is nervous and wants some sort of concrete medical explanation for what has happened so that he can be confident he won’t lapse back into being mentally challenged or something potentially much worse. I (Oscar) figure if my mind could slip into these different states, then why would today or tomorrow be any different. I am not as excited, as the doctor or my father seem to be. I am concerned and searching for explanations. Dr. Morten, after consults and going over many tests just tells me “It’s a miracle.” This does not satiate my desire to know how and why this is happening. I explain to him that I wanted a more technical answer and he cannot give me one. I ask how it’s possible for this to happen, still pushing for answers. Doctor Morten says that before seeing me he would have said it isn’t possible, but then he kind of makes an attempt of explaining when he explains that “the medical world is littered with stories of patients

overcoming the impossible.” Then he tries to lighten up the conversation by saying, “Just watch an episode of 20/20 some time.” Then he and my father Luis get off topic on a discussion of television and I have to interrupt and get their attention. I then get to the point of why I am pushing for answers from the doctor as I say, “Look, Doc. Should I be worried at this point? I mean, is there a chance Ill wake up one day and be slow again? Or worse yet, something else entirely?” I am laying my concerns out directly at this point, looking for any kind of reassurance. The doctor picks up on this and says he doesn’t think that will happen. I express my frustration and then Doctor Morton tells me to “...be thankful.” and that I should just “Enjoy the miracle.” Then both the doctor and Luis begin laughing and praising Jesus and yelling out “Hallelujah!” I found this completely inappropriate given the circumstances so I give Luis a dirty look as if to say, “Will you stop; this is serious business!” Of course we did a few takes for each person’s close ups. Aside from a couple of line slips here and there, which is just the nature of not having any rehearsal time, I thought the intention and investment were there for this scene’s shoot. I had a lot of fun doing this scene, not only because of the great location, but because I got to do a scene with two local actors I have a lot of respect for. Brian the director seemed to like what I did.

(Scene 68) The scene we shot this evening is a flashback scene in the script. It happens as Oscar is looking through the pictures he finds under his bed as he is sweeping. The picture of him, his girlfriend Lisa and his best friend Reuben makes him think of when this happened a few months after the car accident. The scene begins with Oscar at the door of Reuben’s house holding a new jigsaw puzzle he was excited to bring over so Rueben could help him put it together. (In the original script it is Chinese checkers, but a jigsaw puzzle made more sense for the movie because it could be a metaphor of Oscar’s life.) Oscar is about to knock on the door as

Lisa opens it. She looks surprised to see me. I am excited to see both of them and show them my jigsaw puzzle. Reuben reminds me that they were going out, and I explain that I wore my good shoes for the occasion. Lisa reminds me that I can't go with them and that I should know this. I say "I know", even though I was hoping they would want to hang out with me since I had shown up. I was hoping that even if they didn't want me to go out with them they would just put together the puzzle with me. Lisa then suggests I just go home. I try to keep my chin up and stay positive about the situation rationalizing that maybe it's a onetime thing even though I know it's probably not. I say "Okay. Maybe I'll play with my Dad. My Dad's good at puzzles." They leave, and as they are getting in the car and I am clinging to my puzzle like it will keep me afloat and save me from drowning. Right before Reuben steps into the car he says, "Maybe next time." I know this is not true and I am left alone to walk back home by myself. I was hurt by what they did, but some part of me still wanted to believe that maybe one day they would want to hang out with me or wouldn't be embarrassed of me. This was a very sad and uncomfortable scene to shoot for me. There weren't very many lines so there wasn't a problem with messing them up. We just shot everyone's angles a couple of times and that was it. I felt very good about my performance. What is so sad to me about this scene is Oscar keeps hope when he knows deep down there is none. I think it says something about Oscar's spirit and how optimistic and hopeful he is in his childlike state. It's like a child who hasn't lived long enough to become jaded from life's disappointments.

12/14/08

(Scene 24) We did a reshoot of the dinner scene with Sophie and her family tonight to get more angles. This is the scene where I have just met them and I am really excited and want to make a good impression. The scene starts off and I am a little nervous and not really wanting to

eat the food in front of me but acting like I'm about to dig in. At this time Sophie is playing with her food and is scolded by her mother, Angie. Sophie answers back to her mother by putting her fingers in her nose and saying, "This message approved by the Snot-Meister General." I find this very funny and let Sophie know and prove that I get the joke by laughing and repeating "Snot-Meister General." Then Brett asks me to tell them about myself. I really want to impress them so I try and be as thorough as I can possibly be to impart as much about myself and inform them with all of the information about myself I can think of. I am very eager and get carried away to where I couldn't hear Brett when he tried to interrupt me at first to clarify what he meant. When he asks what I like to do, I start to tell him that I love to take pictures, but I get excited about it and repeat love twice with more passion the second time. I love to take pictures and am proud of it. Sophie chimes in, "He does this really cool thing where he draws on top of them." And when Angie asks why I do that, as best friends often do, we answered at the same time, "to make them right." I emphasize that Sophie is better at it because I want Sophie to look good too. She is my best friend after all. Sophie and I share a unique bonding ritual that goes beyond the simple high five. It's called the Animal Dap in the script. We act like we are going to give a high five but then right as we are about to do it, we form our hands into the particular animal and shout the name of that animal. After I give Sophie the compliment, we do the Turkey Dap. When we do this I think it is quite funny we just did it in front of her parents and I laugh. Angie notices I am still pushing around my food and not eating it. She points this out, and as politely as I can, I ask if they have any Kooky Puffs. I then take out my spoon and say "I brought my spoon" as if to be of help and to say, "Don't worry I won't have to dirty any of your silverware." After explaining that they don't have any, Brett asks her to go and get some for me. I feel a little uncomfortable about this, but when he asks her to do it means that he has really warmed up to me. Plus I'm

happy I get to have my Kooky Puffs. We shot this scene from many angles for everyone's close-ups and for some medium and wide beginning shots. We only rehearsed this scene a couple of times before we shot it, and aside from a couple of line flubs, here and there, I think I definitely achieved what I needed to in the scene. Since we had shot it before, it didn't take very long for us to get the flow of it. My objective was to win over the parents and I kept that the entire time. I definitely accomplished this in the scene.

12/23/08

(Scene 66) Today we shot the scene when Sophie comes to Oscar's house after days of him avoiding her. This was a reshoot scene because the lighting was horrible for the last time we shot this. Sophie comes over and she is angry. She tries to find out why, if we are best friends, I haven't contacted her after the most important day in my life. She is hurt and I know this. I've been avoiding Sophie, at first, because I was afraid of how she would react to me being more "grown-up" even though at that point I did intend to see her. But then after Brett paid me a visit telling not to see her, I couldn't and didn't see her. And I didn't answer the phone when she called or answer the door when she knocked. Sophie shows up and catches me off guard as I am taking out the trash and this is where the scene begins. I am just putting the trash in the bin as she gets off her bike. I see her and immediately acknowledge her and try to act as if everything is ok. She halts me and explains how she thought we were friends and on the biggest day of my life, I didn't call her. I try to calm her and explain my situation so she will understand. I don't tell her about what her father said to me though, because I do not want her to turn against her father or hate him, because I do think he's a good man. I tell her how busy it's been. Then I apologize and say that I should have called. I explain how I wasn't sure about how she might react to this dramatic change. I get her to admit the dramatic change so she will understand my point of view

more. She touches my face and studies me and observes the change. As she is doing this I notice a couple of people walking down the street who notice us. I feel they are looking at me with judgmental eyes. What Brett had said to me about me and Sophie's relationship being inappropriate is brought to my mind because of this. I suddenly feel uncomfortable about being there with her. I explain that I'm not the same Oscar that I was before. Then I ask her "What do you think people would feel about us hanging out now?" since I know I feel uncomfortable. I want her to see that. She doesn't see it and says it didn't bother us before so it shouldn't bother us now. I say that I was different then. She asks if we have fun together and then says, "Don't tell me you can't have fun." I want to tell her now about what her father said, but I know I cannot. I just say vaguely, "There's more to it than that." Then she brings up the art we were working on together for the art festival and explains that she needs me. Meekly and in an apologetic way I say that I can't help her with that anymore. Sophie becomes enraged and says that friends are "supposed to stick together, no matter what." I apologize once again as she begins to ride off. I try to get her attention but then stop because I know I cannot make it right and she is too angry. As she rides off I am left feeling hollow, like I have turned my back on and let down a true friend. I thought that this shoot went fairly well and the director seemed to like everything I did. Aside from having to wait for neighborhood noise, I thought it went well. Since we had some time for rehearsal to get our lines down the filming went quite well. It also helped we had basically a rehearsal for it from the last time we shot it.

1/17/09

Today was a very fun day. The scenes we shot are not in the script. The director knew he wanted some footage of Sophie and Oscar hanging out and doing fun things. First we shot Oscar as mentally challenged doing a B movie style alien sci-fi spoof movie with their video camera.

We had to act like we were having a picnic dressed in fifties style clothes. Then a spaceship lands and Oscar runs off scared and Sophie is left there frightened. To meet the alien who gets off the spaceship, which is Oscar, dressed up as an alien. As the Oscar approaches the camera to simulate the alien approaching Sophie, he knocks the camera over and Sophie gives him a disappointed look. Oscar is having fun and laughs when the camera falls and then looks at Sophie and sees that she is not laughing and immediately snaps out of it. He realizes he shouldn't be laughing, takes a cue from Sophie and pretends like he wasn't really laughing. This scene went so well and was so funny. There is no sound or dialogue on this scene. This scene is all about Sophie and Oscar having fun pretending. They are escaping together into their imagination.

The next scene we shot today was another spoof shot by Oscar and Sophie. This one was a medical drama style. This also is not in the script as of right now and is supposed to be after Oscar's recovery, so he is not mentally handicapped. It is going to be part of a non-typical montage sequence of events that occur when Oscar and Sophie are hanging out behind Sophie's parents back. This scene was fun too since it is in the same vein as the previous one shot. The only difference is that Oscar is not mentally challenged. They are once again escaping together. In this scene, Oscar is walking in a sort of happy, cool and dance fashion and then stops abruptly. Oscar acts as if he is having pain in his arm and chest and says, "I think I'm having....a heart attack!!" He falls down and Sophie runs up dressed as a doctor and tells everyone to stay calm. She says, "I hope I don't kill this one...I should have finished medical school." I had so much fun with this scene as well as it wasn't that difficult and the scene was about having fun and escaping. The director liked what I did for both scenes today.

1/24/09

(Scene 15) Today we shot the scene when it is the second day after Oscar met Sophie. They are at the park and just hanging out. Oscar is looking through his camera as Sophie Paints his pictures. He notices someone walking with their hands in their pockets. He begins to tell Sophie about how his dad says you should never walk around with your hands in your pockets. He explains that it is because one time he was walking down some stairs with his hands in his pockets and fell and couldn't get his hands out in time which resulted in him falling on his head. He explains to Sophie that his dad is very smart and he is the greatest. He tells her she should meet him some time. She agrees. And that's the end of the scene. I am bonding with Sophie and want to bond further with her by bringing her to see my father, who I am proud of. This scene went well. It wasn't difficult to do these lines as this story about the father and the stairs is directly from my life. This is how it got in this scene. I felt this shoot went quite well with minimal rehearsals.

1/25/09

(Scene 69) Today's scene takes place after Sophie has confronted Oscar about not contacting her after his recovery. He has just come from looking at pictures of his friends who abandoned him in the past. He intends to continue to be friends with Sophie despite what her father or anyone else thinks, because he doesn't want to be the kind of person who abandons their friends like his friends did to him. This scene was a little more difficult to shoot, as this whole week has been none stop for me and I haven't had time to sit and go over lines beforehand. I learned these lines right before we shot and did a couple of line-throughs with Taylor (Sophie). We did more than the usual amount of takes for this scene, since many of them

acted as rehearsals for us. In this scene I explain to Sophie how my friends abandoned me after the accident. I explained how when I met her she didn't care that I was slow or talked funny or anything and that "I would be an idiot" to toss someone like her aside. I thank Sophie for being there for me. Sophie is happy I still want to be friends, and I tell her it might be better if we didn't tell her parents because I wasn't sure how they'd feel. I do not tell her about what her father did because I do not want her to hate him or for her to confront him and have it come back to me in a negative way. She agrees to not tell and says, "I'm all about the sneakiness" and we both laugh. After the initial hump of getting the scene and lines down, everything else seemed to fit into place for me. I feel I accomplished in the scene what needed to be accomplished. It was very cold and humid which was a little distracting at times. I am worried that because of this, my performance was slightly stiff. I was shivering between takes and my teeth were chattering, but I could not allow my body to do that as the camera was rolling, which may have caused my body to stiffen up slightly. I was conscious of trying to not let this get to me. I hope that it does not come across in the final cut. This was probably the most difficult shoot so far for me. The combination of not being as prepared and fighting the weather conditions effect on my body made this scene so difficult.

(Scene 37) We shot this next scene in the evening. It is Oscar and Sophie's trick or treating scene. We had a lot of kids for this scene out at City Park and it was cold. I trusted that the crew, director and parents had everything under control. I just concentrated on what I had to do as Oscar. It was very cold, but since I was dressed as a big penguin I was able to wear layers of clothes and a jacket underneath. The scene begins as Sophie and Oscar are walking down the street with our Halloween buckets filled with candy. The neighborhood has many kids with their parents trick or treating around us. Oscar is excited about how much candy he has gotten and

tells Sophie she was right about how much candy he would get. As he is telling her about all of his candy, she turns away and puts in some scary teeth in her mouth and turns around and scares Oscar with them. Oscar gets scared and then begins to laugh at how scared he got. He then pushes Sophie as if in friendly retaliation to her scaring him and tells her that she really got him good. She pushes him back and as they are both laughing, some kids throw eggs at her and begin laughing at her. As Sophie is in her escape mode and they are laughing at her, Oscar has a rage build up inside him. He is very upset at what they have done to his best friend. Filled with rage he lets out a war cry and takes off after them. They scatter and one girl falls to the ground and begs him not to hurt her as he lumbers to a stop, huffing and puffing, exhausted from the run. Oscar sees a piece of candy next to her and reaches out to pick it up and the girl pulls back thinking he is going to grab her. Oscar picks up the candy and begins to unwrap it. As he does this, the girl sees her chance to escape and she runs away as Oscar munches down on the candy. Sophie joins up with him and says, "Whoa. That was intense. Are you okay?" Oscar responds as if to let her know he's okay, but he had to teach those kids a lesson. The line is "Eggs are for eating, not for throwing." Sophie jokes off the egg on her saying they don't wear well and Oscar, having had enough excitement out for the evening, asks Sophie, "Can we go home and eat our candy now, Sophie?" Sophie says, "Yes" and as someone dressed as the character Cousin It passes in front of her, she says, "Would somebody get this walking carpet out of my way?" I love this great Star Wars reference button for the end of this scene. I was very prepared for this scene and for the shooting of the scene and I feel it went great. I cannot wait to see how it turns out. From the first take I had full investment in the moment and the character and neither the lines or the weather or anything hindered me from being completely in the moment. It was one of those times when I felt I was "in the zone" of the moment and character. The director loved what

I did. I also added the pushing between Sophie and Oscar after she scared him, because I felt Oscar would want to give her some friendly payback. I think it works well with having the egg thrown at her when she is laughing and engaged with Oscar. You see her character taken down even further which gives Oscar even more incentive to explode as he does.

1/31/09

(Scene 14) Today we shot the scene that happens on the second day after Oscar and Sophie meet. She had called him and told him to meet her at her school the next day. I am so excited about meeting her that I go to her school very early and wait for hours on the front steps of her school. We did a few shots of me taking pictures by the steps, shooing bugs away, sleeping and talking to someone on the steps while waiting for Sophie to get out of school. The scene starts as school lets out and all the kids come walking down the steps by me as I sleep on the steps. Sophie is one of the last kids out and she calls my name. This startles me and I wake up. She sits down next to me and begins to tell me about how she hates school and what a horrible day she has had. I am completely enthralled by her story of how she slipped in the bathroom and accidentally busted in on one of the teachers using the toilet. I found this part of the story humorous and laughed. Some kids come by and call Sophie a weirdo as they tell her to get out of their way. I take notice of this and am a little upset. When Sophie asks how my day was. I get excited because I remember I took photos this morning and I was waiting for her to get out of school so she could draw on them. I am very excited when she says she can do that. Sophie then suggests we leave and I happily follow behind her. We did many takes of this because we had no rehearsal, so once again shooting the scene served as rehearsal. I felt ok about this scene, but I felt that since we had a lot of children extras, Taylor was holding back some which I had to fight against. I found myself pushing further with excitement and struggling to be interested in what

she was saying, especially at first since the lines were not completely there for her. I didn't have many lines in this scene at all so the lines were not a problem for me. I think in the end I accomplished what I needed to in this scene with being excited to see her, being sympathetic to her story and then getting her to work on my pictures for me. Our characters just met the day before and we are already depending on each other as friends.

2/8/09

(Scene 5) The first scene we shot was a very short one set on the first day of the movie. I have just been sent off happily by my father so that I can go off and take photos. This shot takes place at Washington Artillery Park across from Jackson Square and the St. Louis Cathedral in the French Quarter. I approach the railing and see the beautiful St. Louis Cathedral and Jackson Square and look at the man next to me taking pictures of it. I look back at the Cathedral and wonder what all of the rave is about it, as I see wonder in the smaller and less grand things in life. I look away and my attention is grabbed by a crushed can on the ground. I am inspired and pull the camera up to my face and take an instant picture of it. I am so happy I found this little wonder. This is all the scene was, and we only did a couple of takes. There was no dialogue. We couldn't have picked a more beautiful day to shoot at this location.

(Scene 73) The next scene we shot today was one with Sophie and takes place after she and Oscar decide to sneak around together behind her parents back to hang out. This is after Oscar's recovery. Previous to this scene I had sent Sophie a text message on her phone to meet me at Jackson Square after school. As I am leaned up against the railing in Artillery Park, she comes up next to me in a man's hat, trench coat and sun glasses. I am slightly startled when she comes up next to me and then immediately I realize it's her and laugh when I see how she's

dressed. She grabs me and we run off together and run all the way up to the statue of Jackson to get a closer view and hang out in the park. This only took a couple of takes as it was pretty simple and there was no dialogue.

(Scene 95) This was the last scene we shot and was also a simple one. This scene takes place a few weeks after Sophie's father has beaten Oscar up when he caught them hanging out together. This was a simple scene of a melancholy Oscar at the same spot in Artillery Park and taking a picture of the St. Louis Cathedral. After I take the picture, I go sit on the same bench I sat before when I was mentally challenged and look at my pictures I have taken for the day. I am not jazzed at all by what I see because I am sad that Sophie is not with me. It's just not the same anymore for me to take these pictures. It was something she helped me with. I am disappointed in the pictures, so I get up and walk to the trash can and throw them away. All they do is remind me that Sophie is missing in my life. This only took a couple of shots to do, again since it was such a simple shot, and there was no dialogue. For this whole day, we had great weather on our side and no audio to worry about. It was also incredible since we were allowed to tape off the platform at the top of Artillery Park so we could film from eight in the morning until one in the afternoon. What a great day.

2/22/09

Today we shot another scene that is not in the script. It is a short scene of Oscar and Sophie flying a kite on the levee after they've agreed to hang out against Sophie's parent's wishes. In this scene, a jogger passes and comments about how cute Sophie is to Oscar, referring to her as his daughter. This makes Oscar very uncomfortable. This shoot was so much fun, because there were no lines and we were given the task of flying a kite. All of the lines were

improved involving Oscar teaching Sophie how to fly the kite. This seemed to make all of the scene just flow naturally. Since our energy was on the kite, the moment that the jogger comes up happened very naturally. She came up beside me, surprised me and I reacted accordingly. Its great how sometimes if an actor has a task to handle or an obstacle to overcome as the scene is happening, their reactions to what is happening just unfold. We weren't anticipating anything. We were reacting. This was the purest example of this experience so far in this process.

3/01/09

(Scene 6) Before we shot the actual main part of the scene, we did some shots of Oscar taking pictures in the park of things that Oscar finds interesting, like some broken glasses on the ground or a smashed cup floating in the pond. This part of the shoot went well. When the other actors showed up we began to shoot scene six. This is the scene when Oscar first meets Sophie. He saves her from a couple of bullies that are making fun of her and destroying her art work. She is upset and Oscar cheers her up. I had to help rehearse the kids for the beginning of the scene which, of course, took away from my preparation. The beginning of this scene is a conversation between the two bully boys and Sophie. It was about 45 degrees that day and everyone was shivering and very cold. After we shot their part of the scene we ended up running behind about 2 hours, and began experiencing long shadows in the shots. Also, I began to be violently ill. I think part of the reason is, half of the time when I was filming my portion of the scene, I had to wear short sleeves, and so I spent hours shivering in the cold. We did not finish this scene today. The parts I did act in were a tremendous struggle. The whole day I just tried not to shiver whenever I was in a shot. The shoot ended and I was too sick to even help pick up everything to load the trailer. I slept in the car and spent the next day in bed running a fever of 101.3 degrees.

3/07/09

(Scene 103) This is the last scene in the movie and our last big location shoot. We shot it at a gallery on St. Roch Street in New Orleans. We got there in the early afternoon to set the gallery up having to take down artwork we could not show and replace it with art work that we had permission to use for the movie. We had the extras arrive for 6pm and began filming at 6:30 pm. We set up for the part of the scene when Sophie's parents meet me and Sophie comments on how much I've changed and how great I look. This part was so easy to film. It was short and we all knew our lines coming into it. In this part Angie, along with her husband, thank me for putting the painting Sophie and I worked on together into the festival. I knew I could not be completely comfortable with this, since the last contact I had with them was when Brett beat me up in my back yard for hanging out with Sophie. With these given circumstances, I was a little tentative talking to them. But when they both thanked me, I saw they both truly meant it and it felt as if the hatchet was being buried. I nervously and graciously accepted their thanks and then Sophie sees me, runs up and hugs me, then tells me she misses me. I feel weird about saying anything in front of her parents, but I still tell her I miss her. I also go to hug her but I don't give her a full embrace because we are in front of her parents and I don't want to give them the wrong impression. She then pulls me away from them and whisks me away to see the painting, since I haven't seen it hanging yet. When we get to the picture, Sophie comments on how it is different now, which to me is a comment about our friendship. I tell her about the job I have now, which I don't like. It comes out in my line reading that I don't like the job. At this point, the girl Samantha walks up and compliments my painting. Sophie then asks if I can join all of them for dinner. Even though I know the hatchet has been buried I realize it's probably not a good idea to join them. Doing the festival with the painting was my way of making up with the family, but I

know I can't really have a friendship with them like before. I also know Sophie will be ok. I just witnessed the beginning of a friendship between her and Samantha. I decline the offer of joining them by saying I've already eaten, even though I hadn't. I encourage them to go have fun, and they leave. Before they do I get the idea to take their picture for them to commemorate the moment. I take the picture and offer it to Sophie and she declines, saying she'll get it from me the next time she sees me. In her mind this will ensure that we will see each other again. I see them off then I go back to the picture to contemplate what has happened realizing that I probably won't see her again. As I am looking at the painting, Luis, my father arrives and tells me he "wasn't about to miss my son's first art showing." I then realize that I lost one relationship in my life, and I needed to nurture the other relationship. So, I thank him for taking care of me all those years and I take him up on the offer he had made a couple of weeks ago to have a celebratory dinner. We happily walk off together joking and enjoying each other's company. This shoot was rushed, but everyone knew their part and it went rather smoothly considering we had about 27 extras we were handling at the same time and one of the owners of the art gallery had had way too much to drink and kept walking into the shots as we were filming. So, consequently he may make it into the movie. We asked him after if that was ok and he said it was. I felt pretty good about this scene, although, at the point when Sophie asks me to go to dinner, there are no close ups of me, because we were rushed and there are a couple of moments, I believe that could use close ups on me to make the scene more effective. Brian says he should be able to make it work. I felt, I played each moment true to the circumstances. I feel with this scene I redefined Sophie's and my relationship for us and her parents. I also felt how uncomfortable it was when Oscar is approached by Brett and Angie for the first time since the beating. It felt very appropriate, just rushed. I hope the rushed feeling I had did not come across in my performance.

3/08/09

(Scene 6) Today we shot the scene when Sophie and Oscar first meet. This is the scene we attempted to start last week when I became very sick. Filming this scene was difficult because I really did not feel like Taylor wanted to be there. I think she was just exhausted from filming for the past two days. We began the scene right as I see that Sophie has been pushed off of the bench by the bullies. I come to her rescue and the bullies run off. Once I see she is ok, I take her picture to commemorate the moment. This is a great scene because we are connected by me coming to her rescue and seeing she is upset I try to cheer her up. I think once we started getting into the fun of what the scene is about, Taylor started to loosen up and have fun with what we were doing which made my job a lot easier. I discover she is an artist and she discovers I love to take pictures, but I am not satisfied with how they look and try to “make them right” by coloring on them. It is not how I see the world. She tries to look at my picture before I try to make it right and I won’t let her look at it. Then she asks to take a shot at making it right and I reluctantly hand the picture over to her. I adlibbed the line, “You could try Sophie, but it’s very hard to make it right.” Then I started to try to peek at what she was doing just as she did to me, which wasn’t in the script but felt right, and Brian really liked it. It was a cute moment. Taylor and I were having fun creating this scene together. In this scene we see how good Sophie and Oscar are for each other and complement one other. I think you are supposed to see in this scene that Sophie and Oscar share the same outlook on things and I think we portrayed this well during the shoot. Both are alienated and found a quick connection with each other though this and the expression of their perspective through their art. I think once we got going working on this scene, we found this easy to do and did a great job representing this fast connection.

3/28/09

(Scene 81, 83, and 85) The scene we shot today is when the recovered Oscar is camping in his backyard with Sophie against her father's wishes. Her father, Brett, has just found out where they are and is on his way to come get her. We shot different angles of Sophie and me as I am telling a ghost story trying to scare her. Little do we know the true scare is coming soon. This shoot went well and all of my reads went pretty well, but especially the one when the camera was on me. I really got into telling the story and, as per the directors request, ended up adding in some sound effects with my mouth of the metal claw scratching and the door creaking in the story. The next thing we shot was when Brett finds us in the tent. He immediately unzips the tent, scares us, pulls her out, yells, "You son of a bitch!", and starts beating me in the face. This was fun to shoot because I got to put fake blood on my face and snap my head back while he made the motions of punching me. After he finishes beating on me, I imagine myself floating in space. To create this effect put a blank screen behind me so it would be easy to crop me out of the shot and put me in space using computer generated graphics. While I am lying there on top of the destroyed tent with blood on my face, I have a smile and am in a haze. I see a tiny planet and lift my hand up and touch it, pushing it away, and smile at how powerful I am in the universe. I can't wait to see what Brian does with this shot of Oscar in space. This was a fun shoot.

Scored Script

My friend, Oscar.

by
Brian Kaz
& Blake Balu

Story by Brian Kaz

Production Draft 11/05/08

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BEAT 1

Objective: to embrace the day

Actions:

1. to awake

2. to lean

3. to alert

1

4. to inform

5. to slide on

6. to walk

7. to dress

FADE IN:

INT. OSCAR'S ROOM -- MORNING

We creep toward a MAN in bed, sleeping with his butt propped in the air like a 5 year old. The image looks like the colorful scribbles of a child...

LUIS

"Our truest life is when we are in dreams, awake".

The EFFECT becomes REALITY when--

LUIS (CONT'D)

Awake, my Boy!

The window shade is drawn, blasting sunshine at OSCAR(35), a sweet and unassuming chap. He stirs, annoyed.¹

ANGLE ON -- LUIS(62)

weathered and unkempt, staring fondly out the window.

LUIS (CONT'D)

Breakfast in ten minutes.

Luis exits. Oscar leans forward.² A POLAROID CAMERA is attached to his wrist.

OSCAR

Okay.³ I'm awake now.⁴

His speech is slurred and child-like. It's now apparent he's MENTALLY HANDICAPPED.

He slides on a pair of funny-looking glasses⁵ and we see a SCAR near his temple healed many years ago.

Oscar heads for the closet,⁶ passing a wall littered with DOZENS of Polaroids. Each one has been SCRIBBLED over with COLORED MARKERS.

Oscar dresses and ties his shoes on with utmost concentration.⁷

CUT TO:

BEAT 1. Actions (cont.)

8. to brush 12. to capture
9. to jet 13. to scoff
10. to devour 14. to improve
11. to vacate 15. to save

2.

2 INT. BATHROOM, OSCAR'S HOUSE

Oscar brushes his teeth, making a big mess.⁸ He haphazardly drops his toothbrush, missing the holder by a mile.⁹ It bounces into the sink.

CUT TO:

3 INT. KITCHEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE

Oscar eats breakfast with Luis. Luis is having eggs. Oscar chows down on a HAMBURGER.¹⁰

CUT TO:

4 EXT. OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

Luis hangs a bottle of water around Oscar's neck, then wipes his face before seeing him off.¹¹

CUT TO:

5 EXT. JACKSON SQUARE -- LATER

A row of TOURISTS are taking pictures of the St. Louis Cathedral. Oscar is there too, aiming his camera at his FEET

Oscar's POV - His feet are steeped in the PAINTERLY, KALEIDOSCOPE COLOR of our opening scene. SNAP!¹²

The photo develops. He scoffs at its blandness¹³ and pulls out a pack of COLORED MARKERS, then begins SCRIBBLING on top of it.¹⁴

CUT TO:

6 EXT. PARK -- LATER

WE FOLLOW as Oscar captures seemingly mundane subjects on film: An old FRISBEE, a crushed SODA CAN, a DOG'S WAGGING TAIL...¹⁵

Each time, he scribbles his markers over the photo.

ANGLE ON -- SOPHIE(11)

on a graffiti tagged bench painting a STATUE. Sweet but strange, Sophie's a standard issue awkward pre-teen, sporting clothes that are a starving artist brand of chic.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 1. Actions (cont.)

- 16. to notice
- 17. to admire
- 18. to nab

3.

6 CONTINUED:

Her POV - of the statue. Oscar comes into frame, blocking her view. She pauses and stares at him. Oscar notices.¹⁶

LONG BEAT - as they lock into a curiosity stare-down, sizing each other up like dueling gunslingers.¹⁷

Oscar takes her picture.¹⁸ Sophie returns fire with a quick dab of her brush on the canvas.

They hold their look as a group of kid HOODLUMS approach Sophie.

HOODLUM #1

Well if it isn't Little Orphan Sophie.

SOPHIE

I have parents.

HOODLUM #1

You don't have parents. You have rentals. Now get up. This is my bench, loser.

Sophie looks down to the GRAFITTI on the bench.

SOPHIE

I'm sorry. I wasn't aware you were...

(reading)

"Ass Cheez".

HOODLUM #1

You think you're funny, huh?
"Labrador" Dali!

They laugh. Sophie suddenly BARKS LIKE A DOG.

HOODLUM #1 (CONT'D)

(getting in her face)

See, Dude! I told you this chick was nuts!

BEAT 2.

Objective:
to save Sophie

Actions:

1. to Command

OSCAR calls out.

OSCAR

Leave her alone, you two!¹

HOODLUM #1 turns. He doesn't know what to make of Oscar.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 2. Actions (cont.)
2. to lumber 4. to verify
3. to introduce

4.

6 CONTINUED: (2)

HOODLUM #1
(to Sophie)
Who's that? Your boyfriend?

SOPHIE
Yeah.
(re: Hood #2)
Is he YOURS? Perhaps we should
double date.

HOODLUM #1
Freak.

#1 PUSHES Sophie to the ground and they run off. Oscar
lumbers to her.²

OSCAR
Oscar Austiego!³

SOPHIE
(confused)
Huh?

OSCAR
Are you okay?⁴

SOPHIE
Oh. Yeah. Super.

BEAT 3.
Objective:
To connect with
Sophie
Actions:
1. to appreciate
2. to question
3. to confirm

Sophie extends her hand to Oscar. But he doesn't help her up
and instead, takes her picture.¹

She sits in a huff with her ruined painting.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
(high pitched voice)
Another fine birthday, Sophie!
(then, normal)
You can say that again, Cookiepuss.

OSCAR
Who is Cookiepuss?²

SOPHIE
Nobody. It's just how I deal.

OSCAR
Oh.
(pause)
So, it's your Birthday today?³

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 3. Actions (cont.)

4. to inquire 6. to cheer up 8. to recognize 10. to disclose 12. to remind
5. to plop down 7. to study 9. to affirm 11. to ease 13. to reprimand

5.

6 CONTINUED: (3)

SOPHIE

Yep.

OSCAR

How old did you make? ⁴

SOPHIE

Twelve.

He plops down next to her singing-- ⁵

OSCAR

"...And you smell like one, too." ⁶

SOPHIE

Uh, thank you.

Oscar studies her dirty painting up close. ⁷ Then, an
epiphany.

OSCAR

(points to painting)

That's... ⁸

(points to statue)

That! ⁹

SOPHIE

How can you even tell now?

OSCAR

I can tell. ¹⁰

SOPHIE

Listen. Thanks for helping me with
my Ass Cheez problem.

(realizing)

You know what I mean.

OSCAR

It's okay. ¹¹

SOPHIE

What's your name?

OSCAR

I already told you. ¹² You shouldn't
make fun. ¹³

SOPHIE

No, I wasn't. I just didn't hear
you. That's all.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 3. Actions (cont.)
 14. to apologize 16. to greet 18. to improve 20. to proclaim 22. to educate 24. to warn
 15. to introduce 17. to whisk away 19. to guard 21. to hand 23. to relinquish

6 CONTINUED: (4)

6.

OSCAR
Oh... I'm sorry. ¹⁴
 (then)
Oscar Austiego. ¹⁵

SOPHIE
 I'm Sophie.

OSCAR
Hi, Sophie. ¹⁶

SOPHIE
 (re: his photo)
 That looks pretty good. Can I see
 it?

¹⁷
Oscar pulls it away and quickly scribbles on it with his
 markers. ¹⁸

OSCAR
It's not right yet. ¹⁹

SOPHIE
 What are you doing? You're gonna
 ruin it.

OSCAR ²⁰
It's not right yet!

He hands her his other photos, all scribbled on. ²¹

SOPHIE
 What am I--

OSCAR
 (pointing at them)
Tha... THAT'S right. ²²

Sophie browses through them with interest.

SOPHIE
 This is a cool idea, actually.
 (re: his new photo)
 You mind if I try?

He offers it to her reluctantly. ²³

OSCAR
It's not right. ²⁴

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 3. Actions (cont.)

25. to study 27 to give 29. to wiggle 31. to revel
26. to glory in 28. to congratulate 30. to verify 32. to reiterate

7.

6 CONTINUED: (5)

Sophie digs into her sachel filled with various art tools.
She takes out PAINT MARKERS and draws on top the photo. The
result is much more vivid than when Oscar does it.

SOPHIE

There you go.

²⁵
Oscar is mesmerized.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

You like it?

OSCAR

(laughing)

Yes I do!²⁶

She hands it to him. He gives her a photo of the Soda can.²⁷

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Happy Birthday.²⁸

SOPHIE

Thanks, Oscar.

Sophie gives him an ANIMAL DAP. [an Animal Dap is when two
people "high five" or "dap" and at the moment their hands
come together, they gesture them into the shape of an
animal.]

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Octopus.

(then)

Wiggle your fingers.

Oscar wiggles them.²⁹ They look like tentacles.

OSCAR

Octopus.³⁰ I get it!³¹

SOPHIE

Is there a reason you scribble on
all your photos?

OSCAR

(like he's explained it a
thousand times)

To make them right, Sophie!³²

SOPHIE

I don't understand. What's wrong
with them in the first place?

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 3. Actions (cont.)
 33. to take advantage 35. to explain
 34. to display 36. to clarify

8.

6 CONTINUED: (6)

Oscar takes a picture of the statue,³³ then shows it to her.³⁴

OSCAR
The picture's wrong. I don't see
this.³⁵

SOPHIE
 What do you see?

He points to HER PAINTING.³⁶

CUT TO:

BEAT 4.⁷
 Objective:
 To eat dinner

Actions:
 1. to enter
 2. to sit
 3. to greet
 4. to apologize
 5. to question
 6. to bear down
 7. to test

INT. KITCHEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

Luis is finishing dinner, still in his morning robe. Oscar
enters and sits at the table, camera in hand.²

LUIS
 Ah, there's my little Ansel Adams!

OSCAR
Hi Dad.³

LUIS
 Your timing is impeccable.

OSCAR
I'm sorry.⁴

LUIS
 No, that's good! I'm just putting
 the final touches on my famous
 "Spam a la Luis".

OSCAR
 (disappointed)
Spam? ⁵

LUIS
 Come now, Oscar. You love a good
 Spam steak.

OSCAR
Not for dinner.⁶

LUIS
 But what on earth could you
 possibly want more than this?

OSCAR
You know.⁷

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 4. Actions (cont.)
8. to affirm 10. to assist 12. to sit 14. to inform 16. to question 18. to bask in
9. to wonder 11. to beam 13. to answer 15. to satiate 17. to inform 19. to snapat

9.

7 CONTINUED:

LUIS
I do?

OSCAR
Yes.⁸

LUIS
(thinking)
Hmm...

BEAT - as Oscar is surprised Luis doesn't know.⁹

OSCAR
Koo...Kooky...¹⁰

LUIS
(smiling)
Kooky Puffs?

Luis hands a ready-made bowl of Kooky Puffs to a beaming
Oscar.¹¹ They sit.¹²

LUIS (CONT'D)
How was your day in the park?

OSCAR
Good.¹³ I have a friend now.¹⁴

LUIS
That's wonderful. What's his name?

OSCAR
Sophie.¹⁵

LUIS
He's a she?

OSCAR
I think so.¹⁶ I didn't ask.¹⁷

LUIS
What does she do?

OSCAR
She makes me happy.¹⁸

LUIS
I meant her job, silly goose. Or
is she special like you?

OSCAR
I didn't ask.¹⁹

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 4. Actions (cont.)

20. to agree 22. to commemorate 24. to express regret
21. to go along with 23. to steer away from

10.

7 CONTINUED: (2)

LUIS
Well you should invite her over.
I'd like to meet this Sophie.

OSCAR
Okay. 20

BEAT, then--

LUIS
(musing)
"In everyone's life, at some time,
our inner fire goes out. It is then
burst into flame by an encounter
with another human being."

Oscar has no idea what this means.

OSCAR
Okay. 21

BEAT - as they quietly eat.

LUIS
Listen, Oscar. Today's a
tremendous day for your Father.
Ten years suckling at the tit of
sobriety. It's quite an important
milestone.

Oscar snaps a picture of him. 22

LUIS (CONT'D)
Thank you.
(pause)
Anyway, uh, apropos to this... I
wanted to inquire if you would you
like to accompany me to my AA
meeting tonight. I'll be
delivering a stirring exhortation
at the podium.

OSCAR
I have to work on my wall. 23

LUIS
(disappointed)
Oh. Understood.

OSCAR
Sorry. 24

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED: (3)

LUIS
That's quite alright.
(then)
Perhaps we'll celebrate with some
ice cream when I get home.

BEAT 5
Objective:
to obtain Choco
chip icecream.
Actions:
1. to adore
2. to stress
3. to reaffirm
4. to answer
5. to declare
6. to glory in
7. to breakdown
8. to savor

Oscar's jaw drops. 1

LUIS (CONT'D)
I thought you'd like that.

OSCAR
(duh)
Well, yeah! 2 Ice cream! 3

LUIS
But what flavor to choose...?

OSCAR
Choco chip! 4 Choco chip! 5 Choco
chip! 6

Luis joins in the chant.

Oscar suddenly LEAPS forward and covers his Father's mouth.
With a look of UTTER SERIOUSNESS, he whispers.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
On a sugar cone!... With whipped
cream. 8

LUIS
Yes. Brilliant!

CUT TO:

8 INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- EVENING

Sophie's at her desk doing homework. There's a KNOCK on her door.

SOPHIE
Enter.

Enter ANGIE(34), a fit and proper soccer mom.

ANGIE
How's your homework coming along?

SOPHIE
(country accent)
Just dandy, Mrs B.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

8 CONTINUED:

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

(then, normal)

Don't talk to her, Snugglefritz.

Angie's quite used to these encounters.

ANGIE

Need any help?

SOPHIE

I'm doing English. Not Math.

ANGIE

Oh, okay.

(then)

Well, Listen. Don't make plans
Saturday afternoon.

SOPHIE

Why?

ANGIE

We're going to the Aquarium with
Cassandra and her Mother.

SOPHIE

(robotic voice)

Negative. I do not like Cassandra.

ANGIE

What's wrong with Cassandra?

SOPHIE

(robotic voice)

It is simple logic. Cassandra is
faulty. She and her friends make
fun of me.

ANGIE

They do?

SOPHIE

(normal)

Everybody does, Mom.

BRETT(34) shows up. He's brash, rugged and comfortable with
himself.

BRETT

What's going on?

ANGIE

Your daughter says everyone makes
fun of her.

(CONTINUED)

BRETT

It's no wonder. She dresses like Wilma Flintstone gone Goth.

ANGIE

Brett. I'm trying to be constructive here.

BRETT

She knows I'm only joking. Don't ya, sweetie?

She doesn't.

ANGIE

We just don't like seeing you alone all the time. A girl your age should have friends.

(then)

Tell her, Brett.

BRETT

A girl your age should have friends.

Brett lets out a BELCH and grabs his stomach.

BRETT (CONT'D)

Oh, man...

ANGIE

What?

BRETT

Those crab cakes aren't sitting too well.

ANGIE

You want some Maalox, baby?

BRETT

Nah. I'm gonna go give 'em a burial at sea.

(to Sophie)

Good night, monkey butt. Happy Birthday.

Brett leaves.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 6. Objective: to arrange photos Actions:
1. To pin up 3. to acknowledge
2. to quiet 4. to reply

14.

8 CONTINUED: (3)

ANGIE
You know, maybe if you'd actually
TRY to fit in a little better, you
wouldn't have this problem.

Sophie puts up her hands like she's in a box.

SOPHIE
Force field.

ANGIE
Sophie. Don't start with that.

SOPHIE
(loudly)
What? I can't hear you. I'm in a
box!

ANGIE
Fine. Whatever. I'll call Maggie
and cancel. Have fun by yourself
this weekend.

SOPHIE
Yeah, pork chops sound great!

Angie exits. Back to her homework. Then--

She looks to Oscar's photo and flips it over, revealing
Oscar's child-like handwriting. It reads:

OSCAR 555-3131

CUT TO:

9 INT. OSCAR'S OFFICE -- SAME EVENING

The wall of Polaroids. Oscar comes into frame and pins up
the day's photos.¹

The PHONE RINGS. And RINGS. And RINGS. He finally answers.²

10 INTERCUT WITH SOPHIE--

OSCAR
Hello.³

SOPHIE
Hey, Oscar. You know who this is?

OSCAR
No.⁴

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 6 Actions (cont.)

5. to recognize 7. to concede

6. to respond

10

CONTINUED:

15.

SOPHIE

It's Sophie. From the park.

OSCAR

Hi, Sophie. 5

SOPHIE

So, what'cha doing?

OSCAR

Putting my photos on the wall. 6

SOPHIE

Cool. I'd love to see that sometime.

OSCAR

Okay. 7

SOPHIE

You wanna hang out tomorrow?

OSCAR

Okay. 1

SOPHIE

Cool. Meet me after school. You know where Jefferson Elementary is?

OSCAR

My dad says I went to Jefferson Elementary. 2

SOPHIE

...Is that a yes?

OSCAR

Yes. 3

SOPHIE

Great. I'll meet you at the steps.

LUIS

I have ice cream!

OSCAR

(distracted)

Um, Okay. 1

Oscar drops the phone receiver onto the table and walks away. 3

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 7

Objective:

to arrange to

meet Sophie. Actions:

1. to approve

2. to enlighten

3. to affirm

BEAT 8

Objective:

to get ice cream. Actions:

1. to acknowledge we hear Luis come home.

2. to drop

3. to ditch

BEAT 8 Actions (cont.)
4. to rush 6. to hang up
5. to cut out

16.

10 CONTINUED: (2)

SOPHIE

Bye.

No answer. We HEAR Oscar and Luis on her end.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Oscar? Did you hang up?

No answer. Oscar suddenly rushes back to the phone.⁴

OSCAR

Okay. Bye!⁵

He hangs up.⁶ Sophie chuckles and does the same.

CUT TO:

11 INT. OSCAR'S ROOM -- MORNING

BEAT 9.
Objective:
to meet Sophie
Actions:

1. to sleep
2. to awake
3. to brush
4. to leave

We creep toward Oscar, sleeping with his butt propped in the air like a 5 year old.¹ Again the image looks like a child's colorful scribbles...

LUIS

"O suns and skies and clouds of
June, and flowers of June together.
Ye cannot rival for one hour
October's bright blue weather!"

The EFFECT becomes REALITY when--

Luis draws the window shade, casting a blinding light on Oscar.

LUIS (CONT'D)

Which YOU are missing out on.

Oscar rustles in aggravation.²

CUT TO:

12 INT. BATHROOM, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

Oscar brushes his teeth,³ then drops the toothbrush
haphazardly onto the counter.⁴

CUT TO:

BEAT 9 Actions (cont.)

5. to set forth 8. to seize moment

6. to sit 9. to sleep

7. to wait

17.

13 EXT. OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

Luis hangs a water bottle around Oscar's neck, then wipes his face before seeing him off. 5

CUT TO:

14 EXT. SCHOOL -- LATER

Jefferson Elementary. School is in session. Oscar sits on the front steps like an obedient puppy. 6

TIME DISSOLVE:

1) Oscar's waits for class to let out. 7

2) Two TEACHERS have a smoke as Oscar takes a picture of a bug. 8

3) Oscar is laid out, asleep. 9

Then--

The BELL sounds. School kids begin filing out and gawk at the napping Oscar as they pass.

Sophie approaches.

BEAT 10

Objective:

To have a
fun day with
Sophie. Actions:

1. to awake

2. to lie

3. to respond

SOPHIE

Oscar?

He awakens. 1

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

How long have you been waiting there?

OSCAR

Not long. 2

She sits beside him with a big SIGH.

SOPHIE

Did I ever tell you how much I hate school?

OSCAR

No. 3

SOPHIE

Gah. I slipped in someone's rag.

(pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 10 Actions (cont.)
4. to cringe 6. to disgust 8. to educate
5. to relish 7. to concede

18.

14 CONTINUED:

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

It was so disgusting. I must've
slid like twenty feet across the
bathroom and slammed my head
against a stall.

(indicating cut)

Look at that!

OSCAR

(studying)

Ow. 4

SOPHIE

Anyway, the door flew open and
there was Ms. Hager, sitting on the
toilet in mid poo.

Oscar LAUGHS. 5

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

You know, they say the change into
womanhood is supposed to be like,
all beautiful and stuff...

She puts her shoe in Oscar's face.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Does this smell beautiful to you?

He pulls away, disgusted. 6

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Gross, huh?

(then)

I swear. Count me out of this
whole puberty thing.

OSCAR

Okay. 7

He hands her a stack of unaltered Photos.

SOPHIE

Cool. New photos.

(noticing)

There's nothing on these.

OSCAR

Well, you were in school, Sophie! 8

SOPHIE

Oh, I get it. You want me to make
them right.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 10 Actions (cont.)

9. to assert

10. to skiddadle

19.

14 CONTINUED: (2)

OSCAR

Yes, please. 9

SOPHIE

Okay. I can do that.

(then)

C'mon. Let's blow this poopsicle stand.

They leave. 10

CUT TO:

15 EXT. PARK -- LATER

BEAT 11

Objective:

to connect deeper with Sophie. Actions:

1. to hang
2. to observe
3. to grab attention
4. to boast
5. to reason
6. to amuse
7. to explain
8. to preach

Shaded by an OAK TREE, Sophie colors on Oscar's photos. Oscar hangs upside down from a branch taking pictures. 1

His POV - Upside down, of a MAN walking by with his hands in his POCKETS. 2

OSCAR

Know what, Sophie? 3

SOPHIE

Sure don't.

OSCAR

My Dad says you should never, NEVER walk around with your hands in your pockets. 4

SOPHIE

Why's that?

OSCAR

Because, because one time I was walkin' around with my hands in my pockets, and I was, I was walking down some stairs and I still had my hands in my pockets, and, and I fell forward...and I fell on my head... 'cause I couldn't get my hands out in time. 7.. So that's why you should never, NEVER walk around with your hands in your pockets. 8

SOPHIE

Sounds like some good advice. I'll remember that.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 11 Actions (cont.)

9. to approve 11. to boast 13. to brag 15. to suggest
10. to fill in 12. to bask 14. to prove

20.

15 CONTINUED:

OSCAR
Good.⁹ 'Cause my Dad knows this
stuff.¹⁰
(climbing down)
My Dad, my Dad's smart.¹¹

SOPHIE
You sound pretty chummy with your
dad.

OSCAR
Yeah.¹² My Dad's the greatest.¹³ His
coffee mug says it.¹⁴
(then)
You should meet him.¹⁵

Sophie hands him the finished photos.

SOPHIE
Well, believe it or not, I've got
nothing better to do.

CUT TO:

16 INT. DEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

BEAT 12

Objective:
to introduce
Sophie to my
world. Actions:

1. to enter
2. to alert
3. to educate
4. to concure
5. to sit
6. to check
7. to disclose
8. to clue in

Oscar and Sophie enter.¹

OSCAR
(calling out)
I'm home!²
(to Sophie)
This is my home.³

SOPHIE
(glances around)
It's nice.

OSCAR
Yeah.⁴
They sit on the couch.⁵

LONG BEAT - It's Quiet. REAL quiet.

Oscar checks the clock.⁶

OSCAR (CONT'D)
It's five o'clock.⁷ I have to take
my shower now.⁸

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 12 Actions (cont.)
9. to flee

21.

16 CONTINUED:

SOPHIE

Huh?

He gets up and leaves her. 9.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Oscar?

LONG BEAT - She's alone.

Sophie peers around, then checks out the FAMILY PHOTOS on the wall. A CANDLE gets knocked off the table.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Nice one, dummy.

She picks it up and notices a PHOTO ALBUM nestled away. Curious, she leafs through it.

The album is full of pictures of Oscar. Strangely, HE APPEARS TO BE NORMAL: posing with his GIRLFRIEND, hanging out with a BEST FRIEND, in CAP and GOWN graduating from COLLEGE...

Then, a NOISE from the hall. Sophie quickly puts the book back just as Luis enters.

LUIS

(suspiciously)

Hello there.

SOPHIE

Um...hi.

LUIS

Where's Oscar?

SOPHIE

Taking a shower, I think.

LUIS

Ah, yes. Well, he'll be indisposed a while. He's amazingly thorough with a bar of soap.

(shakes her hand)

I'm Luis. The Father.

SOPHIE

Sophie. The friend.

(CONTINUED)

16 CONTINUED: (2)

LUIS

So I hear.

(pause)

I do hope you two are getting along
 alright. I know he can be a handful
 sometimes.

SOPHIE

It's cool.

LUIS

Marvelous. Marvelous.

LONG, UNCOMFORTABLE BEAT - as Luis studies her.

SOPHIE

Well, I should get going. My
 parents will be wondering where I
 am.

LUIS

"A young girl travels the world
 over in search of what she needs,
 and returns home to find it."

SOPHIE

Hmm. I doubt it.

(then)

Anyway, it was nice meeting you.

LUIS

Likewise, my dear. Don't be a
 stranger now.

She's out the door. Luis glances over to the photo album,
 concerned.

CUT TO:

17 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Angie's doing her daily aerobics. Sophie enters and plops
 down on the La-Z-Boy.

ANGIE

Where've you been?

SOPHIE

Dancing for loose change.

ANGIE

I swear. You and your Father.

(CONTINUED)

17 CONTINUED:

SOPHIE

What, he dances for loose change too?

Angie glares at her. Sophie grins.

ANGIE

Seriously. Where have you been?

SOPHIE

If you MUST know, I was at a friend's house.

ANGIE

(perks up)

A friend's house?

SOPHIE

Yes, a friend. Don't make a big deal out of it.

ANGIE

(sits)

Well, no. That's great! I mean, I wish you would have called me - hello! - but no, this is nice! We can have her over for dinner tomorrow. Does that sound good?

SOPHIE

I guess. But...

ANGIE

(calls out)

Hey Brett! Did you hear? Sophie's got a friend!

BRETT

(from kitchen)

I told you no pets!

ANGIE

No, it's an actual person!

(to Sophie)

It IS an actual person, right?

CUT TO:

18 INT. BATHROOM, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- NEXT DAY

1. Oscar overuses deodorant.¹ His T shirt's still on.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 13
Objective:
to prepare to
go to Sophie's
house for dinner
Actions:
1. to deodorize self

BEAT 13 Actions (cont.)

2. to fix hair

3. to brush teeth

4. to jet 18

CONTINUED:

24.

2. Oscar tries to fix his hair.² It's not going so well.

3. Oscar brushes his teeth,³ then drops the toothbrush haphazardly onto the counter as he leaves.⁴

CUT TO:

19 INT. KITCHEN, SOPHIE'S HOUSE

Angie prepares tonight's meal.

CUT TO:

20 INT. DEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

LOW ANGLE CAMERA follows tennis shoes into the den where Luis sits. He lights up by the sight of--

Oscar, wearing a VEST AND TIE. The rest of his outfit is vintage Oscar: Highwaters, white socks and baseball cap.⁵

LUIS

Move over, James Bond!

CUT TO:

21 INT. DINING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Sophie's eyes FILL THE SCREEN, darting around. WE PULL WIDER to see her following every move of her Mother, who's making final dinner preparations. The dining table is impeccably set.

Brett enters and looks over the fancy spread.

BRETT

Jesus, Angie. Is the President coming?

ANGIE

Shut it, Brett. This is a big deal.

BEAT 14

Objective:
to win over
Sophie's
Parents 22

The Doorbell RINGS, causing Sophie to blurt out--

SOPHIE

I'll get it.

INT. FOYER, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- CONTINUOUS

The door opens, revealing Oscar. He holds up a big SPOON.¹

Actions:

1. to prove

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 14 Actions (cont.)

2. to greet
3. to impress
4. to enter 22
5. to greet
6. to brag
7. to avoid 23
8. to prove

25.

CONTINUED:

OSCAR
Hi, Sophie.² I brought my spoon.³

INT. DINING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Angie and Brett wait to receive them. Angie's trying hard to reserve her enthusiasm. But it makes no difference, as Oscar's entrance⁴ immediately shatters it.

SOPHIE
Mom. Dad. This is Oscar.

With a toothy, fake smile, Angie grabs Brett's sleeve. She doesn't like this one bit. Neither does Brett.

OSCAR
Hello.⁵ Sophie's my friend.⁶

Angie's grip TIGHTENS.

CUT TO:

24 INT. DINING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

The most uncomfortable dinner is underway. Oscar stares at his untouched plate⁷ as Angie and Brett try to figure him out. Meanwhile, Sophie's turning her dinner into a Jackson Pollock.

ANGIE
Sophie. What'd I tell you about that?

With a defiant stare, Sophie puts a finger up her nose.

SOPHIE
(in announcer voice)
This message approved by the Snot-Meister General.

Angie scoffs.

OSCAR
(chuckles)
Snot-Meister General.⁸

BRETT
So tell us about yourself, Oscar.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 14 Actions (cont.)

26.

24 CONTINUED:

- 9. to stall
- 10. to inform
- 11. to impress
- 12. to dazzle
- 13. to floor
- 14. to gush
- 15. to relish
- 16. to educate
- 17. to amuse

OSCAR
What? ⁹ Oh, um... I'm Oscar Austiego. ¹⁰
I live at fifty-three twenty four
Terpischore street with my Dad,
Luis Austiego. ¹¹ My phone number is,
uh, 555-3131... ¹²

BRETT
(cuts in)
No, I mean... What do you like to
do?

OSCAR
I love, I LOVE to take pictures! ¹³

BRETT
Oh, yeah?

OSCAR
Yeah! ¹⁴ I love it. ¹⁵

SOPHIE
He does this really cool thing
where he draws on top of them.

ANGIE
Why do you do that?

OSCAR & SOPHIE
(in unison)
To make them right. ¹⁶

OSCAR
But, Sophie's better at it.

Sophie smiles and gives him an ANIMAL DAP--

SOPHIE
Turkey!

They both LAUGH. ¹⁷ Angie grins in growing approval.
Then--

ANGIE
Oscar. You haven't touched your
chicken.

OSCAR
Um. ¹ Do you have any Kooky Puffs? ²

BEAT 15

Objective:

to get

Kooky Puffs

Actions:

1. to apologize

2. to test

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 15 Actions (cont.)

3. to assist

4. to sulk

5. to guilt 24

CONTINUED: (2)

27.

ANGIE

Kooky Puffs?

OSCAR

(holds up spoon)

I brought my spoon. 3

ANGIE

I'm sorry, sweetie. We don't have that here.

SOPHIE

Yeah, she doesn't like to stock actual, GOOD food.

Oscar hangs his head in disappointment. 4

BRETT

Angie. Go get the boy some Kooky Puffs.

ANGIE

I'm in middle of dinner.

Everyone shoots Angie a guilt trip. 5 She is powerless.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

Okay. I'll be back.

CUT TO:

25

INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- LATER

BEAT 16

Objective:

to prove what a true friend I am to Sophie.

1. to examine

2. to assure

3. to inform

Sophie leafs through a HALLOWEEN COSTUME CATALOG as Oscar examines one of her clay sculptures with interest. 1

OSCAR

I like your parents Sophie. 2

SOPHIE

Feel free to take them home with you.

OSCAR

(chuckles)

Sophie! I can't do that. 3

SOPHIE

Oh, well. I took a shot.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 16 Actions (cont.)

4. to jest

5. to divulge

25

CONTINUED:

6. to reject

7. to wonder

8. to ask for assurance

9. to ponder

10. to decide

11. to clarify

12. to reassure

28.

OSCAR
(still laughing, to
himself)

Take them home with me... 4

SOPHIE
Man. Halloween's so close I can
taste it.

OSCAR
Halloween's scary. 5

SOPHIE
You don't ever go Trick or
Treating?

OSCAR
No. 6

SOPHIE
Why not? It's tres cool. You get
to dress up and paint all over your
face. Complete strangers shower
you with tons of candy. And for
one day out of the year, you can be
whoever you want to be. Nobody
knows who you are.

OSCAR
Wow. 7 Really? 8

SOPHIE
Yeah. Holloween's my favorite.

BEAT - as Oscar ponders. 9

OSCAR
Okay. 10

SOPHIE
Okay, what?

OSCAR
I'll go trick or treating. 11

SOPHIE
Really?

OSCAR
Yeah. 12

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 16 Actions (cont.)
13. To volunteer

29.

25 CONTINUED: (2)

SOPHIE
Awesome! We are gonna have SO.
MUCH. FUN.

Angie bursts in.

ANGIE
Who's up for some party games?

Oscar raises his hand. 13

CUT TO:

26 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

The CAMERA DOLLIES past Sophie, Angie then Brett. Each one looking more perplexed than the other.

REVERSE ON-- OSCAR

At the Pictionary board. He has drawn the most incomprehensible object ever. He spurs the players on, each new pen stroke making it worse than before.

CUT TO:

27 EXT. STREET -- DAY

Oscar and Sophie ride BIKES. Oscar's not very good and runs into a TRASH CAN.

CUT TO:

28 EXT. FRONT YARD, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

FIRECRACKERS are taped to cuddly stuffed animals. Oscar lights it as Sophie VIDEOS it. BOOM!

CUT TO:

29 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Oscar and Sophie watch the footage in SLOW MOTION, transfixed by the destruction they created. Angie just shakes her head. Those crazy kids.

CUT TO:

CUT

BEAT 16 Actions (cont.)

14. to eat

15. to observe

30.

30 EXT. PARK -- AFTERNOON

Sophie, Oscar, Luis, Brett and Angie are having a picnic.¹⁴

CUT TO:

31 INT. MOVIE THEATER

Sophie and Oscar watch a scary film.¹⁵

CUT TO:

32 INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

The TEACHER writes the day's lesson on the board as Sophie scribbles Halloween images in her notebook. Sitting at the desk in front of her is the ever popular CASSANDRA. Behind her is SKATER DUDE.

SKATER DUDE

Hey, Sophie. I heard you're friends with some middle aged psycho.

SOPHIE

He's not a psycho, dummy. He's mentally challenged.

SKATER DUDE

Your discussions must be fascinating.

CASSANDRA

(overhearing)

Yeah. What do you guys talk about? Who won the gold at the Special Olympics?

Skater Dude CHUCKLES.

SOPHIE

Oscar's a million times more interesting than you, Cassandra.

CASSANDRA

Only in that warped little head of yours.

SOPHIE

For your information, me and Oscar create art together.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 16 Actions (cont.)

16. to copy

17. to monument

18. to catch up 32

CONTINUED:

31.

Sophie shows her one of the painted Polaroids. Cassandra chuckles at it.

SKATER DUDE

What a coincidence!

(indicating)

Me and James here create FARTS together!

He starts making Fart noises.

CASSANDRA

(laughing)

I swear, Sophie. Just when I think you couldn't be more weird, you go and top yourself once again.

Sophie suddenly lets out an EAR PIERCING SCREAM, so loud it causes the TEACHER to break her chalk.

The room goes silent as everyone looks at her in puzzlement. Sophie gives them a satisfying smile.

CUT TO:

33 INT. TRICK OR TREAT HOUSE #1 -- DAY

A door opens, revealing Oscar and Sophie in costume. Oscar is an adorable Lizard, Sophie is a Princess Leia Zombie.

Sophie holds out her bag and yells trick or treat. Oscar then realizes he was supposed to as well. 16

CUT TO:

34 INT. TRICK OR TREAT HOUSE #2 -- DAY

Door opens. Sophie trick or treats. Oscar is facing the other way taking a picture of something. 17

CUT TO:

35 INT. TRICK OR TREAT HOUSE #3 -- EVENING

Door opens. Sophie trick or treats. Oscar isn't there. Suddenly, he comes running to meet her. 18

CUT TO:

BEAT 16 Actions (cont.)

- 19. to walk
- 20. to boast
- 21. to prove

32.

36 INT. TRICK OR TREAT HOUSE #4 -- EVENING

Door opens. Oscar finally has the trick or treat thing down. They SCOFF when they are given TOOTHBRUSHES instead of candy.

CUT TO:

37 EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD -- NIGHT

With Halloween winding down, Oscar and Sophie are walking home. 19

OSCAR

I got, I got, I got a LOT of candy,
Sophie. 20

SOPHIE

Sure did.

OSCAR

I got m-a-M's, and twix bars, and
candy corn, and blow pops, and -- 21

SOPHIE

Bet ya don't have this...

Sophie hides her face, then Pops back out wearing WAX LIPS. Oscar freaks out. Sophie cracks up.

Suddenly, she gets PELTED in the face with an EGG. They turn to find a bunch of her CLASSMATES across the street, laughing hysterically.

HOODLUM #1

Ha! I got her!

CASSANDRA

Hey, Sophie. Why didn't ya'll dress up? It's Halloween!

Mortified, Sophie ZONES OUT. Everything SLOWS DOWN.

In the midst of MUFFLED laughs and ridicule, Sophie transports herself to a vast FOREST VALLEY. She breathes in the fresh peaceful air. Then--

A RAGE suddenly builds inside Oscar. He bellows out some crazy, beserker WARCRY and races toward her attackers like a madman. 2

HOODLUM #1

Holy frick!

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 17
Objective:
to protect Sophie.
Actions:
1. to notice
2. to scare

BEAT 17 Actions (cont.)

3. to stop

4. to define

5. to 37
change subject

CONTINUED:

33.

The kids FLEE in fear. Oscar barrels to a stop, huffing and puffing. 3

BEAT - as Sophie joins him.

SOPHIE

Whoa. That was intense.

She takes his hand and they move on. [at this point, Someone in a COUSIN IT costume comes into frame, walking annoyingly slow in front of them.]

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

You okay?

OSCAR

Eggs are for eating, not for throwing. 4

SOPHIE

Tell me about it. They don't wear too well either.

OSCAR

Can we eat our candy now, Sophie? 5

SOPHIE

Yes. Lets.

Sophie's had enough of Cousin It.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Would somebody get this walking carpet out of my way?

CUT TO:

BEAT 18

Objective:
To comfort
Sophie

Actions: 38
1. to feast

EXT. OSCAR'S BACKYARD -- LATER

Two bodies are silhouetted by the glow of light inside a bright orange TENT.

39

INT. TENT -- CONTINUOUS

Inside, Sophie and Oscar lie in a sea of unwrapped CANDY, munching down. They're clearly getting sick.

Sophie attempts to bite into a new piece, but can't.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 19 Actions (cont.)

2. to accept
3. to scarf down

39

CONTINUED:

34.

4. to answer
5. to affirm
6. to joke
7. to cheer up
8. to inquire
9. to dig

SOPHIE

Oh, god. If I eat one more Tootsie
Roll I'm gonna explode all over the
walls.

OSCAR

I'll take it. 2

She hands it to him. He eats it, 3 then GROANS in discomfort.

LONG BEAT

SOPHIE

Oscar?

OSCAR

Yeah, Sophie? 4

SOPHIE

That was really cool what you did
for me tonight. Going after those
jerks and all.

OSCAR

Yeah. 5 'Cause they dropped their
candy. 6

SOPHIE

(snickering)

Did you see the look on their
faces?

BEAT - as they LAUGH out loud. 7

Suddenly, Sophie's laughter becomes TEARS.

OSCAR

What's wrong, Sophie? 8

SOPHIE

(collects herself)

Nothing.

(beat)

It just gets to me sometimes,
that's all.

OSCAR

What gets to you? 9

SOPHIE

Everybody treating me like I'm from
another planet, or something.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 10 Actions (cont.)

10. to empathize

11. to request affirmation

39 CONTINUED: (2)

12. to discover

13. to question

14. to seek

15. to delight

16. to support

35.

OSCAR

People think I'm different, too. 10

SOPHIE

I know they do. And you know what?
They're wrong.

OSCAR

They are? 11

SOPHIE

Yeah. They are. And don't ever
let anyone tell you otherwise.

OSCAR

Maybe... maybe I'll tell them
THEY'RE from another planet. 12

SOPHIE

There you go.

(then)

And if things get too heavy, just
do what I do.

OSCAR

What's that? 13

SOPHIE

I close my eyes, block everything
out, then imagine I'm somewhere
else.

OSCAR

Where do you go, Sophie? 14

SOPHIE

The lake, France, Pluto... Anywhere
I want.

Oscar smiles at the thought. 15

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Hey, Oscar?

OSCAR

Yes, Sophie? 16

BEAT

She turns away.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 18 Actions (cont.)
17. to comfort

36.

39 CONTINUED: (3)

SOPHIE
Good night.

OSCAR
Good night, Sophie.

CUT TO:

40 INT. TENT -- LATER

Oscar SNORES so loud it wakes Sophie up.

CUT TO:

41 INT. KITCHEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

The clock reads: 3:12am. Luis is in the corner making coffee. Sophie comes through the back door and scares him. She doesn't notice this and gets a glass of water. Luis sits and waits for just the right moment--

LUIS
(loudly)
You scared me!

SOPHIE
(frightened)
Ah!
(then)
Oh. Mr. L.

LUIS
Now we're even.

She sits.

LUIS (CONT'D)
You're up late.

SOPHIE
(with country twang)
Oscar snores like a bear with a
buzzsaw.
(then)
How 'bout you?

Luis gestures to a pile of PICTURES.

LUIS
I was just looking over his photos.
Looks like you two had quite a
night.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE
Yes indeedy. It was a blast.

Luis presents a photo to her, puzzled by the ANGRY MAN featured in it.

LUIS
I sense a fascinating story behind this.

SOPHIE
Oh. Oscar got chased by a dog and he ran and hid inside the first house he came across. Only, the dog followed him in and broke some stuff. The owners weren't too happy about that.
(re: angry man)
Especially him.

LUIS
Oh, dear.

They share a LAUGH.

BEAT

SOPHIE
Mr. L. Can I ask you something that's been bugging me?

LUIS
Of course.

SOPHIE
The first time I came here, I found this photo album, and Oscar looked...

LUIS
Normal?

SOPHIE
Yeah. Why is that?

LUIS
Well, I guess you deserve to know his story.

Beat - Sophie turns to full attention.

(CONTINUED)

41 CONTINUED: (2)

LUIS (CONT'D)

Oscar wasn't always the Oscar you know. He was once a regular, healthy adult with a good job, friends, even a long-time girlfriend.

SOPHIE

So what happened?

LUIS

It was Christmas Day, ten years ago. Oscar and I spent the afternoon regaling each other with stories of his Mother Elizabeth, my wife.

(smiles, remembering)

Liz was such a little firecracker. The Lucy to my Ricardo.

(then)

Anyway, she had died five years earlier of cancer and we made a pact that each year on Christmas we would drive up to Shreveport and visit her final resting place. So we jumped in the car and headed off.

CUT TO:

42 INT. CAR, MOVING -- NIGHT

It's a CRYSTAL CLEAR NIGHT. Normal Oscar is asleep in the passenger seat as Luis drives.

LUIS

Well, we had been driving for a couple of hours and, the fog was so bad I could barely see two feet in front of me. Oscar was asleep so I tried to keep myself alert by listening to the radio. Fiddling with the knobs and such.

Luis opens a LIQUOR FLASK and chugs it.

LUIS (CONT'D)

Next thing I knew, a tree was racing toward us at sixty miles per hour.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 18 Actions (cont.)
18. to sleep

39.

42 CONTINUED:

His POV - barreling FULL SPEED at a TREE.

CUT TO:

43 INT. KITCHEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE

SOPHIE

Oh no.

LUIS

I suffered a broken collarbone, a
broken nose and two ribs.

(pause)

Oscar... suffered more. While the
brain damage he sustained could
have been far worse, Doctors could
never explain why he's become the
way he is. In many ways, he's just
a child.

(then)

This is the Oscar YOU know.

SOPHIE

Does he remember any of this?

LUIS

No.

Luis sits back and lights a cigarette, haunted by this.

CUT TO:

44 INT. TENT -- MOMENTS LATER

Sophie crawls back into her sleeping bag, and thoughtfully
watches Oscar sleep. 18

BEAT

She moves in closer, gives him a kiss on the cheek and softly
whispers:

SOPHIE

Thanks for being my friend.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

BEAT 19 Objective: to ensure that Sophie has a good birthday. Actions:
1. to tolerate

40.

45 INT. MEMAW'S HOUSE, DINING ROOM

Sophie's BIRTHDAY party. RELATIVES and Oscar sing (badly) to her.

SUPERIMPOSED: ONE YEAR LATER

Sophie blows out the candles. APPLAUSE.

SOPHIE
Now bring on the presents!

CUT TO:

46 EXT. MEMAW'S YARD -- LATER

We're in Mississippi country. Everyone is eating cake and chatting away.

CUT TO:

47 EXT. MEMAW'S YARD, LAKE

Oscar's stuck in a PADDLEBOAT on the lake with Sophie's crazy great uncle MEL(50). I.

MEL
...So I'm standing there with pants
to the ankles, gun out the holster,
and my ass cheeks facin' the dawn's
early light, and I tells her, I
says Dawlin', you ain't said
nothing about no service. What the
hell do I need an escort service
for?

(pause)
I get escorted out of every place I
frequent!

CUT TO:

48 INT. MEMAW'S HOUSE, KITCHEN

SOPHIE and MEMAW(60).

MEMAW
Sophie. Do you realize you're a
teenager now!

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE
(playing with her)
I know. I'm growing up so fast.
Huh, Memaw?

MEMAW
Took the words right out of my
mouth.

Angie approaches.

MEMAW (CONT'D)
Angie. I was just telling Sophie,
she's a teenager now.

ANGIE
I know. She's growing up so fast.
Huh, Mom?

MEMAW
Took the words right out of my
mouth.

Sophie snickers.

ANGIE
Sophie. Did you tell MeMaw about
the Art Contest?

MEMAW
Contest?

ANGIE
Yeah, your Granddaughter won second
place.

MEMAW
(proudly)
For your painting, darlin'?

SOPHIE
Sort of. It was Mixed Media.
Oscar helped too.

MEMAW
Mix met-eor?

SOPHIE
Media. I painted on top of some
photographs that Oscar took.
(excitedly)
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 19 Actions Cont.)
2. to endure

42.

48 CONTINUED: (2)

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Right now we're doing this really
crazy looking human portrait out of
dozens of polaroids for the
Southern Art Fest.

MEMAW

(feigning comprehension)
Ohhh...

SOPHIE

Yeah. It's a really big deal.

MEMAW

So Oscar takes pictures, huh?

SOPHIE

(rolls eyes)
Yeah. Anyway, I'm gonna go look
for him.

CUT TO:

49 EXT. MEMAW'S YARD, LAKE

OSCAR and MEL-- 2.

MEL

...That was some bullshit. Wanna
know some other bullshit? This is
some bullshit right here: I have
no balls. And that's not a
statement on my confidence, friend.
I'm talkin' there's not a beanbag
one in my pants. Got a lap dance
by Charlie's grenade, you see. And
my nuts blew off to the East and
West of Hamburger Hill. I spent
the next three months shittin'
shrapnel. You have any idea what
it's like to get your nuts blown
off? It ain't nothing pretty. And
it don't feel too nice either.

CUT TO:

50 EXT. WOODS

BRETT and his redneck cousin VICTOR(28) are drinking beers
and shooting cans with a rifle.

VICTOR

I tell you about this new piece of
ass I'm seeing?

(CONTINUED)

BRETT

That's the fourth one this month.
Is that a new record?

VICTOR

Hell yeah. This bitch is only sixteen, but man, she's got a pair of puppies just beggin' to obey my commands! You know what I'm sayin'?

(laughs, then)

She's a little freak, too. One of those domino-matrix chicks with piercings and shit all up in her crevices. Crazy, bruh.

BRETT

Damn.

VICTOR

Speaking of freaks...
(indicating Oscar)
What's with "Short Bus" back there?

BRETT

Oscar? He's alright.

VICTOR

(shakes head)

I swear. Only your daughter, cuz.

BRETT

Actually, he's been pretty good for Sophie. She ain't nearly the oddball she used to be.

VICTOR

I hear ya.

(then)

But the dude's gotta be older than you, yeah?

Brett taps on his temple.

BRETT

Not up here.

VICTOR

Still. You ain't even a LITTLE worried?

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 19 Actions (cont.)

3. to enjoy

4. to hang tough

50

CONTINUED: (2)

44.

BRETT

Nah. He's harmless.

(then)

YOU, on the other hand...

Victor laughs as Brett takes out a can with precision. Victor then hocks a giant LOOGIE which flies past Sophie as she approaches.

SOPHIE

Geez, uncle Vic. You could kill a squirrel with that thing!

VICTOR

Maybe I should trade in my .22.

BRETT

Sophie. You wanna take a shot.

SOPHIE

No thanks. I despise senseless violence against inanimate objects.

(then)

Have ya'll seen Oscar?

BRETT

Yeah. He's on the lake with Mel.

SOPHIE

Oh god. I better go save him.

CUT TO:

51 EXT. MEMAW'S YARD, LAKE -- MOMENTS LATER

Mel is unusually quiet. Oscar enjoys this, and the beautiful surroundings. 3

BEAT

Mel CUTS ONE. 4

MEL

Mmm. I love the smell of napalm in the morning.

CUT TO:

SOPHIE at the dock.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 19 Actions (cont.)

- 5. to flee
- 6. to scam

51

CONTINUED:

45.

- 7. to admit
- 8. to reveal
- 9. to purge

SOPHIE
(calling out)
Uncle Mel. You mind if I borrow
Oscar a minute?

MEL
(yelling back)
You saying I gotta give up another
nut?

CUT TO:

AT THE DOCK. Sophie helps Oscar out the boat. 5

MEL (CONT'D)
(laughing)
Alright. See ya. Ya bastard!

OSCAR
Okay. See you... Bastard. 6

Then--

SOPHIE
How's it going?

OSCAR
Not too good, Sophie. 7 Uncle Mel's
weird. 8 He talks really A LOT about
his privates. 9

SOPHIE
Believe me, I know.
(then, like a country
yokel)
~~But Oscar, my friend. Lemme ask~~
~~you sumthin'. Are you ready to~~ CUT
~~have yourself some good ole~~
~~fashioned, down-home country fun?~~

OSCAR
~~Am I!~~

CUT TO:

52 SERIES OF SHOTS WITH OSCAR & SOPHIE:

- ~~1. Off reading in a golf cart.~~
- ~~2. Fishing with cane poles.~~ Cut
- ~~3. Tumble rolling down the hill.~~

(CONTINUED)

52

CONTINUED:

4. They're on the dock, watching the sun go down. THE SKY LOOKS LIKE THEIR SWIRLY, VIVID IMAGINATION.

Sophie puts her head on his shoulder. Perfect end to a perfect day.

BLACKOUT:

IN BLACK:

BEAT 20
Objective: to
embrace the day.
Actions:

LUIS
"Because things are the way they
are, things will not stay the way
they are."

FADE IN:

INT. OSCAR'S ROOM -- MORNING

- 53
1. to awake
2. to sit up
3. to befuddle
4. to vacate
5. to rummage
6. to wonder
7. to brush
8. to process
9. to place
10. to notice
11. to smile
12. to realize

LUIS
So get up!

Luis draws the window shade and casts a blinding light on Oscar, who stirs in aggravation.¹ Luis exits.

Oscar sits up² from a regular sleeping position with a look of BEFUDDLEMENT and slides the camera off his wrist.³

He climbs out of bed.⁴ Passing the photo wall, he runs his fingers through them⁵ as if wondering whether he's in a dream.⁶

INT. BATHROOM, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Oscar brushes his teeth,⁷ seemingly processing every little thing about himself in the mirror.⁸ Bad haircut, lame clothes. Finally, he takes the toothbrush and RESTS IT⁹ NEATLY BACK INTO THE HOLDER.¹⁰

Suddenly he smiles,¹¹ overwhelmed by the realization that HE'S NORMAL AGAIN.¹²

CUT TO:

BEAT 21
Objective:
to reveal
change

- 55
Actions:
1. to nab attention
2. to uncover

INT. KITCHEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

Luis has breakfast, enthralled by the paperback book he reads. Oscar enters holding his glasses.

OSCAR
Dad,¹ Do you know where my contacts
are?²

(CONTINUED)

55 CONTINUED:

ANGLE ON --

A STUNNED Luis.

CUT TO:

56 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Angie and Brett watch the NEWS.

ANGLE ON -- TV

As Oscar's picture is displayed.

NEWS ANCHOR

A local Bywater resident, who has lived mentally handicapped for the last ten years, suddenly awakes to normalcy in what doctors are calling a medical marvel.

ANGIE

Sophie! Oscar's on the news!

Sophie comes rambling in.

SOPHIE

What? Seriously?

ON THE TV--

DOCTOR MORTEN(60) is being interviewed:

DOCTOR MORTEN

...I met with Mr. Austiego this morning and he was completely lucid as if no impairment had ever afflicted him. Initial cognitive tests have indicated normal brain function. At this time we're unable to discern the reason behind his recovery, but we're currently pouring over multiple brain scans that were recently conducted. Hopefully an answer will present itself soon.

(CONTINUED)

56 CONTINUED:

SOPHIE
Wait. Are they saying Oscar's
normal now?

BRETT
(concerned)
Are they?

ANGIE
It sounds like it.

Brett puts down his paper and leaves the room.

NEWS ANCHOR
When asked about his ordeal, Oscar
had this to say:

OSCAR
It's like I just woke up from a
long dream.

A million emotions wash over Sophie.

CUT TO:

57 INT. OSCAR'S OFFICE -- DAY

The phone rings.

CUT TO:

58 INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

BEAT 22
Objective:
to understand
why & how I've
changed.

Sophie waits anxiously for someone to pick up the phone. No
one does.

CUT TO:

59 INT. DOCTOR'S OFFICE

Actions:
1. to wait

Luis and Oscar (now with SHAVED HEAD) wait¹ as a medical
COLLEAGUE stands quietly behind Doctor Morten's desk, so tall
his head is out of frame.

Dr. Morten enters with some xrays.

DOCTOR MORTEN
Well, I've consulted with the brain
boys upstairs and we've finally
come to a conclusion.
(pause)
It's a miracle.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 22 Actions (cont.)

2. to dig
3. to call into question
- 59 CONTINUED:
4. to cut off
5. to grab attention Beat.
6. to inquire
7. to clarify
8. to pry

49.

OSCAR

Actually, I was looking for an
answer that was a little
more...technical. 2

DOCTOR MORTEN

Oscar, what can I tell you? Every test we've run all point to the same conclusion: Mentally, you're perfectly healthy. Aside from a couple of external reminders, it's as if the accident never happened.

OSCAR

But how is that even possible? 3

DOCTOR MORTEN

Well...before you came to me, I would have said it isn't. But you know, the medical world is littered with stories of patients overcoming the impossible. Just watch an episode of 20/20 sometime.

LUIS

We don't own a television.

DOCTOR MORTEN

Really?

(then)

Listen, my brother's selling one of those widescreen LSD dealies with the "hed-me" input...

LUIS

I have no idea what that means.

DOCTOR MORTEN

Neither do I. Evidently it's quite "the shit", as he puts it.

OSCAR

Guys, do you mind? 4

(then)

Look, Doc. 5 Should I be worried at
this point? 6 I mean, is there any
chance that I'll wake up one day
and be slow again? 7 Or worse yet,
become something else entirely? 8

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 22 Actions (cont.)

9. to sit back

10. to realize

59

CONTINUED: (2)

50.

DOCTOR MORTEN

I'm inclined to say no. However unlikely it is that your brain has healed itself, it seems far more unlikely that it would be able to damage itself again on its own. But to be safe, we'll continue to monitor your condition as time goes on.

Oscar sits back, uneasy. 9

OSCAR

Man, this is just too freakin' bizarre. 16

LUIS

It's okay, son. You're fine.

DOCTOR MORTEN

Oscar, you dodged a cannon sized bullet here. My advice to you is to just be thankful. Enjoy the miracle. And...

COLLEAGUE

Praise Jesus.

CUT TO:

60 EXT. OSCAR'S HOUSE

Sophie rings the doorbell and waits. No one answers.

CUT TO:

61 EXT. SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Brett washes his car and watches as Sophie comes home, angry and upset.

A CHILD loses his ball and it rolls toward her. She kicks it into the street where it gets run over by a CAR.

CUT TO:

62 INT. DINING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Sophie, Angie and Brett are having a quiet meal. Sophie looks hangdog at them.

(CONTINUED)

SOPHIE
May I be excused?

ANGIE
You've got a full plate in front of
you.

SOPHIE
My condolences to the starving kids
in China. Can I go please?

ANGIE
Yes, you may.

Sophie leaves.

BRETT
What's with her?

ANGIE
She hasn't heard from Oscar since
the recovery and she's worried he
doesn't want to be friends now.
Frankly, I don't know what to tell
her.

BRETT
Don't tell her anything. I'm not
sure I like the idea of them
hanging around with each other,
given what's happened.

ANGIE
They've been best friends for over
a year, Brett. Oscar's practically
family.

BRETT
Oscar was. I don't know who this
new guy is.

ANGIE
We could invite him over. Get to
know him.

BRETT
You're kidding, right?
(pause)
Look, this little friendship of
theirs was cute before, but now....
I mean he's older than us, for
Christ's sake.

(CONTINUED)

62 CONTINUED: (2)

ANGIE

If he was her Uncle, this wouldn't be an issue.

BRETT

But he's not her Uncle. You really want some thirty six year old coming here for sleep overs and god knows what else?

ANGIE

I suppose not.

BRETT

Damn right. The rules have officially changed.

ANGIE

Oscar might be thinking the same thing. Maybe that's why he's never called.

BRETT

Maybe.
(then)
Either way, I'm going to see him tonight. I want to nip the problem in the bud as soon as possible.

ANGIE

This is gonna destroy Sophie.

BRETT

As far as I'm concerned, we treat this like a death in the family. We mourn his loss and move on.

CUT TO:

BEAT 23
Objective:
to guilt father
Actions:
1. to investigate
2. to kid

63 INT. KITCHEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- LATER

Luis is preparing a meal. Oscar enters and smells the aroma.

OSCAR

Spam a la Luis?

LUIS

No. Tonight is Spam Cakes Au Gratin.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 23 Actions (cont.)

3. to introduce

4. to poke fun

63

CONTINUED:

53.

5. to reject

6. to conform

7. to grab

8. to sit

9. to dig in

10. to reply

11. to eat

12. to prod

13. to clue in

OSCAR
My dad.³ The master of canned meat.⁴

LUIS
There's Kooky Puffs in the cabinet
if you want.

OSCAR
Nah.⁵ I'll have what you're having.⁶

LUIS
I wasn't sure.
(then)
Grab some utensils, would you
please.

Oscar does⁷ and sits.⁸ Luis joins him and they dig in.⁹

~~OSCAR~~ LUIS
What do you think?

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Not bad.¹⁰

LUIS
The key is hot sauce and honey.
BEAT as they eat.¹¹

LUIS (CONT'D)
So, have you thought about your
next move?

Oscar becomes upset.

OSCAR
It hasn't even been three days and
what, you already want to kick me
out?!¹²

LUIS
Well, no...son. I...

OSCAR
I'm joking, Dad.¹³

LUIS
Ah! Tomfoolery. I should have
suspected.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 23 Actions! (cont)

14. to give weight

15. to charge

16. to list⁶³

17. to pile up

18. to push

19. to challenge

20. to interrogate

21. to imply

22. to jab

CONTINUED: (2)

54.

OSCAR

Seriously though.¹⁴ It IS something I should start thinking about.¹⁵

LUIS

Luckily, you have time.

OSCAR

I just have SO many questions now. So many responsibilities.¹⁶

(then)

And what about Sophie?¹⁷ How is she gonna take this?¹⁸

LUIS

I think she'll be fine with it.

OSCAR

I'm actually afraid to talk to her.¹⁹

LUIS

You shouldn't be.

²⁰ OSCAR

Shouldn't I? The last time I "changed", everyone around me changed.²¹

(then)

Including you, it seems.²²

LUIS

How so?

BEAT 24

Objective:

to save friendship

with Sophie's

Family.

Actions:

1. to open door

2. to greet

Oscar slides Luis' Ten Years Sober Pin toward him.

~~OSCAR~~

~~(with a hint of malice) cut~~
~~I wonder why that is.~~

Luis' heart sinks. Then, there's a KNOCK at the door. Oscar gets up.

CUT TO:

64 EXT. OSCAR'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

Brett's at the door. He's all business. Oscar answers.¹

OSCAR

Oh. Hey, Mr. B...²

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 24 Actions (cont.)

3. to summon

4. to inquire

64

CONTINUED:

5. to appreciate

6. to divulge

7. to drive point home

8. to grab for lifeline

55.

BRETT

Oscar.

OSCAR

Is Sophie with you? 3

BRETT

No. She's home.

OSCAR

What brings you here? 4

BRETT

I saw you on the news the other day. Congratulations.

OSCAR

Thanks. 5

BRETT

They said you were completely back to your old self.

OSCAR

Yeah. One hundred percent, apparently. 6

BRETT

Must be a strange feeling, being essentially a kid one day, then a grown man the next.

OSCAR

Strange isn't strong enough a word. It's a pretty tough adjustment. 7
Hopefully, it doesn't freak Sophie out too much. 8

BRETT

Uh huh. Well, listen. That's actually why I came here tonight.

(uneasy)

Ah, this is a little awkward, so... I'm just gonna come out and say it. I don't want you hanging around my daughter anymore. I know you two are friends, but I just don't think it's appropriate now. It's not right.

(pause)

Now, I know you're a good guy and all, Oscar.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 24 Actions (cont.)

9. to mourn

56.

64 CONTINUED: (2)

BRETT (CONT'D)

And I want to thank you for being her friend and helping her up to this point. But I feel like we're at a crossroads here. And whatever your intentions are - it doesn't matter. I think you should just let it go. Alright?

(then)

Anyway, that's all I have to say.

Brett gives a half-ass wave and leaves. Oscar is left wounded. 9.

CUT TO:

65 INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- LATER

Sophie's in a funk. Brett enters.

BRETT

What's up, monkey butt?

SOPHIE

Nothing.

BRETT

Listen, I talked to Oscar tonight.

SOPHIE

You did? What did he say? Why hasn't he called me?

BRETT

Things are different now, sweetie. HE'S different.

SOPHIE

It shouldn't matter. We're best friends.

BRETT

I don't think he sees it that way anymore.

SOPHIE

(devastated)

What do you mean?

BRETT

Well, mentally he's an adult now. He wants to be with people his own age.

(pause)

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

65

CONTINUED:

BRETT (CONT'D)

I mean, I hate to say that sweetie,
knowing how close you two were.

Sophie starts crying.

BRETT (CONT'D)

But hey, it's alright. You know?
Everybody loses friends at one time
or another. Even your Dad. People
move on and make new friends, just
like YOU'LL move on make new
friends. We certainly know you're
capable of it, right?

(beat)

I know it hurts right now, but
trust me. Soon you'll have another
best friend. Someone your own age.
And you'll forget all about him.

Brett looks to a concerned Angie at the doorway. He kisses
Sophie's forehead and exits, leaving her an emotional wreck.

CUT TO:

EXT. OSCAR'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Oscar takes out the trash.¹ Sophie RIDES UP pissed. She
throws down her bike and marches to him, but has no idea how
to speak to this new Oscar.

OSCAR

Sophie.²

She halts him.

SOPHIE

Force field.

(then)

I thought we were friends. The
biggest day of your life and you
didn't even call me.

OSCAR

I wanted to, but so much has been
going on.³ There were medical
tests, and reporters, and a million
things going through my head.⁴

(pause)

I'm sorry.⁵ I should have called.⁶

SOPHIE

Damn skippy you should've.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 25

Objective:

To let Sophie
down gently.

Actions:

1. to carry

2. to address

3. to calm

4. to excuse₆₆

5. to apologize

6. to clarify

BEAT 25 Actions (cont.)

7. to search

8. to force empathy

9. to coerce

10. to spur on

11. to lean

12. to notice

13. to push away

14. to prompt

15. to persuade

16. to tip off

66 CONTINUED:

58.

OSCAR
I just... I really didn't know how
you would react to all of this. 8 I
mean, it's a pretty dramatic
change, don't you think? 9

SOPHIE
(curiously eyeballs him)
Well, I won't lie. It IS kinda
weird.

OSCAR
Exactly. 10

SOPHIE
Come closer.

¹¹
He leans forward and she studies his face.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
It's like you're Oscar. But you're
not. But you are...

¹²
Oscar notices a NEIGHBOR watching them with interest.

OSCAR
No, I'm not. 13 How do you think
people would feel about us hanging
out now? 14

SOPHIE
Who cares about them? It never
bothered you before.

OSCAR
I was different then, Sophie. 15

SOPHIE
So what? Don't we have fun
together? Don't tell me you've
changed so much that you can't have
fun.

OSCAR
There's more to it than that. 16

SOPHIE
And what about the Art Fest? I
can't do our project alone. I need
you.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 25 Actions (cont.)

17. to beg pardon

18. to plead for forgiveness

66 CONTINUED: (2)

19. to grab attention

59.

OSCAR

(weakly)

I can't help you with that anymore. 17

SOPHIE

This isn't fair! Just because you're suddenly... grown up, I get tossed aside? I haven't changed. I'm still your friend. You know why? Because friends are supposed to stick together, no matter what.

OSCAR

I'm sorry. 18

Sophie stomps back to her bike.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Sophie... 19

SOPHIE

(riding Off)

Ass-wad!

CUT TO:

BEAT 26

Objective:

to gain peace
with my decision.

Actions:

67

INT. OSCAR'S HOUSE, DEN -- LATER

1. to observe

2. to remember

3. to reflect

Oscar peruses the "Simple Oscar" pictures on the wall. How queer it is to see himself that way. He starts pulling them down. 2

Then, he grabs a picture from his former life. He's with his girlfriend LISA, who's giving him a big smooch. His best friend REUBEN is next to them, jokingly gagging.

Oscar thinks back... 3

DISSOLVE TO:

BEAT 27

Objective:

to have a
fun evening

Actions: 68

1. to wait

2. to greet

3. to lure

EXT. REUBEN'S HOUSE

Ten years ago. "Simple" Oscar sits at the porch steps holding a box of Chinese Checkers, waiting. Lisa exits with Reuben. They are dressed for a night on the town.

LISA

Oscar, what are you doing here?

OSCAR

Hey, Lisa. Hey, Reuben? I brought Chinese Checkers. 3

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 27 Actions (cont.)

4. to convince

5. to lie

68

CONTINUED:

6. to comply

7. to accommodate

8. to ease

9. to yield

10. to let go

REUBEN

Oscar, man. We told you we were going out tonight.

OSCAR

That's why I wore my good shoes. 4

LISA

I'm sorry, Oscar. But you can't come with us. You know that.

OSCAR

I know. 5

LISA

You should probably get home.

OSCAR

Okay. Maybe I'll play with my Dad. 7
My Dad's good at Chinese checkers. 8

LISA

Yeah. That sounds great.

REUBEN

Yeah. Have fun, guy.

OSCAR

Okay. You too. Bye, bye. 10

BEAT 28

Objective:

to make amends
with Sophie

Actions: 69

Reuben and Lisa jump in their car and haul off.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK -- LATER

Sophie mopes at the "Ass Cheez" bench. Oscar sits next to her. She is at once happy and angry.

1. to sit

2. to award

3. to confide

OSCAR

You're right. 2

SOPHIE

Of course I am.

(then)

About what?

OSCAR

After the accident, every one of my friends abandoned me. 3
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 28 Actions (cont.)

4. to admit

5. to compliment

69

CONTINUED:

6. to charm

7. to credit

8. to commend

9. to call out

10. to take jab

11. to appreciate

12. to bond with

13. to grab attention

14. to suggest

15. to advise

16. to propose

OSCAR (CONT'D)

And for the next ten years, people went out of their way to steer clear of me.⁴ And then along came this funny, sweet, interesting...⁵

SOPHIE

Talented...

OSCAR

(smiles)

Talented, completely nutty and insane little girl.⁶ And it didn't matter that I was slow, or talked funny or any of that stuff.⁷ She saw past all that.⁸ I'd be an idiot to toss someone like her aside.⁹

SOPHIE

More like a bonafide butt munch.

OSCAR

Yes. A big, smelly, butt munch.¹⁰
(pause)

Anyway. Thank you, for being there.¹¹

SOPHIE

So... does this mean we're still friends?

Oscar ANIMAL DAPS-- 12

OSCAR

Snail.

She smiles, relieved.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

But listen.¹³ It's probably best if your parents didn't know we're hanging out together.¹⁴

SOPHIE

Why?

OSCAR

I'm not sure how they'd feel about it, so it's best to play it safe.¹⁵
Okay?¹⁶

61.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 28 Actions (cont.)

17. to paint

18. to wait

69

CONTINUED: (2)

62.

19. to stroll

20. to whistle

21. to pretend

22. to plea

SOPHIE

(nods)

No problem. I'm all about
sneakiness.

CUT TO:

70 EXT. LIBRARY -- AFTERNOON

Brett drops off Sophie. After he drives away, she takes off
down the street.

CUT TO:

71 INT. OSCAR'S ROOM -- LATER

Sophie and Oscar work on their art. 17

CUT TO:

72 INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

A room full of bored STUDENTS. Sophie gets a TEXT MESSAGE.
It reads: ANDREW JACKSON IS A SQUARE AFTER SCHOOL

CUT TO:

73 EXT. JACKSON SQUARE -- AFTERNOON

Sophie meets Oscar at the JACKSON STATUE dressed INCOGNITO. 18

CUT TO:

74 EXT. PARK -- AFTERNOON

Oscar's strolling through the park, ¹⁹whistling a happy tune. 20
Suddenly, he grabs his chest and falls to the ground in pain. 21

OSCAR

I think I'm having a heart attack! 22

A determined Sophie runs up to him dressed like a DOCTOR. She
puts a stethoscope to his heart.

SOPHIE

I need ten cc's of ambi-neumatic-
exbealadocious fluid. STAT!

ANGLE ON -- a Stuffed Animal

Obviously being controlled by a hand.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 28 Actions (cont.)

23. to eat

24. to persuade

63.

74

CONTINUED:

SNUGGLEFRITZ (V.O.)

But that amount could kill him!

SOPHIE

Just do it, Snugglefritz! We're
running out of time!

Snugglefritz trots off out of frame. We now see the CAMCORDER
Sophie and Oscar have set up, filming them.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Don't worry, son. You're in good
hands.

(takes off glasses)
I'm the best damn Doctor there is.

CUT TO:

75 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Angie and Brett watch TV. A blissful Sophie enters. She
gives them a peck on the cheek on her way to the kitchen.
The parents give each other a suspicious look.

CUT TO:

76 EXT. MOONWALK

Sophie and Oscar eat and watch the boats go by on the
Mississippi. 23

Oscar asks a MAN walking by to take their picture with his
Polaroid. 24

Sweet pose, then SNAP!

CUT TO:

77 INT. KITCHEN, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Angie does the dishes. Sophie strolls in with a backpack.

SOPHIE

See ya, Mom.

ANGIE

Where are you off to?

SOPHIE

Didn't Dad tell you? I'm sleeping
at Aunt Rita's.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 29

Objective: to complete the painting

64.

77 CONTINUED:

Actions:

1. to pull leg

2. to Kid

3. to a muse

4. to prepare

5. to jest

6. to summon laughter

7. to explain

8. to beat a dead horse

ANGIE
No. He didn't.

SOPHIE
I asked him this morning.

ANGIE
Alright. Well, have fun.

SOPHIE
I will.

CUT TO:

78 INT. OSCAR'S OFFICE -- LATER

Sophie works on their art as Oscar cracks jokes...

OSCAR
So this Irishman walks out in his
tighty whities carrying a gas
powered chainsaw. 1 You know what he
said to me? 2

SOPHIE
What?

OSCAR
"You saw me under where?" 3

Sophie laughs so hard, JUICE BLOWS from her nose.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Okay, I got another one. 4

SOPHIE
No more! You're gonna mess me up.

OSCAR
A man with a chicken walks into a
bar. 5 The chicken says, "Man, that
HAD to hurt!" 6

She laughs again, then abruptly stops.

SOPHIE
Wait. What?

OSCAR
Bar. He ran into a bar. 7 Hurt
himself. 8
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 29 Actions (cont.)

9. to give up

10. to compliment
78

11. to halt

12. to convince

13. to admire

14. to confirm

CONTINUED:

OSCAR (CONT'D)
(she's not getting it)
Ah, forget it. 9

Oscar watches her paint a bit, then grabs her brush.

Perfect. 10 OSCAR (CONT'D)
Stop right there. 11

SOPHIE
You sure?

OSCAR
Definitely. 12

They step back and admire their new creation. 13

OSCAR (CONT'D)
It's ready, chicklet. 14

SOPHIE
Southern Art Fest, here we come.

CUT TO:

79 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Phone rings. Angie answers.

ANGIE
Hello?
(listens)
Oh, hey Rita.
(listens)
Just folding some laundry. What's
up?
(listens)
Lunch? Sure. Brett's off tomorrow
and Sophie's already there anyway.
(listens)
What do YOU mean, "what do you
mean?" Sophie IS at your house,
isn't she?
(listens)
Well, where... Oh my god... Rita,
I'll call you back.

She hangs up and dials another number.

CUT TO:

65.

80 INT. BRETT'S WORK -- CONTINUOUS

A giant, bustling WAREHOUSE. Brett is checking a clipboard. He hands it back to a WORKER.

BRETT
Looks good. Roll with it.

His CELL rings.

BRETT (CONT'D)
(answering)
Yeah, hon?

INTERCUT--

ANGIE
Have you heard from Sophie tonight?

BRETT
No. Why? She's at your sister's, right?

ANGIE
She's supposed to be, but Rita doesn't know anything about it.

BRETT
That little...

ANGIE
I'm starting to get worried. It's been almost five hours since she left the house.

BRETT
Angie. Don't worry. I think I know where she is.

He hangs up, and he ain't happy.

CUT TO:

81 INT. TENT -- LATER

CU on Oscar's creepy face, illuminated by the flashlight he holds. He has Sophie on edge with the scary story he tells.
[His story is INTERCUT with Brett making his way to them]

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 30
Objective:
to entertain Sophie
Actions:
1. to illuminate
2. to captivate

BEAT 30 Actions (cont.)

- 3. to draw in
- 4. to spell out

67.

81 CONTINUED:

- 5. to creep out
- 6. to warn
- 7. to unsettle
- 8. to build anticipation
- 9. to illustrate
- 10. to pile up tension

OSCAR

She was the only one left.³ All her friends were dead, mangled and rotting in maggot infested pools of their own blood.⁴ But the Meathook Murderer's thirst for revenge was insatiable.⁵ And as she hid in the boathouse, he would come for her.⁶

82 EXT. BRETT'S WORK -- MOMENTS LATER

- 11. to create suspense

12. to frighten Brett jumps into his CAR and races off.

83 INT. TENT

OSCAR

The sound of his footsteps got closer, louder with each passing step.⁷ Soon, he was at the door...⁸

84 EXT. OSCAR'S HOUSE

Brett BEATS on the front door. Luis answers.

LUIS

Hello, Brett.

Brett forces his way inside.

BRETT

Where are they?

LUIS

They're in the backyard. Is something the matter?

85 INT. TENT -- CONTINUOUS

OSCAR

His breath pierced through the worn cracks and splinters of wood and she could smell the vile stench of death.⁹ The metal of his hook scratched across the door lock.¹⁰ She froze in terror when the lock split in two.¹¹ The door creaked open... and he raised his hook... and before she knew it--¹²

The tent suddenly UNZIPS. Sophie SCREAMS. Brett enters and peers straight at Oscar, incensed.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 31
Objective:
to protect myself

68.

85
Actions:
1. to block
2. to escape

CONTINUED:

BRETT

You son of a bitch!

He PULLS Sophie out of the tent and lunges on top of Oscar, PUNCHING him unmercifully.

BRETT (CONT'D)

I told you to stay away from her!

SOPHIE

Daddy, what are you doing? Stop!

Oscar CLOSES HIS EYES. Everything SLOWS DOWN as he imagines himself floating in SPACE. Then--

Sophie starts to pound desperately on Brett's back to get his attention.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Stop! Please!

Brett turns to her with his fist cocked like he's going to hit her. She cowers.

He eases off. Sophie runs into the house crying.

BEAT - as he looks to a bloodied and bruised Oscar.

BRETT

Why couldn't you just stay a retard.

CUT TO:

86 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Angie waits nervously by the phone. Brett and Sophie suddenly BURST in, scaring her.

BRETT

Go to your room!

Sophie runs off in tears.

ANGIE

What the hell happened?

Brett just puts up his hand and walks away, furious.

CUT TO:

BEAT 32

Objective: To find joy again after the loss of a friend.

Actions:

69.

1. to open up
2. to breakdown

87

INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

3. to clarify

Sophie charges in and starts to DESTROY her room in a fit of emotional RAGE.

4. to release

5. to place

CUT TO:

88

EXT. OSCAR'S BACKYARD -- LATER

6. to call into question

Oscar stares into a blazing FIRE PIT, rapt in intense thought. Luis joins him and hands over an ice towel.

7. to declare

8. to vent

9. to snap at

10. to extinguish

OSCAR

It's strange.¹ When I was trapped in that simple mind-set, everything was so much bigger. More vivid and clear.² Like I was seeing through a child's eyes.³

(pause)

Now, it's all muddled and I can't seem to make sense of anything.⁴

He puts the towel to his eye.⁵ It's painful.

OSCAR (CONT'D)

What's wrong with me?⁶ After all I've been through, I'm still a long way from "normal".⁷ I don't know who I am or what the hell I'm supposed to be.⁸ And now a little girl's life is screwed up because of it.⁹

LUIS

You were just following your heart, Son. There's no shame in that.

OSCAR

Look where it got me.¹⁰

Oscar dumps water onto the fire, putting it out.¹¹

CUT TO:

SHOTS OF OSCAR AND SOPHIE'S FAMILIAR HAUNTS:

89 1. THE "ASS CHEEZ" BENCH. VACANT.

90 2. THE SCHOOL STEPS. NO ONE THERE.

BEAT 32 Actions(cont.)

11. To capture

12. to endure

13. to capture

14. to observe

91

3. MOONWALK. EMPTY.

15. to abort

70.

CUT TO:

92

INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- DAY

From the view of the window, CHILDREN are at play. We move to the bed and BOOM DOWN underneath, where Sophie plays with a toy. She's talking herself and, perhaps Cookiepuss.

CUT TO:

93

INT. JEWELRY STORE -- DAY

JEWELERS set diamonds and repair watches as Oscar takes product shots of jewelry.¹¹ He looks like he wants to be anywhere but there.¹²

94

EXT. FOYER, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Halloween. Two adorable TRICK OR TREATERS knock on the door. A depressed Sophie answers, holding a giant bowl overfilled with candy.

TRICK OR TREATER

Trick or Treat!

Sophie flicks a piece at one of them, hitting him in the eye. Then, she dumps the whole bowl on top of the other one. KIDS come charging in and scramble for every morsel on the ground.

CUT TO:

95

EXT. JACKSON SQUARE -- DAY

Oscar takes a picture of the St. Louis Cathedral.¹³ He sits and looks at the picture. It's normal and dull.¹⁴

He crumbles it.¹⁵

CUT TO:

96

INT. CLASSROOM -- DAY

A STUDENT stands in front of the class holding a rainbow colored KITE. SHOW & TELL is written on the chalkboard behind her.

KITE GIRL

This is a kite. It's my most favorite kite in the world.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

KITE GIRL (CONT'D)

Every Sunday afternoon, me, my
 Father and his life partner Greg
 fly it in the park. Those Sundays
 are the best days of my life.

(then)

Thank you.

CUT TO:

A STUDENT with a ROCK.

ROCK BOY

I found this rock on the
 playground. The bug I smashed with
 it is still there.

CUT TO:

An awkward SAMANTHA (14), who we'll meet later, with a
 colorful clay sculpture.

SAMANTHA

I present to you Sefaria, daughter
 of King Biffel and the Queen
 Brumfelda. Sefaria is the last and
 most beautiful of the Lumerian elf
 princesses that live in the
 Shimmering Forest of Lumeria. Her
 wings are that of a butterfly and
 she can enchant the darkest of
 hearts with her sweet, angelic
 voice.

KID (O.C.)

Lame!

CUT TO:

Hoodlum #2 wearing an old lady's WEAVE.

HOODLUM #2

This is my Great Aunt Ester's
 Church weave. She says she likes to
 look her best for the Lord.

CUT TO:

Sophie, with a MOBILE VIDEO PLAYER.

SOPHIE

This is my mobile video player.
 (then)
 (MORE)

(CONTINUED)

96 CONTINUED: (2)

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
And this is what I found on my
Dad's computer.

She presents it to the class. It's playing a PORNO.

TEACHER
Sophie! No!

SOPHIE
Apparently, he's not gettin'
enough.

The STUDENTS gasp. The Teacher rips the player away from
her.

CUT TO:

97 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- LATER

Sophie is being reprimanded by Angie as Brett comes home.

ANGIE
Are you kidding me? What on earth
would possess you to do that,
Sophie?

BRETT
What now?

ANGIE
Do you know what your daughter did
at school?

BRETT
Learn...?

ANGIE
Oh, she learned something alright.
She learned where your folder full
of downloaded porn was and used it
for show and tell.

BRETT
(embarrassed)
Why would you do that, Sophie?

ANGIE
Because she doesn't think. She'll
do whatever it takes to be weird
and abnormal. I swear, what goes on
through that strange little mind of
yours, I'll never know...

(CONTINUED)

97 CONTINUED:

BEAT - as Sophie ZONES OUT. Everything SLOWS DOWN.

Angie's tirade becomes MUFFLED when suddenly, the MISSISSIPPI RIVER appears in the living room. Sophie imagines herself floating peacefully above its surface.

Then--

ANGIE (CONT'D)
(dumbfounded)
Sophie?!

Sophie snaps out of it and looks down in confusion. She just
PEED ON HERSELF.

SOPHIE
(robot voice)
Sophie is leaking vital fluids.
Malfunction! Malfunction!
Malfunction!

CUT TO:

98 INT. ANGIE & BRETT'S BEDROOM -- LATER

Angie and Brett are readying for bed.

ANGIE
What are we gonna do with that
child, Brett? That was excessive,
even for her.

BRETT
You know my thoughts on the
subject.

ANGIE
I'm not putting her in therapy.
She'll never live that stigma down.

BRETT
Then I don't know what to tell you,
hon.

BEAT

ANGIE
She was never like this with Oscar
around.

(CONTINUED)

BRETT

I told you I didn't want that name
uttered in this house.

ANGIE

You know I'm right.

BRETT

So, what are you saying? Let him
back in our life, after what he
did?

ANGIE

Well, No.

(thinking)

Maybe.

(then)

I don't know.

(pause)

Look. I'm not saying what he did
was right. But you can't deny that
for whatever reason, he was a
positive force in her life. A Yin
to her Yang if you will.

Brett rolls his eyes.

ANGIE (CONT'D)

I mean, it's not like you caught
them having sex in that tent.

BRETT

Jesus, Angie. Are you TRYING to
piss me off?

ANGIE

I'm just saying--

BRETT

Forget it. I don't wanna hear
another word about him. This
conversation's over.

Brett turns away.

BEAT

ANGIE

By the way, I took the liberty of
deleting your porn folder.
(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 32 Actions (cont.)

16. to read

17. to ward off

75.

98 CONTINUED: (2)

18. to shrug off

ANGIE (CONT'D)

19. to question motive

(then)

Pervert.

20. to end conversation

21. to plea for help

CUT TO:

99 INT. DEN, OSCAR'S HOUSE -- EVENING

Oscar's reading the paper, depressed.¹⁶ Luis enters.

LUIS

I didn't hear you come home.

OSCAR

(sarcastic)

That's cuz I wore my slippers to work.¹⁷

LUIS

How is work?

OSCAR

Uneventful.¹⁸

LUIS

You know, we never did celebrate your new job. We should go out and have a meal.

OSCAR

YOU wanna go out?¹⁹

LUIS

Curious, isn't it? Your father has hardly seen the sky in ten years. But change seems to be in vogue this season.

(pause)

C'mon. A celebratory dinner with your old man. What do you say?

OSCAR

No thanks.²⁰

LUIS

I tell ya, Son. I just don't like seeing you this way.

OSCAR

Then stop looking at me.²¹

BEAT - Luis knows the real problem.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 32 Actions (cont.)

22. to steer away

23. to throw in his face

99

CONTINUED:

24. to break it down

25. to ponder

26. to notice

LUIS

Why don't you go see her?

OSCAR

What? 22

LUIS

Go talk to her.

OSCAR

I'm sorry. Did my last ass
whipping not cause enough damage
for you? 23

LUIS

Son, I understand your relationship with her is a bit unorthodox, and perhaps going behind her father's back wasn't the wisest of choices. But regardless of the circumstances, I do believe you two have a bond that should be maintained. You just, you need to find some common ground that all parties can agree upon.

OSCAR

Dad, we're not the United Nations here. 24

LUIS

No.

(taps brain)

But you ARE at war. And a true friend is worth fighting for.

(then)

Trust me, the last thing you want is to live with regret.

Luis leaves him to ponder that. 25

Back to the paper. Oscar eyes are suddenly drawn to an ADVERTISEMENT. 26 It reads: JOIN US AT THE 32nd ANNUAL SOUTHERN ART FEST!

A light bulb goes off in his head. 1

CUT TO:

100 INT. LIVING ROOM, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- AFTERNOON

Angie exercises. The doorbell RINGS.

76.

101 INT. FOYER, SOPHIE'S HOUSE -- MOMENTS LATER

She answers. No one is there. A SOUTHERN ART BROCHURE rests mysteriously at the step.

CUT TO:

102 INT. SOPHIE'S ROOM -- LATER

Back from school, Sophie lumbers in. The brochure is on her desk. She picks it up and leafs through it. HIGHLIGHTED in the list of entries is:

"KINDLE" BY SOPHIE BADEAUX AND OSCAR AUSTIEGO.

ANGLE ON -- ANGIE

At the door with a smile. Sophie turns to her, excited.

CUT TO:

103 INT. ART GALLERY -- EVENING

The SOUTHERN ART FEST. Lots of well dressed ART LOVERS mingle with champagne and hors d'oeuvres.

Sophie and her parents walk down the line, viewing the entries. They come across Sophie and Oscar's...

SOPHIE

Look! That's it. This ones ours!

Angie and Brett take a moment to study it. The piece is littered with painted on POLAROIDs of Oscar and Sophie taken over the last year. Wavy strokes of vivid flames stretch vertically along the background.

Brett reads the gold colored QUOTE written in the corner. It says:

"In everyone's life, at some time, our inner fire goes out. It is then burst into flame by an encounter with another human being. We should all be thankful for those people who rekindle the inner spirit." A. Schweitzer

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

What do you think, Dad?

BRETT

I like it.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 33 Actions (cont.)

2. to behold

3. to contemplate

103

CONTINUED:

4. to decide

5. to hesitate

6. to spy

78.

Honest? SOPHIE

Yeah. It's good. It really is. BRETT

It's fabulous, sweetie. ANGIE

ANGLE ON -- OSCAR

watching from across the room.² Should he say hi?³

Angie and Brett move along. Sophie stays. Oscar makes his
move⁴ just as SAMANTHA(12) approaches Sophie. Oscar hesitates⁵
and watches this new girl with interest.⁶

AT THE PAINTING--

Hi. SAMANTHA

Howdy. SOPHIE

Samantha studies the piece then looks to her with a double
take when she realizes Sophie's in it.

Is this one yours? SAMANTHA

Yepper. SOPHIE

Coolio. It looks awesome. SAMANTHA

Thanks. SOPHIE

You're Sophie, right? SAMANTHA

That's what it says on my driver's
license. SOPHIE

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 33 Actions (cont.)

7. to observe

8. to discover

103

CONTINUED: (2)

79.

9. to greet

10. to thank

SAMANTHA

(chuckles)

I'm Samantha. We have English together.

SOPHIE

You sleep in class a lot.

SAMANTHA

I know, huh? Mrs. Archer's so boring.

SOPHIE

Tell me about it.

SAMANTHA

I heard her husband lost his left arm and leg last year.

SOPHIE

Really?

SAMANTHA

Yeah, he's "all right" now.

Samantha CRACKS herself up.

BACK TO OSCAR--

Observing their encounter.⁷ We HOLD here. The girls are becoming very animated and seem to be hitting it off.

ANGIE

Oscar?

Oscar turns. It's Angie and Brett.

OSCAR

Oh.⁸ Hey.⁹

ANGIE

Wow. You have really changed. You look great.

OSCAR

Much appreciated.¹⁰

ANGIE

Listen, Oscar. Thank you so much for doing this. Sophie is just overwhelmed.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 33 Actions(cont.)

11. to inform

12. to appreciate

103

CONTINUED: (3)

80.

BRETT

Yeah. Thanks.

OSCAR

(looks to Sophie)

It was no problem. Really.¹²

AT THE PAINTING--

The girls are having a blast...

SOPHIE

Okay, wait. Here's one: A man with a chicken walks into a bar. The chicken says, "Man! That had to hurt!".

Samantha LAUGHS.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

That's funny... Right?

Samantha nods, trying to contain her laughter.

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Okay.

(beat)

Why?

SAMANTHA

Because. He walked into a bar. You know, like a metal bar. Hit him right in the head.

SOPHIE

(getting it)

Oh my god.

(laughs)

Geez, I'm dense.

BEAT

SAMANTHA

You want some punch? My throat's as dry as a peanut.

SOPHIE

My heart doth patter at the notion.

SAMANTHA

(grandly)

Then I shall return forthwith.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 33 Actions (cont.)

13. to embrace

14. to ensure

103 CONTINUED: (4)

81.

15. to prompt

16. to go with the flow Samantha leaves. Sophie glances around and sees--

17. to hint at

SOPHIE

Oscar!

18. to downplay

19. to complain She runs into a warm embrace. 13

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

I missed you!

OSCAR

Me too, chicklet. 14

SOPHIE

Have you seen our painting yet?

OSCAR

Not yet. 15

SOPHIE

Then come on!

She suddenly GRABS his arm and pulls him toward it. 16

AT THE PAINTING--

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

It looks so groovy-licious on the wall! I don't know if it's the light or what, but it seems different then I remember.

OSCAR

It does, a little. 17

BEAT

SOPHIE

So what have you been up to?

OSCAR

Nothing much. 18 Got a job and stuff. 19

SOPHIE

A job?

(pinches his cheek)

My little boy is all grown up!

Everyone joins them. Samantha returns with punch.

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 33 Actions (cont.)

20. to bow out

21. to assure

103

CONTINUED: (5)

82.

22. to prove

23. to confirm

24. to encourage

SOPHIE (CONT'D)

Oh. Everybody. This is Samantha.
She's an ar-teest, like moi.

SAMANTHA

Bon jour.

SOPHIE

(to Samantha)
These are my parental units.
(then)
And this... is my friend, Oscar.

SAMANTHA

Great job on the painting.

OSCAR

Thanks.

SOPHIE

Dad, can Samantha go out to eat
with us tonight?

BRETT

I guess so. As long as it's
alright with her parents.

SOPHIE

What about Oscar? Can he come too?

BEAT - Brett's unsure.

OSCAR

No. That's okay. I already ate,
actually. 20

SOPHIE

Aw... C'mon Oscar.

OSCAR

No, really. 21 I'm stuffed. 22

SOPHIE

You sure?

OSCAR

²³Yeah. You girls go have fun. ²⁴

SOPHIE

I'll see you around, won't I?

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 33 Actions (cont.)

25. to finalize

26. to make peace with

103 CONTINUED: (6)

83.

27. to bond

28. to let go

29. to grab attention

30. to present

31. to give faith

32. to survey

33. to discover

34. to greet

35. to quiz

OSCAR
Sure.²⁵ Yeah... Of course.²⁶

SOPHIE
Okay.

She gives him an ANIMAL DAP-- 27

SOPHIE (CONT'D)
Rabbit.

BRETT
Well, we should get going.

ANGIE
Have a good night Oscar.

OSCAR
Good night.²⁸

As they leave---

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Hey girls. Hold up.²⁹

The girls turn. Oscar takes a Polaroid of them and presents it to Sophie.

OSCAR (CONT'D)
Here you go.³⁰

She refuses it.

SOPHIE
I'll get it from you the next time
I see you.

³¹
They share a smile, then part ways. Oscar turns to the
painting.³²

Moments later, Luis joins him.

LUIS
Oscar.

Oscar turns, surprised to see him.³³

³⁴ OSCAR
Hey, Dad. What are you doing here?³⁵

(CONTINUED)

BEAT 33 Actions (cont.)

36. to reflect

103 CONTINUED: (7)

84.

BEAT 34

Objective:

To mend relationship
with father.

Actions:

1. to express gratitude

2. to assure

3. to drive point home

4. to place

5. to complete

6. to celebrate

7. to redeem LONG BEAT

8. to inquire

LUIS

I wasn't about to miss my son's
first art showing for the world.

Oscar looks back to the painting, his thoughts drifting. 36

OSCAR

You know, I never did thank you for
taking care of me all those years. 1

LUIS

No thanks is necessary.

OSCAR

Yes, it is. 2

(then)

Thank you. 3

LUIS

Is everything okay, son?

Oscar adds the new photo with the others. 4

OSCAR

Perfect. 5

Oscar puts an arm around his dad and turns lively. 6

OSCAR (CONT'D)

Well, now. What do you say we go
have that celebratory dinner? 7

LUIS

"Celebration is the divine order of
togetherness."

OSCAR

Who said that? 8

LUIS

Luis Austiego.

They shoot each other a smile as they walk away.

ANGLE ON -- THE PHOTO OF SOPHIE & SAMANTHA

as a new friendship develops right in front of our eyes.

FADE OUT

Project Evaluation

I am always my worst critic when it comes to critiquing my performance in any production. In addition, I am writing this evaluation having only seen a portion of the footage since the film is not yet complete. Therefore, it is very difficult for me to say, with any objectivity, whether or not my overall performance did the script and character justice. I can only reflect on whether or not I was truly invested in each moment to gauge my personal success in this project. Although circumstances held me back on many occasions, and I allowed myself to be distracted by weather conditions, technical problems, or even the other actor not being invested, I took advantage of every moment I could and, one way or another, completed each scene on film with the appropriate investment on my part.

In film, unlike theatre, there is not always a rehearsal period (in this case, almost never) so thanks to multiple takes the ultimate goal of the performance was reached. Also, on a film shoot, the environment is not as safe as theatre. What I mean by this is that when shooting a film there are technical and environmental elements such as wind, rain, people walking into a shot or focus problems with the camera that can affect your performance. In theatre, you have more of a controlled environment and rehearsal time. Also, in film, since much of the time scenes are performed out of order, the performer must pay extra attention to the given circumstances and what led up to the scene. I was successful with cueing in on the given circumstances of each scene I was in.

When the director Brian Kaz and I were writing the screenplay, we wanted the film to be a comedy but one that was anchored in a very complex and serious plot thereby lending itself to more dramatic moments. We also wanted an unrealistic story that seemed as if it could really

happen (a fantasy). We wanted it to be a fun film but one that should be taken seriously. Oscar should not be just part of a sketch comedy type movie. The characters are entrenched in the struggles of their lives and the comedy comes from that as opposed to just a few funny jokes and gags. We wrote it this way because we wanted Oscar to be real to the audience. Oscar should not be someone just to laugh at. The audience should be on his side, feel for him, laugh with him and not at him, and if they do laugh at him, it should come out of an endearing trait or moment with Oscar. We are accomplishing this in the making of the film. I have been playing Oscar with the actions of moment to moment consciousness based on the given circumstances and where the script leads me. Each moment is earned and is true to the tone of the film.

I have struggled with how far to push the manifestation of Oscar's mental challenge, but I think I struck a balance, serving the script and the character well. I have done what the director wanted and what the script requires of Oscar with regards to his vocal work and physicality. With the script, Brian's direction, and my research I have executed an effective portrayal of the character of Oscar that is fitting for the script, character and the mood of the film.

I cannot begin to speculate what the success of the movie will be or how an audience will receive it because it is not completed. I can only go by Brian's reactions, how the scenes felt while I performed them and by the reactions of my fellow actors and others who were present at each shoot. I believe Brian was happy with my performance. He mainly was directing the other actors, I believe, because he trusts my talent and dedication. We were always on the same page when it came to the portrayal of Oscar. We wrote the screenplay together and knew exactly what the scene needed. Because Brian was the director, camera operator, and cinematographer, he was also focused a lot on the technical aspects and how the shot looked as far as composition and focusing. Every now and then when we would talk about the day's work he would compliment

me or we would discuss something he wanted me to work on with my character. Many times it was solicited from me because I wanted some kind of feedback and would periodically get paranoid that I was going too far or not doing enough. He would reassure me and even said one time, “When I’m watching the dailies, I love every moment Oscar is on the screen. He makes me smile.” Sometimes he would say that it was up to me if we tried takes different ways, but he was happy with what I gave him when we filmed. When I asked him to comment on working with me and about what he thought about my overall performance in this production, this was his response:

I am very pleased with Blake's performance of Oscar, easily as much or more so than other projects we have worked on. He is someone you can count on to go above and beyond whether he's playing a run of the mill thief, psychologically scarred cannibal or a sweet and child-like mentally handicapped man. Blake's strengths as an actor are his willingness to understand fully the mindset and mannerisms of a character he plays and the ability to meld into that persona completely at the snap of the fingers (essential in the stop/start world of filmmaking). His Oscar is sweet, affable, charming and yet very complex. Exactly as envisioned. Blake had to strike a very delicate balance with Oscar so as to not offend nor make the audience uncomfortable with his relationship with Sophie. I believe he has succeeded where many others would fail. Blake has a great work ethic and overwhelming desire to play a particular scene as best as possible. In short, he truly cares about the projects he works on.

Charlie Farve Hayes, who is the producer and casting director for the production, wrote these comments with regards to working with me and my performance in this production:

I have been fortunate to work with Blake (in both theatre and film) from his first foray onto the stage in 2001. Blake is an incredible natural talent in performing, and I have seen him grow as a performer over the years into a wonderful actor. With the role of Oscar, Blake uses all the actor's tools to create a character that is authentic, tragic, and comical. His Oscar is so real that I am often emotionally affected by just watching his performance during the filming. There are times when I laugh at how cute and silly Blake's Oscar is, and there are times when my heart breaks in anguish when watching Blake's performance in the more dramatic/tragic scenes. I have said numerous times that Blake's forte (in acting) is his ability to create a character, and he certainly created a memorable one with Oscar. Of course, Blake's performance in the final cut of the film will be fantastic, but I actually do not have to wait for the complete film to say that he is great in this role. I do not need to see the final edited film. I have been there for every shoot of *My Friend, Oscar* and watched Blake's performances. In my head, the film is complete, and his Oscar is brilliant. I only wish that others would have had the same opportunity that I have in watching a true talent such as Blake become Oscar.

During filming, Blake sets a great example to the other actors. He is very organized and efficient without being cold or unemotional. He is always prepared to do whatever the director asks of him whether it is doing 15 takes of the same scene because our child actor needs more takes; working with the other actors

while we set up another shot; or being a crew member of a scene he is not in. I have witnessed this type of dedication and eagerness in both his film work and his stage work. He is a true gentleman of the theatre (and film).

Luis Q. Barroso, who co-starred as my character's father in this production, had this to say about my performance:

It has been a pleasure to work with Blake as a fellow actor and see him develop the role of Oscar. I have seen him hone his craft during the past few years, and I can truly say that he has a deep understanding of what acting is and a strong command of the actor's tools: body, voice and imagination. The role challenged Blake in the use of his body by the limped walk that his character possesses. He has been extremely consistent on this as well as in physically depicting moments of joy and moments of sadness. He is an actor that does not solely depend on his face to express emotion. Vocally, he has had to deal with a stuttered speaking pattern during the first half of the project. He made sure that his speaking was completely understood. Finally, he brought a lot of imagination to the role from the very beginning by having made some very solid character choices that were right on target. His transformation from the affected Oscar to the normal Oscar was a joy to behold. Blake did appear a bit over anxious at times being too impatient with himself (during the process, not the performance), but this is what happens when one strives for perfection, and he certainly was going for that. In my own opinion, he achieved it with professionalism.

Everyone that has seen the rough cuts of some of the scenes likes them and tell me that that the film will be great. They also said that my performance worked very well. Ben Matheny and Rebecca Laborde, two undergraduate students at UNO, said that my performance was believable as well as entertaining. Based on my own feelings about my performance and the reactions I have received so far, I am happy with my portrayal of Oscar. Aside from wishing we had more money and more crew members so I could concentrate more on my role, I do not think I could have changed much of what I did. I think that I portrayed Oscar in a truthful way on screen. Although, I also feel that I have not had enough time away from this project to make any real hindsight observations about what I could have done better. The film itself is not complete. Ultimately, it is up to the audience to decide if my performance is truthful, believable and/or entertaining in the finished film when it is shown at the premiere in September of 2009.

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Appendix A: Credits for *My Friend, Oscar*.

Writers	Blake Balu and Brian Kaz
Story	Brian Kaz
Director	Brian Kaz
Executive Producer	Brian Kaz
Producers	Blake Balu and Charlie Farve Hayes
Casting and Locations	Charlie Farve Hayes
Editing, Special Effects and Post	Brian Kaz
Music	A.J. Caruso and Brian Kaz
Lighting and Sound	Michael Phillips, Kevin Kazmierczak, and Michael Ward
Production Assistants	Alex Ates, Brooke Snyder, Arynne Sherousse,

Cast:

Oscar Austiego	Blake Balu
Sophie Badeaux	Taylor Slade
Luis Austiego	Luis Q. Barroso
Angie Badeaux	Rebecca Frank
Brett Badeaux	Lucas Harms
Doctor Morten	David W. Hoover
CousinVic	Patrick Payne
Memaw	Sharon Smetherman
Uncle Mel	Michael P. Sullivan
Lisa	Kat Johnston
Reuben	Ryan Bruce

Teacher	Megan Harms
Levee Jogger	Katie Howe
Samantha	Rebecca Farley
Hoodlum #1	Daniel Ammos
Hoodlum #2	Roque Caston
Trick or Treater	Jaqueline Gross
Skater Kid	Dominic Lloyd
Cassandra	Abigail Ramirez
Fire Hat Student	Austin Evans
Students	Bonnie Dupre, William Fontenot, Caroline Fontenot, Benjamin Hernandez, Sydney Dodson, Morgan Dunn, Samantha Hodges, Cody Hunter, Megan Hunter, Seth Kelly, Joshua Blouin, Jared Blouin, Lindsay Blouin, Amanda Kishbaugh, Rosie Lloyd, Nina Padilla, Logan Sylve, and Reina Tucker

Appendix B: Movie Posters





Appendix C: Movie Screen Shots













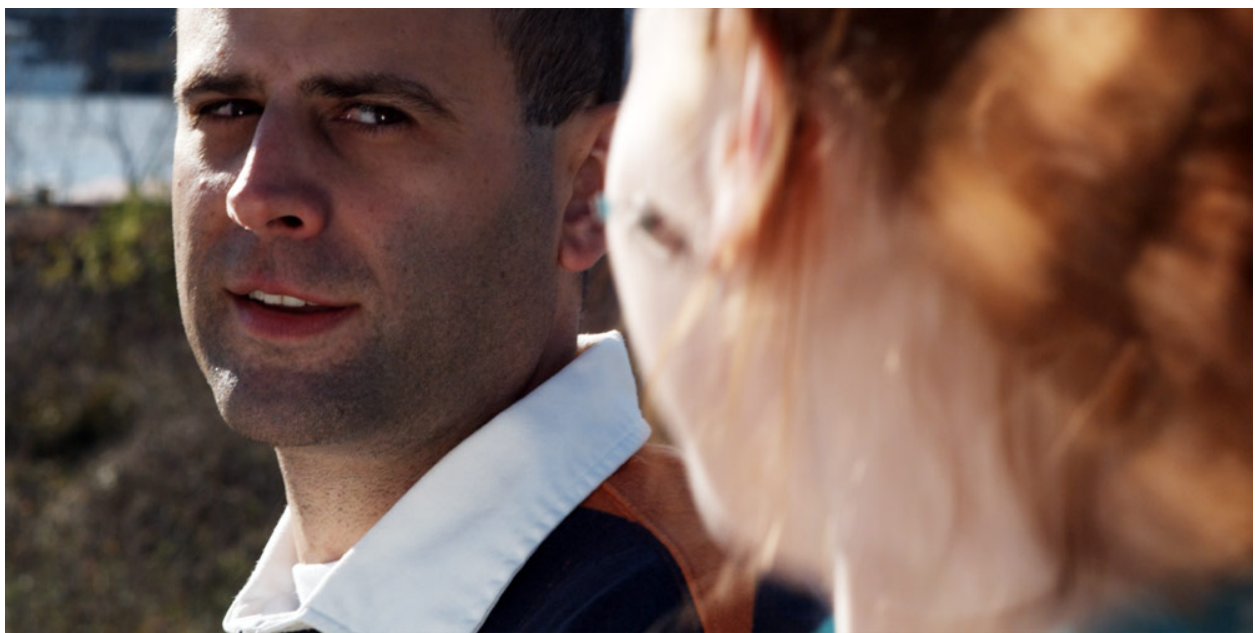
















Vita

Blake Balu was born at Baptist Hospital in New Orleans, LA on October 13, 1972. He graduated from Holy Cross high school in New Orleans in 1990, and received his B.A. in 1999 with a double major in Psychology and Sociology from Southeastern Louisiana University in Hammond. After graduating, he went on to do social work for six years in the New Orleans area. During this time, in 2001, he began acting and helped start and maintain a theatre group called DRAMA! for five successful seasons. His first performance was in the southern U.S. premiere of *The Travelling Companion* by Tennessee Williams. In 2004 he became one of the founders and producers of the successful Reyo-San Pictures film and television production company. In the fall of 2006 he entered into the performance in acting program at the University of New Orleans to pursue a Master of Fine Arts. Blake intends to use his degree and training to have a career in professional acting in film, theatre and teaching.