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The Snoops

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The Snoops

A Screenplay

Presented to

The Faculty of the School of Film & Television,

Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles, California

In Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Fine Arts

By

Rigvedita Nigam

APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy
for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Screenwriting

Student: Rigvedita Nigam Date: 04.17.2015

Committee Co Chair (690): _____ Date: 4/17/15

Committee Co Chair (691): _____ Date: 5/7/15

Advanced Screenplay Project Title:

The Snoops

Criteria for advancement to candidacy:

Student has demonstrated sufficient ability and knowledge to complete the thesis project.

✓ Approved to Candidacy

_____ Not Approved to Candidacy

Comments:

ADVANCED SCREENPLAY PROJECT APPROVAL

The Advanced Screenplay Project submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting submitted by the candidate fulfils the requirements and standards set forth in the University Bulletin by the Division.

Screenplay Title: The Snoops

Student: Rigvedita Nigam Date: 04.17.2015

Committee Co Chair: SCWR 690 BETH SERIN

Signed: Beth Serin Date: 4/17/15

Committee Co Chair: SCWR 691 Karol Hoeffner

Signed: Karol Hoeffner Date: 5/7/2015

Graduate Director: Karol Hoeffner

Signed: Karol Hoeffner Date: 5/7/2015

Dean: Stephen Ujiloki

Signed: Date: 5/7/15

This feature length screenplay written by

Rigvedita Nigam

under the guidance of a faculty committee from the School of Film & Television at Loyola Marymount University, and approved by the members of the committee, has been presented to and accepted by the Graduate School in partial fulfillment of the thesis requirements for the degree of Master of Fine Arts in Screenwriting.

Advanced Screenplay Project Committee:

Committee Chair: SCWR 690

Committee Member: SCWR 691

Graduate Director

Dean, School of Film & Television

5/7/15

Date

THE SNOOPS

Written by

Rigvedita Nigam

3955 Brunswick Avenue,
Los Angeles, CA 90039
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EXT. OCEAN - NIGHT

A night out of a picture book -- starry skies -- foam tipped waves -- huge, yellow moon.

A periscope rears its head above the waters.

SUPER: OFF THE COAST OF NEW JERSEY, 1942

Then the U-boat surfaces -- slowly rising -- water dripping down it's gleaming hull.

Until the whole of the submarine is visible. A Nazi swastika is etched into black metal.

The hull flap opens. Two SPIES emerge, lowering an inflatable dinghy into the water.

CUT TO:

EXT. DIRT ROAD - NIGHT

A patrolling COAST GUARD stops to light a cigarette. The lighter doesn't spark.

COAST GUARD
Damn Zippo!

Something rustles in the undergrowth behind. He spins around, gun out. His eyes probe the darkness beyond the trees and the beach.

COAST GUARD (CONT'D)
Who goes there?

EDMUND DASCH, 35, steps out of the shadows. He is blessed with a sympathetic face...the appearance of a man who has been through much but has managed to retain his sense of humor.

EDMUND
Easy, man.

HERMANN BURGER trails behind him...gun in hand behind back. A handsome man except for the cold, dead eyes that would send a chill down your spine if you looked at him closely.

Unseen by the guard, Edmund pushes Hermann's gun hand down and steps forward.

COAST GUARD
Who are you?

EDMUND
Walter. This is my friend Bobby.

Hermann gives a placid smile.

COAST GUARD
Curfew's set for 8 'o clock. It's ten past. You should be at home, with your families.

EDMUND
We were on the beach --

HERMANN
-- looking for sand crabs.

CLOSE ON the guard's trigger finger stiffening in readiness.

COAST GUARD
And did you find any?

EDMUND
No. We were too busy staring at that monstrous U-boat.

At the last words, the guard goes on red alert.

COAST GUARD
You're saying you saw a sub?

EDMUND
Straight ahead...about a mile off shore.

The guard pulls out a pair of binoculars and focuses them on the moonlit ocean.

POV BINOCULARS: The submarine sinks -- the swastika clearly visible.

COAST GUARD (O.C.)
(alarmed)
That's a German sub all right! We've got to warn the cutters.

He takes his eyes off the binoculars. Finds himself staring at point blank range into the barrel of a Beretta.

HERMANN
(slowly)
Goot. Bay.

Edmund takes his cap off in mock respect knowing what will happen next. BANG! Hermann's gun goes off.

LATER

The men walk on the dirt road, weighed down by heavy backpacks.

HERMANN (CONT'D)
How was dat?

EDMUND
You sound like an American who spent all his life in Germany.

HERMANN
(in German)
But I have spent my whole life in Germany!

EDMUND
When in Rome, do as the Romans do. Or rather, speak as they do.

HERMANN
But we are not in --

His eyes light up with understanding.

EDMUND
Do you know why I feel sorry for you? You'll go through your whole life with no appreciation for irony.

Hermann lights a cigarette.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
You better leave the talking to me. Did you even realize this isn't crab season?

Hermann shrugs.

HERMANN
These lucky strikes have no kick.

EDMUND
(coldly)
I'm sorry you're having to smoke third grade cigarettes on a mission.

Their voices fade away as they vanish into the darkness.

KIDS (PRE-LAP)
William! William! William!

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

TEENAGED KIDS cheer WILLIAM DOOLITTLE (12), perched atop a handyman's ladder facing a poster glued to the school wall.

William looks down at the boys nervously. He has pixie ears and an impish appearance with thick, curly hair.

WILLIAM
Are you sure?

TALL TEENAGE KID
Ya. Nothing's gonna happen. Don't worry, we're keeping watch.

William looks unsure but grabs his black marker. His hand moves in quick, expert strokes as he paints a black handlebar moustache on the Mayor's bulbous face.

ON POSTER: The Mayor shakes a disapproving finger above a pinball machine. Beneath, the words 'Help us win the war. Abstain from pinball'.

William pushes a pair of binoculars hanging from his neck out of the way.

WILLIAM
What now?

He's basking in the sunshine of the older boys's attentions.

CHUBBY TEENAGE KID
Give 'im cherry lips!

TALL TEENAGE KID
Stick 'is tongue out!

William giggles, pulls out a red marker and starts painting lips.

CLOSE ON POSTER: The Mayor's lips look like he wants to kiss the naughty public. His disapproving finger is now topped by a long, red nail.

The boys are enjoying the makeover when one kid nudges another and soon the group takes up a whispered chant.

CHUBBY TEENAGE KID
It's pain-in-the-butt Humphrey.
Vamoose!

He runs for the cover of the tree lined street, followed by the other kids.

Tall teenage kid throws a tomato at the Mayor as he sneaks past.

SPLAT! The tomato's red juice drips down over the Mayor's face.

WILLIAM
Hey! What do you think you're doing?

He looks around. The other kids are nowhere to be seen.

A tough looking beat cop approaches, trailing a stick dangerously on the ground. This is OFFICE PAYNE. William freezes.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Darn!

He scrambles down in fright-- falls -- brings the ladder down with him.

PAYNE
Hey! Kid! Stop right there.

William picks himself up and starts running like a sprinter off the blocks. Blood runs down one knee.

Payne studies the ruined poster -- notices a pair of fine looking binoculars strewn on the ground.

EXT. STREET - DAY

William's legs pound the sidewalk as he runs at top speed. He looks over his shoulder. No Payne.

He slows to a stop, hands on knees, gasping for breath. Realization hits.

WILLIAM
Oh no!

He turns around, starts running back to school.

INT. PARLOR - DOOLITTLE HOME - DAY

A laundry room cleverly restyled into an at-home salon. Walls papered in green and white. Steam rises out of a ceramic basin standing in a corner.

Somewhere, a radio is switched on at a low volume.

AMY DOOLITTLE, 25, gently massages shampoo into DAISY SWEENEY'S hair. Her own hair is a mass of wild curls pinned up in a hurry.

DAISY
-- I was frying the chicken when Johnny brought in the mail, doing a war dance, mind you.

AMY
(chuckling)
I'd like to have seen that.

Amy helps Daisy to the basin.

DAISY
I said 'honey, you don't want me to burn your supper' but he's not listening. And chicken's his favorite! He says to me ' mommy, daddy wrote a letter.

Amy freezes for a second, then starts washing hair.

AMY
Tucker's coming home?

DAISY
Tomorrow evening. Can you imagine?

AMY
(flat voiced)
That's wonderful.

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - DAY

William moves stealthily along the brick wall, careful to stay in the shadows.

He searches for and spots the binoculars. Makes a dash for it. But Payne's lying in wait like a cat.

PAYNE
Gotcha!

Payne grabs his jacket but William lets him pull it off.

In one great burst of motion, he sweeps up the binoculars and races away.

PAYNE (CONT'D)
I'm coming for you, Doolittle!

INT. PARLOR - DOOLITTLE HOME - DAY

Amy looks morose as she wrings hair, then expertly flips it back, ties a towel around it and leads Daisy back to her chair.

DAISY
Louisa -- she works over at the convention hall -- says to me 'first things first, you're to fix yourself'. You're Tucker's homecoming present. So I came right to you.

AMY
(forced)
Good advice.

Daisy picks up on her mood.

DAISY
Here I am, gabbing on about my husband. What news of Frederick, dear?

Amy sighs. She's young and pretty, but her eyes look troubled and there are dark circles around them.

AMY
I've had nothing from the War office. God knows I've called them but it's always --
(deepens voice)
-- we'll notify you when we know.'

She picks up the hair dryer. As she turns it on, a mass of hair starts to blow around Daisy's face.

AMY (CONT'D)
It's like the sky swallowed his plane whole or something.

EXT. STEEL PIER - DAY

William races through CROWDS strolling in the bright, sunny afternoon. He knocks into KID eating an ice cream cone.

The ice cream SPLATTERS on the ground.

WILLIAM
Sorry!

Behind him, Payne pedals furiously on his bicycle.

INT. PARLOR - DOOLITTLE HOME - DAY

Amy cuts Daisy's front hair into bangs.

DAISY
Frederick's missing, and you working and raising that boy by yourself. I don't know how you do it all.

AMY
I don't either.

Daisy opens a Good Housekeeping magazine. It's book marked at The Working Mother's Guide to Raising the Perfect Child.

DAISY
(teasingly)
This is your guiding light?

Amy gives an embarrassed laugh.

AMY
Guess I need more tricks up my sleeve to keep up with him.

She unpins the overall off Daisy. Daisy goes over to the mirror. She likes what she sees.

DAISY
Where's William? My Stuart came home an hour ago.

AMY
Playing cops and robbers, no doubt. That seems to be the latest fad these days.

EXT. MOVIE THEATRE - STEEL PIER - DAY

William stands in line with other PEOPLE trying to buy a ticket. It's a great hiding place out in the open. Payne sails past, never spotting him.

William runs in the other direction.

EXT. MARKET PLACE - DAY

-- He runs past stores

-- TOURISTS posing for a photograph.

-- turns into a street.

EXT. STREET - DAY

William runs down the neat, tree lined street with small, basic houses on either side.

EXT. DOOLITTLE HOME - DAY

Out of breath, William takes a moment before reaching for the door knob. A HAND grabs him.

PAYNE
Told ya.

WILLIAM
Please sir, they made me do it.

PAYNE
Take me for a fool?

William lowers his eyes, ashamed. Payne knocks on the door.

INT/EXT. DOOLITTLE HOME - DAY

Amy opens the door to find William standing sheepishly under Payne's arm.

AMY
Oh! What happened -- your knee!
It's bleeding.

PAYNE
He was drawing moustaches and such
like on the mayor's anti-pinball
message.

AMY
(aghast)
How could you?

PAYNE
It’s a shame when Captain Doolittle’s son becomes the leader of the local riff raff. Ma’am, I mean no disrespect but the boy needs a firm hand.

Amy pulls William inside firmly.

AMY
I’ll see to it that the poster is replaced.

PAYNE
Glad to hear it, ma’am.

He takes a little black notebook out of his back pocket. Flips it open for William to see.

PAYNE (CONT’D)
See this?

CLOSE ON NOTEBOOK: A list of felons on each page with their crimes written alongside.

-- Dwayne Hawkins, petty theft.

-- Brady Muldoon, escaped convict.

Payne whips out a pencil and starts writing William's name on the page below the list.

-- William Doolittle, Vandal.

William stares at his title in horror.

PAYNE (CONT’D)
Your name’s on the page, son. I’d advise you to be real careful from now on.

He gives him the binoculars.

PAYNE (CONT’D)
These are military issue. Where did you get them?

WILLIAM
My dad gave them to me.

PAYNE
Then they're precious. You shouldn't leave them lying around.

He exchanges glances with Amy.

PAYNE (CONT'D)
Boy his age needs something to do. Else it's gonna be a long summer.

INT. DOOLITTLE HOME - DAY

Amy shuts the door behind Officer Payne. She turns to face William.

AMY
So what happened <u>this</u> time?

WILLIAM
Billy and Curtis forced me. They said I had to do it or else.

AMY
Two weeks ago you lit a bonfire under the pier and almost lost an eye. Billy made you do that too?

William thinks fast.

WILLIAM
It was Stubby's idea. But he got scared at the last minute so he asked me --

She points the hair dryer at him.

AMY
Fool anyone you like, kid. But you can't fool me. You're grounded.

She walks out of the room. William follows.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

Amy opens a medicine cabinet and pulls out rubbing alcohol and a bandage.

WILLIAM
(pleading)
But I'm going down the Diving Bell with the gang tomorrow.

Amy sits him on a chair. Starts cleaning the cut on his knee.

AMY
One of these days, you're going to realize the difference between doing something worthwhile and a dumb stunt to impress the older kids.

WILLIAM
They think I'm cool.

AMY
Next time, think what your father would say. Would he agree?

She puts on the dressing, puts everything back in it's place.

AMY (CONT'D)
I have a big day tomorrow. Nine clients. You'll be helping me.

WILLIAM
(horrified)
In the salon?

She nods.

AMY
I just did Daisy's hair. Grab the mop and get sweeping, kiddo.

She drops a kiss on his sulky head -- gently pushes him toward the salon.

INT. SALON - NIGHT

William sweeps up hair -- tips it into a pan -- trashes it. The radio plays.

NARRATOR
-- U.S forces smash Nazi lines in Northwest Germany. Two more planes attacking Japs in the Pacific were struck down. As of now, the search for Captain Doolittle's missing squadron is still on. Those four planes were lost at sea in a stealth attack against the Germans. That's all on the news tonight.

He looks downcast as he arranges bottles and brushes neatly on the counter.

NARRATOR (CONT'D)
Boys and Girls! Your attention please. Presenting a new, exciting radio program featuring the thrilling adventures of an amazing personality - Superman. Faster than an airplane..

The doorbell chimes loudly.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amy moves to open the door. William trails behind her, mop in hand.

WESTERN UNION MESSENGER (O.S.)
Telegram!

The word has an instant, paralyzing effect on Amy. Color drains from her face.

AMY
(whispers)
Frederick.

She opens the door to a solemn faced MESSENGER (15).

WESTERN UNION MESSENGER
Good evening. Telegram for Mrs. Doolittle.

Amy takes the proffered envelope in shaking hands. Then promptly faints.

LATER

William anxiously fans her face with the Good Housekeeping magazine. Amy opens her eyes.

WILLIAM
It's not from the war office!
It's from grandma.

She manages to sit up. Her face looks chalk white.

AMY
Thank the lord. Is she okay?

WILLIAM
(reading aloud)
Dear Amy.
(MORE)

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I've had a bad fall and broken my ankle. Could you come here at once? If you've money to spare for the doctor, that would be useful. Love, Cynthia Doolittle.
(to Amy)
Can you go?

AMY
Don't be silly. I'll just have to cancel my appointments. You'll have to manage, there's enough food in the fridge and --

WILLIAM
Mrs. Ferguson and Mrs. Parker and Miss Norma don't even have telephones. How are you going to tell them?

Amy chews on a lip. She hadn't thought of that.

AMY
I'll think of something. Now let's have dinner quickly, then it's off to bed with you.

INT. WILLIAM'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

William tosses and turns under the covers, the binoculars peeking out from under his pillow.

Moonlight floods the room illuminating shelves full of airplane model kits and photographs.

CLOSE ON a photograph -- Frederick Doolittle and William smile for the camera on the boardwalk on a sunny day. There's a strong resemblance between father and son.

William moves restlessly under the covers again. Looks at the photograph.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Amy speaks into the telephone. William walks in groggily, still in his pyjamas.

AMY
I told you, Frederick's mother had a fall.
(pause)
(MORE)

AMY (CONT'D)
She lives alone, she needs me. I'll make it up to you when I'm back.

Cynthia's snooty voice is heard loud and clear.

CYNTHIA (O.C.)
That's fine, darling. We heard about William desecrating school property yesterday --

AMY
-- and your son was right there, egging him on. He's three years older than William, he should've known better. Bye now.

She puts the phone down.

AMY (CONT'D)
One down. Eight more to go.

WILLIAM
(ashamed)
You don't have to. I'll go.

Amy looks at him incredulously.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I want to help Grandma. And you heard Mr. Payne. He said I needed to do something useful. Well, here's my chance. See?

AMY
You can't go two blocks without running into trouble. And you expect me to send you to New York City all by yourself?

WILLIAM
Unless you plan on making nine house calls tonight, I don't see that we have a choice. Besides, dad would agree with me.

Amy bites a lip uncertainly. Should she or shouldn't she?

EXT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

William wears his best suit and bow tie as he walks down the platform with Amy. The binoculars are slung around his neck. She hands him a ticket.

AMY
Hold on to that. Show it to the conductor --

WILLIAM
I know.

AMY
Listen, you have to be careful. Promise me. You're not going to be in Atlantic City. There's all kinds of people you don't know about.

Edmund and Hermann pass by William and Amy, casually looking for their car.

CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
All aboard!

AMY
Where did you put grandma's address?

He taps his trouser pocket.

AMY (CONT'D)
And the bus fare?

William jingles the coins in his other trouser pocket.

WILLIAM
Stop babying me.

MAX DONOVAN (17), fresh faced, an all American baseball player type strolls by, reading slowly off the chalk numbers printed on the car.

AMY
And the money envelope?

William opens his jacket to reveal the envelope pinned to the tweed fabric.

WILLIAM
You worry too much.

TRAIN CONDUCTOR (O.S.)
All aboard!

Behind them, Max approaches a well dressed, middle aged COUPLE waiting at the platform.

He smoothens his hair in a practiced gesture, dips a hand into the man's coat pocket and takes his wallet.

Looks around. No one notices. He walks quickly to the New York City bound train and jumps in.

AMY
That's a hundred dollars. Six month's savings. Be careful with it.

The train gives a piercing whistle. William puts a hand to his heart in mock solemnity.

WILLIAM
I'll guard it with my life.

He jumps on the train as it slowly begins to move. Amy follows, rattling last minute instructions.

AMY
Be careful. Don't wander -- go straight to Cynthia's flat. And don't talk to strangers or fall asleep on the train!

WILLIAM
I love you too.

He blows her a kiss. She waves as the train leaves the station. Behind her, the robbed man raises a stink but she starts walking away, lost in her own thoughts.

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Hermann emerges from the toilet -- and runs smack into William -- causes him to lose his balance - knocks the suitcase from his hand.

HERMANN
Bose kind!

Max stands a little way off -- an eagle watching it's unsuspecting prey. Hermann pushes William aside roughly and walks off.

WILLIAM
You ran into me!

William's distracted -- still staring after Hermann -- when Max steps in smoothly. He dusts off William's jacket and picks up his suitcase.

MAX
You okay?

He picks up the fallen suitcase.

WILLIAM
It was his fault. He should've apologized.

MAX
What else do you expect from a Hitler loving Nazi! Now, where do you want to sit?

The only empty seats are next to Hermann and Edmund. Max stows the suitcase overhead, then takes a seat opposite William.

William sees his a pin on his shirt displaying the boardwalk's Diving Bell.

WILLIAM
You work at the pier?

MAX
Most summers.

WILLIAM
(excitedly)
I work next door -- at Mr. Joe's ice cream parlor on Saturdays. Why, we're neighbors!
(beat)
But -- how come we haven't met?

MAX
(evasively)
Oh I just work Mondays and Wednesdays. I'm Max by the way.

WILLIAM
I'm William. You can call me Willie, though. All my friends do. We were all going down the bell today but my grandmother's sick. I'm going to New York City to visit her.

MAX
Same here. I've been selected.

His voice barely disguises his pride.

WILLIAM
You're going to fight in the war!

MAX
Like my pop. He was in the Navy in World War one. When my number came up, he said to me 'son, make your old man proud'. That's what I aim to do.

WILLIAM
My dad's fighting the war too. Against Germany. He's a pilot.
(beat)
He's missing.

Outside, wooden houses and store fronts flash past.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
(wistfully)
I'd give anything to have him back.

MAX
Cheer up. You know, you can get a better view from the observation deck.

WILLIAM
What's that?

MAX
You mean you've never seen one? Come on.

William hesitates.

WILLIAM
My suitcase --

Max turns to Edmund.

MAX
Could you keep an eye on our stuff?

Edmund nods.

CLUB CAR

William follows Max deeper into the train. He's fascinated at the MEN playing cards and smoking cigarettes, the revolving chairs and high windows.

WILLIAM
I feel like I'm in someone else's dream.

MAX
The Empress sure is a sweet ride. All these pretty people drinking wine and reading the funny papers, talking about 'the economic situation of the country'. Makes you just want to --

He trails off. Realizes he's talking too much.

DINING CAR

White linens, bud vases, black men serving drinks. The clink of silverware as well dressed men and women go about their meals.

WILLIAM
Makes you want to --?

MAX
Nothing. Some people behave as if there's no war, as if our men aren't dying hungry and wounded on the battlefield. Well, not for long. These trains are going to be decommissioned pretty soon. And these pretty people --

Stares at the opulence around him in disgust.

MAX (CONT'D)
-- well they'll just have to sit at home and remember the good times.

WILLIAM
But you're not like them. You're different.

MAX
You bet. I'm going to fight those Japs or Germans or whoever they send my way all the way to hell.

OBSERVATION DECK

They reach a little open balcony with a metal grab rail. William looks around him in excitement. The train thunders past fields and houses at top speed.

WILLIAM
Stubby and Curtis and Billy are gonna be pea green with envy when I tell them I went to New York city all by myself.

MAX
Why do you have those on you all the time?

He indicates the binoculars.

WILLIAM
Oh. They're my dad's really. There's a slight chip --
(shows it)
-- so he gave them to me.

The train starts to slow down. A small boy runs on the other side of the tracks, waving madly. William waves back.

MAX
Isn't this wonderful? I'm saving it all up here.

He taps the side of his head.

MAX (CONT'D)
When the gun fire and explosions get too much for me, I'll close my eyes and conjure up this scene.

He closes his eyes, as if memorizing the landscape. William puts a hand on his arm in reassurance.

WILLIAM
You'll be alright, Max. You'll be king of the trenches.

Max stares at his innocent face.

MAX
Guess we'd better head back. This is our station.

WILLIAM
Oh my goodness! I'd forgotten all about it. Let's go!

WILLIAM'S SEAT

The train slows to a halt. William and Max reach their seats. William offers a meatpie to Max.

MAX
Ooh! Meatpies! My favorite.

As they gobble up the pies, William starts to yawn.

MAX (CONT'D)
Go to sleep. I'll wake you up when we get close.

Outside, fields, houses, factories and blue skies pass by faster and faster till the entire vista becomes a blur. William falls asleep.

LATER

Edmund and Hermann stand near the door with their backpacks. The train slows down. Max looks around carefully. With no one watching, he reaches inside William's jacket.

He carefully unpins the money while William continues to snore softly. He's about to take the binoculars also, but he hesitates. Leaves them there.

The train comes to a halt. Max rushes to the toilet. He keeps the door ajar so he can see William.

The Germans get down. It's noisy now, and William is forced to wake up. Max walks in, wiping his hands on a kerchief.

MAX (CONT'D)
This is our station.

William nods. Max hands him the suitcase.

MAX (CONT'D)
All set.

WILLIAM
Sure!

Automatically his hand goes to his jacket pocket. He flips it open. Nothing.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
My money! It's gone! Who could've taken it?

MAX
Those damned Germans!

INT. PENN STATION - DAY

Max and a distraught William get off the train. Max puts a comforting hand on William's shoulder.

MAX
Look kid, I wish I could help you but the train's been late. I gotta scoot. The war office doesn't like tardy recruits.

William nods miserably.

MAX (CONT'D)
Wish you luck!

Max disappears into the crowd. William is the picture of despair when he suddenly remembers the money. His hand goes to the inside of his jacket pocket. Meets air.

Horrified, he takes it off. Sees the two pin holes where the envelope was attached to the fabric.

WILLIAM
My money's gone!

William sits down in shock. Head sunk in hands he cries softly. Around him, sunlight filters in columns through the soaring, canopy ceilings.

Thousands of men, women and children march in every direction, up and down wrought-iron staircases, dragging cases and heavy leather bags behind them.

Another train pulls in. People get down and people enter carriages.

Voices, whistles and engine sounds fill the air like a noisy sonata.

Everywhere, young couples are locked in embraces, lost in a world of their own.

William finally raises his head. He swipes away angrily at his tears.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
At least I still have you.

He clutches the binoculars like a lifeline.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Dad, I know you'd agree with what I'm about to do.

An IRATE PASSENGER almost trips over him.

IRATE PASSENGER
(irritably)
On your way, boy. Don't hang about in the middle of traffic.

Shaking, William gets up and manages to start walking.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NEW YORK - DAY

Edmund and Hermann are walking briskly. They turn a corner and disappear from view. William runs after them.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NEW YORK CITY - DAY

A roaring game of stickball is underway. Six KIDS play to a Saturday afternoon CROWD of all ages and colors.

A curly haired boy wearing the biggest glasses you ever saw swings a bat up in the air. This is WALDO SAVAGE, 12, and his eyes are narrowed in intense concentration.

BEAU CHADWICK, 15, golden haired heartthrob, spits on a little pink 'spaldeen' for good luck.

Then SLAMS it towards Waldo.

Waldo hits -- misses -- the ball bounces away teasingly -- disappears under a parked Chevy.

The crowd roars it's disappointment. A KID runs to retrieve it.

JIM NUTT, 12, a beach ball in a striped jersey clutches his head in mock despair. Waldo makes a face at him.

He turns to see Beau break into a little jive.

BEAU
You think you can handle another one?

WALDO
You think you could pitch better than that ass wiggle?

DEWEY FINCH, 13, chucks the ball to Beau who catches it expertly.

DEWEY
Quit fighting already, you two.

Jim nudges Beau.

JIM
You’ve got fans.

He points to two cute GIRLS watching Beau and Waldo. To the boys’s embarrassment, the girls burst into laughter.

Beau self consciously smoothens his T-shirt, runs a hand through his hair.

JIM (CONT’D)
They’re out of your league, Beau.

Beau knocks Jim on the ground in an ‘I’ll show you who’s boss’ way. They roll on the ground until Dewey and Waldo separate them.

DEWEY
Do you want to get chucked out of this neighborhood too?

WALDO
Forget that. If we can’t buy tickets for Rita Hayworth’s picture --

He gestures with an index finger moving across his throat.

DEWEY
(taking position)
Okay, get set.

Beau pitches a slow ball. Waldo hits -- the ball flies high and beyond anyone’s expectations.

He throws the broomstick handle he’s been using for a bat and starts running like a devil on a fire.

Jim also breaks into an incredibly fast sprint for someone his size.

But the ball SMASHES into a store window. The boys freeze.

Jim clutches his head in true despair.

BEAU
Now you’ve done it!

WALDO
You threw a cheap one on purpose.

MAN FROM CROWD
Who cares! It's a home run!

The crowd cheers. Waldo picks up his refashioned bat and points it at Beau as Dewey passes an oil cannister in the crowd. People drop money into it.

Soon, Dewey is counting their winnings when a deep voice booms out.

COP (O.S.)
What's going on here!

JIM
Run!

The boys flee the scene, leaving the ball and broomstick handle behind.

CUT TO:

AROUND THE CORNER

William breathing heavily as he jogs with the suitcase in one hand.

Ahead, Edmund and Hermann walk briskly towards an intersection.

EXT. SIDEWALK - BUSY STREET - DAY

William and the stickball gang meet, running alongside. They stare at each other mid-sprint.

DEWEY
Why are you running?

WILLIAM
Why are <u>you</u> running?

WALDO
Cop. Behind us.

William looks over his shoulder to see a hulking policeman behind them. He picks up speed, the suitcase knocking uncomfortably against his knee.

He looks uncertain for a moment.

BEAU
The cop is after us. Why would --
(realizes)
You're in trouble with the law!

WILLIAM
(solemnly)
I'm a vandal.

WALDO
And I fly War Eagles every Sunday after breakfast!

The boys step around a MOTHER and two KIDS in a pram.

WILLIAM
I'm telling the truth. And it's the Curtiss Warhawk. There's no such thing as a War Eagle.

WALDO
That's what I said.

WILLIAM
Did not. Anyway, every cop in Atlantic City knows about me. They have my name down in their black book.

There's a hint of pride in his voice. By now the cop is receding into the distance. The kids slow down.

DEWEY
So you left home to be a vandal in our city?

WILLIAM
No. I'm chasing thieves.
(indicates)
See those men over by the streetlight? They stole my money on the train this morning.

The boys see Hermann lighting a cigarette while Edmund appears to be reading a map. Both men are at a bus stop.

DEWEY
You must have yelled your head off.

WILLIAM
Actually, I was sleeping. I ate too many pies so..

He trails off. Waldo and Beau snicker.

JIM
How much did you lose?

WILLIAM
One hundred dollars.

Waldo whistles.

WALDO
You're a cool one, aren't you.

William hurriedly changes the subject.

WILLIAM
Look.

He pulls out Hermann's cigarette butt salvaged from the train and passes it around.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
He --
(indicates Hermann)
-- was smoking these on the train.

The boys examine it curiously.

BEAU
That's a funny squiggle.

WALDO
It's not a squiggle! It's a Swastika. I stole Mr. Burkhadt's newsletter last week. It was full of these things.
(off their stares)
Just to get back at him for stealing my bike horn. It drives him crazy.

Ahead, a bus approaches the intersection. William watches as Hermann puts his cigarette out. Edmund folds up the map.

WILLIAM
I gotta go. It was great talking to you.

He picks up his suitcase.

BEAU
Hold on.

He looks around at the boys. They all nod.

BEAU (CONT'D)
We'll help you nail those two.

WILLIAM
(excited)
Really?

BEAU
But not like this. I have a better idea.

The bus pulls up. The numbers 57 are written up front.

WILLIAM
Well, hurry up then. I don't want to lose them.

Edmund and Hermann get into the bus.

BEAU
You won't. Not with ol' Betsy.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - DAY

A large motorcycle and sidecar -- with the boys on it -- bounces awkwardly over a speed bump in pursuit of the bus.

Beau barely avoids hitting a fire hydrant. Behind him, William and Dewey hang on for dear life.

Waldo and Jim are squashed like litter puppies in the sidecar with the words 'Bloomin Betsy' written on the outside.

JIM
If you go any slower, my grandmother will catch up with us. And <u>she</u> uses a walking stick.

BEAU
Shut up, Jim! I've never taken so many piggybacks, that's all.

WALDO
(teasingly)
We'd go a lot faster if you weren't weighing us down, potato sides.

JIM
Take that back.

Jim grabs Waldo in a choke hold. Waldo pushes back. They start wrestling, making the sidecar wobble dangerously.

BEAU
(panicked)
What are you doing?! We'll turn over.

WILLIAM
Look out!

A car in front of them slows down. Beau swerves at the last minute to avoid rear ending it. The motorcycle SCREECHES to a halt. Passersby stare suspiciously at them.

Beau points a shaking finger at Waldo and Jim.

BEAU
You think it's so funny but wait till we have an accident. Then --

WILLIAM
They're leaving the bus!

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Edmund cracks his neck loudly, making an unpleasant CRUNCHING sound.

EDMUND
What does our little helper look like?

Hermann shows him a scratchy, black and white photograph.

CLOSE ON PHOTOGRAPH: A large, beefy man with braided hair smiles to camera, revealing a missing front tooth. He stands next to a three hundred pound Halibut suspended from fish hooks.

Hermann gives a menacing laugh.

HERMANN
Dead meat.

EXT. FULTON FISH MARKET - DAY

An old, dilapidated brick structure taken right out of a Sherlock Holmes novel. A large sign above reads 'Fulton Fish Market' with the 'T' missing.

The Snoops watch Edmund and Hermann go inside the building before parking the motorcycle.

As they follow the men, Waldo and Jim continue to argue, trying to settle the fight but actually making it worse.

JIM
You always return my comic books with dog ears.

WALDO
Who returned my erector set with a broken gear box and didn't own up?

WILLIAM
Time out! We're fighting the Germans. Not each other.

Jim and Waldo look guilty. Nod their heads.

BEAU
William's right. And we need a plan to get the money back. They won't just hand it to us.

INT. FULTON FISH MARKET - DAY

Every fish known to mankind is here, either dead or alive. The floor is wet and muddy and the air, cold and dank.

The Snoops cover their noses to avoid the overpowering smell. Ahead, Edmund and Hermann stroll casually, inspecting fish, blending into the crowd.

DEWEY
I say we wait until they buy something. Then we surround 'em. Make a ruckus.

WALDO
But we need something to prove they took the money.

William thinks hard.

WILLIAM
The notes should have safety pin marks.

BEAU
That's it. Let's go get 'em.

JIM
I wish I had my stickball bat. I'd feel safer with it.

HALIBUT AISLE

The Germans pretend to be interested in buying Halibut. As they check price tags, a large, beefy man walks up to them. This is FRITZ MOLE, the man from the photograph.

FRITZ
Can I help you?

His voice is warm, thickly accented but his eyes are cold and searching. The snoops huddle as close to the men as they dare, trying to catch the conversation.

Edmund checks to see that no one is close by.

EDMUND
(softly)
We are Stars of the Reich. We are here to deliver fireworks to the war parade.

Meanwhile, Jim sees a frozen fish and puts his hand inside it's mouth for fun. He pretends to be caught in the jaws of the fish, thrashing about, trying to get free.

Waldo and Dewey glare at him, silently begging him to stop. But Jim's excitement turns to shock when he can't get his hand out. It's stuck.

FRITZ
(nods)
I think I have what you are looking for. Come with me.

Edmund and Hermann go with Fritz. Dewey tries to free Jim's hand but the dead fish has a firm grip on it.

WILLIAM
Star? Starfish ripe? That sounds funny.

DEWEY
I heard them say 'parade'.

BEAU
I think there's a war parade on tomorrow. But let's follow them and see what they're upto.

INT. BASEMENT - FULTON FISH MARKET - DAY

The Snoops take cover behind a row of giant tuna suspended from the ceiling with fish hooks. They are too far to hear the men and can just about see them.

It's freezing. The boys huddle together to keep warm. Jim's face is a picture of misery now that he can't rid of the fish.

FAR END OF BASEMENT

Fritz opens a meat locker and pulls out a large fish with a huge cross stitch running down one side .

HERMANN
What the hell is that?

FRITZ
(sneers)
A sample of my needlework. You'll find out soon enough.

He picks up a large sheet of brown paper and a string. Wraps it quickly. Then ties it up in a bow.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
There. Gift wrapped with a bow on top. Take it.

TUNA AISLE

WILLIAM
(whispers)
Get ready, guys! Any minute now.

They creep forward, keeping close to the wall. Waldo feels something cold and creepy on his shoulder. He turns around to look. It's Jim, resting his fish encased hand for support.

Dewey feels a sneeze coming. He holds his nose but to his horror, a SQUEAK erupts. The snoops look at him in alarm.

He stuffs a finger up his nostrils. Disgusting, but it does the trick.

FAR END OF BASEMENT

For a moment it seems as if Fritz heard something. He looks at the Tuna aisle.

He hands the Germans a set of uniforms with the words 'Fulton Delivery Service' stitched below the collar.

FRITZ
Take this.

EDMUND
What about transportation?

Fritz reaches into his pocket and produces a set of keys.

FRITZ
The van is parked at the back.
Go out that way.

He points to a narrow staircase leading to a back door.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
I must get back now or I'll be in trouble.

Hermann picks up the fish, nearly bending over with it's weight. Edmund grabs the keys and the uniforms. They leave quickly.

TUNA AISLE

The Snoops are in utter chaos.

WALDO
Great. Now what do we do?

WILLIAM
I wonder what sort of thieves they are?

DEWEY
That braided guy doesn't look like he'd give away <u>anything</u> for free.

JIM
(pleading)
Get my hand out of this thing.

Beau tries to pull the fish's jaw open -- it's impossible -- he grunts with the effort -- suddenly a giant tuna is pushed aside like a feather.

Fritz towers above them, eyes gleaming, meat knife in hand.

FRITZ
Dead fishes don't talk.

The Snoops YELL and RUN towards the exit. Jim follows but the fish slows him down.

Fritz reaches out a giant hand and grabs him by the collar. Yanks him so he's off his feet.

Jim SCREAMS.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
You plan on paying for that!

Jim BAWLS like a baby. Fritz drags him over to a large butcher table.

JIM
No! God, please! Don't --

Fritz raises the knife in the air.

Jim screams -- but Fritz's hand closes on his mouth. Jim thrashes about wildly.

Before the knife descends, William, Dewey and Waldo jump on Fritz, kicking and punching him..

William climbs up his back and tries to choke him.

But Fritz is stronger than them all. He shakes the boys lose, knocking them to the floor.

He raises the knife and brings it down with a THWACK! And another THWACK!

Jim passes out in terror.

EXT. FULTON FISH MARKET - DAY

Jim is lying on the ground surrounded by Waldo, Dewey and PASSERS BY.

He opens his eyes. Then lifts his hand in dread. But it's intact. He breaks out in a grin.

JIM
It's there! It's not chopped off!
Look! I have my hand!

WALDO
I don't know..I was kinda beginning
to like the idea of you as a one
armed stickball wonder.

William pulls Jim up to his feet. Dusts off his clothes.

JIM
Where's Beau?

DEWEY
Gone after those fish loving bozos.
(beat)
There he is!

Beau pulls up to the curb.

BEAU
They just checked into a motel.

EXT. PARKING LOT - HOTEL - DAY

As the Snoops ride into the lot, they notice the German's green Fulton Van parked under a tree. Dewey hurriedly writes down the license plate number.

One by one, the kids get out of the motorcycle.

WILLIAM
How do we find out which room they're in?

WALDO
We could ask. There are some advantages to being a kid.

He does a mock shudder. The boys move toward the hotel entrance.

INT. RECEPTION DESK - HOTEL - DAY

A man is busy making an entry in the hotel register. This is OTTO LANG, balding, mouth drooping in a permanent sneer. He looks up as the boys approach.

OTTO
Yes?

He taps his pencil on the desk to show his displeasure.

WALDO
I'm sorry, are we taking you away from --

He peers at the doodle of a naked woman smoking a cigar on the page margins of the register.

WALDO (CONT'D)
-- your work?

He bursts into laughter. Otto glares.

OTTO
Unsupervised kids loitering around our offices lose game room privileges.

Waldo holds a hand up.

WALDO
We're not staying at your hotel. We're looking for two men who stole his --
(indicates William)
-- money on the train this morning. They checked in here not fifteen minutes ago.

He leans closer to look at the register. Otto shuts it with a SLAM.

OTTO
There are no thieves in my hotel. Now --
(stands up)
-- let me show you the exit.

The other Snoops join forces with Waldo.

BEAU
Don't threaten us. We'll go to the cops.

He deepens his voice to add weight to the bluff. Otto pretends to be horrified.

OTTO
(baby voice)
You'll call the cops? Oooh, I'm shaking with fear.

He pushes the telephone toward him.

OTTO (CONT'D)
Make the call.

The boys look horrified. They had no intention of actually going to the police.

OTTO (CONT'D)
(smug)
Go on. Call them.
(MORE)

OTTO (CONT'D)
But in the time it takes them to get here, you boys will get the biggest thrashing of your lives.

JIM
He's lying.

Otto gives him a long look. Then reaches under his cabinet and pulls out a rifle.

OTTO
I've changed my mind. I'm going to take advantage of the law that says I can shoot trespassers.

The Snoops give a collective YELL and race out the door.. falling over each other in their hurry to escape.

EXT. HOTEL - DAY

A tense argument ensues.

DEWEY
Great. He called our bluff.

JIM
What was I supposed to say? Please sir, we'll take a thrashing as long as you let us wait in your lobby?

WALDO
He didn't even hear us out!

WILLIAM
Did you get a look at the register?

WALDO
(nodding)
Yeah. But there was only one entry today. A Mr. and Mrs. Schafer. Room 107.

The boys stare at one another. This doesn't make sense.

BEAU
I saw them check in! They are definitely in this motel.

DEWEY
What about going in through the back-door? We can talk to a housekeeper.

EXT. BACK ENTRANCE - HOTEL - DAY

Jim crouches beneath a window.

WALDO
Ha ha you like you're about to crap!

Jim glares. He straightens up so he can have a look inside.

JIM
All clear.

One by one, the Snoops sneak in.

INT. HOTEL CORRIDOR - DAY

Framed pictures of families posing by the beach, the pool side and sidewalk line the walls. The carpet is threadbare and stained with years of kids spilling sodas.

The boys walk past room after room.

WILLIAM
Look for a storage or laundry room.

The corridor turns sharply to the right. The boys are about to turn when they hear a familiar voice.

OTTO (O.S.)
-- here looking for you two.

They peer around the corner to see Otto talking to Edmund.

OTTO(CONT'D)
They saw you come in here. Who are they?

Edmund shrugs.

EDMUND
Could be a prank. Anyway, you don't need to worry about us.

He shuts the door. A HOUSEKEEPER comes up from behind the kids with a laundry cart.

HOUSEKEEPER
What are you --

Waldo puts a finger to his mouth.

WALDO
(whispers)
We're playing a game. Don't give us away.

The housekeeper gives a conspiratorial smile.

HOUSEKEEPER
(whispers)

Otto turns around and walks towards the kids. They duck behind the cart.

Otto stares at the Housekeeper standing in the middle of the corridor.

OTTO
What are you doing here?

HOUSEKEEPER
Got a cramp in my hip.

Otto looks nonplussed. He walks away muttering to himself. As soon as he's gone, the Snoops come out of cover.

JIM
You're the best.

HOUSEKEEPER
Anytime, kid.

As soon as she leaves, the boys get into a huddle.

BEAU
That manager is a two faced slime ball.

WALDO
Worse, he's warned them. If we knock, they'll never open the door.

DEWEY
We've got to get them to come out!

JIM
Did you not see his rifle? I'm scared. Let's all go home. William, I'm sure your grandma will understand.

Beau, Waldo and Dewey give him a collective stare down.

DEWEY
You can run home to mommy if you like. We're staying.

Despite the tension, William smiles.

WILLIAM
Thanks. I would never be able to do this without you. All of you.

He looks at Jim who looks ashamed.

JIM
Okay. I'm staying. What's the plan?

William has a gleam in his eye.

WILLIAM
I have an idea. But it's risky. We could bring down the fire brigade if it goes wrong.

The boys are immediately interested.

WALDO
What!

JIM
What's that!

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL CAFE - DAY

PEOPLE chat over coffee. At the far end, two GIRLS, 10, are in the middle of a heated ping-pong match.

Jim and Waldo enter.

JIM
If I don't have one of those, I'll die of hunger.

He points to a selection of goey chocolate cakes in the display counter.

WALDO
Could you for once forget food and pay attention? We've got to get those ping-pong balls.

Just then, one of the girls wins. She does a little jig. The other girl throws down her bat in a tantrum. Waldo makes a move towards them.

GIRL 1
Rematch?

The other girl nods. They get back to their game.

WALDO
Great. Jim, can you --

But Jim's at the display counter ogling cookies. An idea strikes Waldo. He goes up to Jim.

WALDO (CONT'D)
You know how those Duff Gingerbread slices always make you -- you know -

Jim stares.

JIM
What?

WALDO
Stop pretending. They make you gassy.

Jim blushes a furious red.

WALDO (CONT'D)
Could you have one right now?

LATER

Jim finishes the last of the gingerbread slice and walks over to the girls, pretending to be interested in their game. They glare in his direction and go on playing.

He lets out a silent fart. A smelly gas bomb of a fart. In seconds, the girls gag. They drop their bats and flee from the spot.

Waldo strolls over to the table and picks up the ping-pong balls.

INT. HOTEL STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Beau saunters in chewing on an unlit cigarette. An ATTENDANT is busy itemizing housecleaning supplies.

BEAU
Got a match?

The attendant looks at him and laughs. Goes back to work.

BEAU (CONT'D)
Hey, I asked you --

ATTENDANT
Don’t have any. If I did, I wouldn’t give it to you. Boys these days..

He does an eye roll and goes back to his work. Beau walks out in a huff.

INT. HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

William sneaks past a COOK and his HELPER. He scans the room quickly. Notices a chest of drawers.

Otto walks in. William hops on to the base of a trolley laden with food.

OTTO
Hey you. Go outside. The truck needs unloading.

He notices the trolley.

OTTO (CONT’D)
Get on with room service.

The helper quickly wheels the food trolley with William in it.

INSIDE TROLLEY

William waits for a moment, then jumps out to the man’s astonishment.

INT. HOTEL KITCHEN - DAY

William sneaks in but Otto is now standing next to the chest of drawers. Impossible to hide. William looks up to see two bowls of roasted chicken covered with foil. He slowly unwraps the foil.

EXT. PARKING LOT - MOTEL - DAY

The boys meet at the German’s van. Waldo gives William the ping-pong balls. He starts wrapping them up in foil.

WILLIAM
Gimme your pen, Dewey.

Dewey hands him the pen. Using it, William twists the foil around the ball so it resembles a tail.

WALDO
Dynamite. I never thought of that.

WILLIAM
My friend at school makes these all the time to get us out of classes.

He gives a ball each to Waldo and Jim. Beau hands them the matches.

BEAU
Got these from Otto's stash when he was away from his desk.

WILLIAM
Wait for my signal, then light the smoke bombs and roll them under the van.
(takes his binoculars off)
Use these. I'll be over by the pool, waving to you.

Waldo takes the binoculars and positions himself by the van with Jim.

INT. FRONT DESK - MOTEL - DAY

Beau approaches Otto warily.

BEAU
Excuse me, sir?

Otto puts his pen down and looks up at Beau incredulously.

OTTO
You again?

Beau glances at William and Dewey outside, hiding behind a large potted plant outside the lobby. They nod encouragingly.

BEAU
There's something you should know.

Otto makes a move to reach under his cabinet for the rifle. Beau gulps.

BEAU (CONT'D)
A van in your parking lot is on fire.

Otto reaches for the telephone. He dials a few numbers.

OTTO
Hello, Brooklyn Police Station.

BEAU
It's a green van marked Fulton.

At that, Otto disconnects the phone.

OTTO
What do you kids know?

BEAU
(genuinely puzzled)
What? Nothing. I mean..I'm just telling you what I saw.

Otto stands up.

BEHIND POTTED PLANT

DEWEY
Now.

William turns around and waves in the direction of the parking lot.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Binocular POV: William waves his arms.

Waldo removes the binoculars and picks up the balls.

WALDO
Light 'em up.

Jim lights a match and sets the foil on fire. The foil starts to crinkle and smoke.

WALDO (CONT'D)
Hot! Hot!

He quickly rolls the smoking balls under the car. Both kids hide behind the bushes. Waldo peers through the binoculars.

Binocular POV: Otto scans the parking lot, then notices the smoking van. He does a double take. Heads back at a run into the lobby.

INT. CORRIDOR - HOTEL - DAY

William, Dewey and Beau take cover behind the soda machine. Otto sweats profusely as he knocks on Edmund's door. Edmund opens it.

EDMUND
(annoyed)
Now what's the matter?

OTTO
Come quickly. The van. It's on fire.

He's almost hyperventilating now. It takes a second for Edmund to grasp the situation.

EDMUND
Hermann! Something's wrong with the van!

The Germans and Otto go out through the back entrance. William, Dewey and Beau sneak into Edmund's room.

INT. EDMUND'S ROOM - HOTEL - DAY

It looks unused. A couple suitcases and two backpacks are stacked next to the bed.

WILLIAM
They didn't have those cases on the train. Just the backpacks.

The Snoops quickly search the room. Beau checks a closet. Dewey opens a suitcase and pulls out a pair of pajamas.

DEWEY
Clothes!

BEAU
Those don't look like anything I've ever worn.

William opens a backpack and empties it. Most of the stuff is just toiletries and packaged food. But there's a notebook and papers rolled up and tied with an elastic band.

WILLIAM
(flipping through notebook)
It's written in German!

He looks at the documents that are also written in German. He puts everything back, puzzled. Beau checks under the bed and in the bathroom.

BEAU
No wallet.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Smoke billows around the van. Edmund checks the engine.

EDMUND
All okay here.

Hermann unlocks the back doors and peers inside.

INTERCUT WITH

Binocular POV: The view blurs, then refocuses to reveal freezer boxes. But there's something behind the boxes.

The view refocuses to zoom in. We see a crate marked with red crosses.

WALDO (O.S)
Incendiaries.

Hermann slams the door shut. Then looks around. Bends down to check beneath the van.

EXT. BEHIND BUSHES - PARKING LOT - DAY

Waldo looks at Jim in horror.

WALDO
You know how we always mark a bullet case with black crosses?

JIM
In our munitions class? Of course.

WALDO
Well, explosives are marked in red. These guys aren't thieves. They're saboteurs.

The boys stare at each other in growing horror.

JIM
We’ve got to warn the others.

The bushes behind which they’re hiding are suddenly parted.

EDMUND
Aha! Look what I found. Two rabbits in a bush.

He grabs both boys and lifts them up roughly. The box of foil and some matches fall out of Jim’s pocket. The boys yell.

OTTO
There’s another one too. Blonde fellow. Smooth talker.

HERMANN
We’ll find him.

CUT TO:

INT. EDMUND’S ROOM - DAY

William puts a hand under the pillow and pulls out a leather wallet.

WILLIAM
I found it!

The boys gather around as William empties it to reveal a thick wad of money. He starts to methodically check the bills.

DEWEY
Just take your money.

BEAU
Hurry up. Those Germans could be back any minute.

WILLIAM
WHY did they steal from me?! They’re rich.

DEWEY
Maybe they stole it from kids like you.

WILLIAM
(hurt)
Kids like me?

He throws the wallet down.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Well, none of these bills have pin marks.

Sounds of shouts and footsteps outside. Beau grabs the wallet from William and takes out a hundred dollars.

BEAU
It's okay to steal from a thief.

INT. CORRIDOR - MOTEL - DAY

They run out in a panic only to crash into Edmund, Otto and Hermann who has Waldo and Jim in a tight grip.

Otto points at Beau.

OTTO
That's the boy! I don't know these other kids.

Edmund recognizes William.

EDMUND
You're the boy from the train.

William steps up, bristling. He's waited for this moment.

WILLIAM
Yes. And you're a cheap thief!

Edmund is momentarily surprised but he's not interested.

EDMUND
Otto, do you run a hotel or a nursery?

HERMANN
They have seen the van. We can't let them go now.

He pulls a gun out. The Snoops shrink in horror.

Beau, William and Dewey look at each other in confusion. What's going on?

Then Waldo bursts free from Otto's grip.

WALDO
They're not thieves, William. They're spies! They've got bombs and guns in that van.

WILLIAM
(nervously)
We don’t have to listen to you. If the gun goes off, everyone will be out of their rooms in a second.

Hermann breaks into an ugly smile. He pulls out a silencer.

EDMUND
A very clever American invented something called the silencer for exactly this purpose.

Hermann attaches it to the gun. The boys watch helplessly.

HERMANN
Soft as a lullaby.

He trains it on them. They automatically huddle together.

EDMUND
We can’t take this lot out the front.

OTTO
There’s a back exit. I’ll bring the van round.

EDMUND
Tell Fritz plans have changed. He needs to be at the slaughterhouse in thirty minutes.

The boys GASP collectively. Slaughterhouse?

EXT. BACK EXIT - MOTEL - DAY

The boys struggle as they are dragged to the van.

BEAU
Help! Help us!

JIM
Somebody PLEASE HELP US!

INT. VAN - DAY

Quickly, the boys are shoved in the back. They fall on top of mysterious looking crates and metal boxes.

EXT. VAN - DAY

Otto locks the doors and gives a slap on the side of the van. Edmund starts it up.

The forlorn faces of the boys are seen through the back windows as the van drives off.

INT. VAN - DAY

The boys bounce uncomfortably on the hard metal boxes as the van makes it's way across town. Beau, Waldo, Dewey and Jim are all glaring at William.

Poor William looks down in the dumps.

BEAU
You <u>think</u> they stole from you? So you weren't sure?

WILLIAM
The only other person with me on the train was Max. He told me he worked at the Boardwalk.

BEAU
And you believed him just like that?

WILLIAM
I didn't have any reason not to trust him.

WALDO
Are you seriously that naive?

William fidgets with the lid of one of the boxes. It snaps open. Metal parts..springs..tubes..are packed together.

DEWEY
(scared)
What's inside all these boxes.

WALDO
Enough ammunition to blow up half of New York.

Jim lets out a smelly fart. Everyone OOF'S in disgust.

JIM
I'm going to be sick.

BEAU
(sternly)
You got us into this mess, William.
You've got get us out.

EXT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - NIGHT

Hermann opens the doors of the van. The Snoops cower in fear. No one wants to get out. He points the gun at them, making them scramble out instantly.

The whole place is abandoned. Shops and diners are shuttered. The building directly facing them has a large sign that says 'Dead Meat'.

The Germans herd the Snoops towards a side door that's locked with a giant metal padlock. A chain runs through the door handles for extra measure.

EDMUND
(German, subtitled)
Fritz should've been here with the key.

HERMANN
He knows too much. We have to take out an insurance policy on him.

EDMUND
When the time is right --

He does a throat slit with his index finger. Watching it all, Waldo whispers to the others.

WALDO
He's going to get Fritz to kill us.

A new wave of horror runs through the kids. Jim throws up.

Fritz arrives on a scooter. He takes off his helmet and hurries towards them. He stops short when he sees the kids.

FRITZ
I know you.

Jim puts his arms behind his back and hides behind the others.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
What you doing with those kids? We could get into trouble if their parents complained to the cops.

Edmund pulls Beau's nose cruelly. He yells in pain.

EDMUND
Busybodies will get what's coming to them. Do you have the key?

Fritz pulls out a key and unlocks the door.

FRITZ
Welcome to the graveyard.

The Snoops shudder as they are forced to march inside. Hermann shuts the door on us. We hear the loud SLAM of a drop bar on the other side.

INT. SLAUGHTERHOUSE - NIGHT

The Snoops look around but it's dark. Foreboding. Beau rubs his nose. It's very red and starting to swell.

DEWEY
I don't like this. I don't like this one bit.

JIM
I'm scared.

WALDO
Me too.

They huddle closer for comfort. CLICK! Suddenly a light illuminates the creepy surroundings. The Snoops jump out of their skins.

SNOOPS
(yell together)
Aaaaaargh!

They are inside a run down brick and metal fortress.

FRITZ
See those stone slabs? That's the hog cutting station.

EDMUND
If you're done with the educational tour, may we get on with business? I need you to unload the van. Put everything in the second floor office.

Fritz goes off to do as he's told. The Snoops are herded out of the hog station like cattle.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - SLAUGHTERHOUSE - NIGHT

The room is rife with creepy crawlies making the Snoops shudder in disgust.

EDMUND
This is where you will spend the last night of your short, stupid lives.

HERMANN
Mommy's not here to tuck you in and tell you a bedtime story. But don't worry. I'll check in on you.
(off their horrified faces)
Nighty night, boys.

With a menacing grin, Hermann shuts the door on the Snoops. The sound of a key turning in the lock, then footsteps receding. Beau peers through a small opening in the door.

BEAU
He's gone.

Everyone speaks at once in raised, panicky voices.

JIM
I don't want to die!

He bursts into tears.

WALDO
(trembling voice)
We never should've listened to you.

William pales.

WILLIAM
I said I was sorry! I'll make it up to you, I promise.

WALDO
Beau can start a car without a key. Can you do stuff like that? Because unless you're 'Houdini Vandal', I don't want to listen to you.

William slumps down in a corner, defeated.

DEWEY
Nothing will happen to us. Right, guys?

BEAU
You're an ostrich. The moment there's trouble you bury your head in the sand expecting it to blow over. Well, it's not. This time, we're in deep.

Angered, Dewey plonks down on a rusted barrel.

DEWEY
I say we sit tight. Behave. Do nothing. We'll be alright.

Beau laughs scornfully, as if just proven right.

William looks badly shaken but he picks up his binoculars and polishes the lenses. Looks through them and pretends to focus.

DEWEY (CONT'D)
I've seen you do that before. Why do you do it? There's nothing to focus on.

WILLIAM
My dad used them on the war front, until they got damaged. I'm trying to imagine what it must have been like for him. Fighting the war, knowing you might die any moment. Keeping your sights on the enemy... looking out for your buddies.

A tear runs down his cheek. He swipes at it.

BEAU
Great. One of us is paralyzed --
(glances at Dewey)
-- and the other is delusional.

DEWEY
Shut up, Beau. You'd be scared too if you had a little more imagination.
(to William)
You talk about your dad in the past.

WILLIAM
He flew on a mission and was never seen again.

DEWEY
And now you're in a soup too. Your mom must be so worried.

CUT TO:

INT/EXT. DOOLITTLE HOME - DAY

A tearful Amy gives the house a last look over before locking the front door.

CUT TO:

EXT. TRAIN STATION - ATLANTIC CITY - DAY

Amy walks briskly alongside a train clutching her ticket. She mutters softly, as if trying to reassure herself.

AMY
I'm coming, sweetheart.
Everything's going to be alright.

CUT TO:

INT. TRAIN - DAY

Amy sits by the window, watching but not really watching the fields and houses flash past.

INT. BOMB ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund wheels a large metal box with castors into the room. He throws it open. A series of explosives are nestled inside packing material. He starts taking them out one by one.

Hermann and Fritz follow, carrying a heavy duffel bag between them. Fritz struggles to keep a grip on his end of the bag but it slips from his fingers.

HERMANN
Watch it!

FRITZ
It's my hands.

He holds up his large, beefy paws.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
I've been handling frozen fish so long they've become numb.

He leaves Hermann to do the unpacking and hovers around Edmund. Picks a notebook off the floor and starts flipping pages.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
What is this stuff? You making a bomb or something?

He holds the notebook up. CLOSE ON a diagram of a bomb assembly.

EDMUND
You should know better than to ask. Spies don't tell.

Fritz laughs.

FRITZ
Hey, it's only me. We're friends, right. I know you're gonna bomb some place in this city. I don't give a shit. All I care about is my money soon as I'm done.

He checks his watch.

FRITZ (CONT'D)
Which should be in twenty minutes. I'm done loading the van. Anything else you guys need?

Edmund smiles but goes back to his work.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

William prowls about the room. He taps the walls but they're solid. He tests the door but the lock holds. There are no windows.

WILLIAM
So this Houdini you spoke of? Who's he?

Waldo smirks.

WALDO
He's an escape artist. Tie him up, lock him up. Do your worst but he always gets out. I saw him myself.

William notices something on the wooden floor. He bends down to examine a circular layer of gravel and stones.

WILLIAM
Always? He always got out?

He brushes it aside. More gravel and stones. He starts digging with his fingers.

WALDO
They called him 'Handcuff King'.

INT. BOMB ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund reads out from the notebook.

EDMUND
Screw the cap on, let the end bit of the fuse stick out.

Hermann assembles the bomb, carefully pulls at the last bit of the fuse before closing the cap. He sets the bomb carefully next to three similar bombs.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Next, the mega bomb. We'll be making an announcement with this one, no need for a loudspeaker.

Hermann pulls out a large cylinder from one of the boxes.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

A large mound of rubble sits in the middle of the room. Five faces peer into the hole in the floor.

DEWEY
What is it?

WILLIAM
Dry well. It's to get the water out... if it rains or something. I've seen these on the Boardwalk.

It's two feet deep. Dewey lowers himself down and peers through the water duct at the base of the hole.

DEWEY
I can see through to the engine room outside.

BEAU
So what? You'll never get through. The duct's too small.

WILLIAM
Are you sure?

He pulls Dewey up, then jumps down. He takes the binoculars off and gives them to Jim.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Hang on to them for me.

INSIDE HOLE

He peers through the duct. He grows tense as he sees how narrow the passage is.

Takes a deep breath and thrusts his head inside sideways. Wiggles to fit his shoulders in the gap.

WILLIAM
You can do it.

OUTSIDE HOLE

The Snoops look on in amazement as William wriggles and shakes and maneuvers his body to fit inside the channel. Then disappears.

WALDO
(shuddering)
I wouldn't do that if someone gave me free tickets to every Rita Hayworth movie.

DEWEY
He's doing it for <u>us</u>. There's a difference.

INT. WATER DUCT - NIGHT

William is tense and gasping for air, crawling forward blindly because of the dust in his eyes. He looks more scared than ever before.

EXT. STORAGE ROOM - NIGHT

A hand reaches out through the duct. Then we see William's face and gradually, his torso emerges.

He's breathing heavily like he just ran a marathon. But his eyes are wide with fear. He didn't think he'd make it.

The daring act is a moment of victory for him. He smiles briefly before unwinding a thick, rusted metal chain around the door handles.

WILLIAM
Open sesame.

He throws the doors open. Dewey, Jim and Beau give William a silent high-five while Waldo looks on sulkily.

WALDO
Good for you, William.

BEAU
(whispers)
We go out the way we came.

INT. ENGINE ROOM - NIGHT

The boys fall into a single file, moving quietly over the rubble and stone.

DEWEY
What's that giant wheel?

He points to a large, rusted flywheel surrounded by smaller flywheels.

BEAU
Engines. Something here needs a lot of electricity.

INT. PASSAGEWAY - NIGHT

The boys find the entrance door but it's locked on the inside now.

JIM
Now what do we do?

From somewhere inside the plant, a SHOUT and a BANG.

HERMANN (O.S.)
They're gone!

The Snoops freeze, then run enmasse toward the other end of the passageway, away from the storage room.

INT. BOMB ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund kicks the wall in frustration.

EDMUND
Fouled by stupid kids! We've got a mission to execute.

He picks up a gun.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
Seek and destroy. Take the high road, you take the low road.

Hermann stares in confusion.

EDMUND (CONT'D)
(exasperated)
Check upstairs. I'll look into the basement.

CUT TO:

INT. SECOND FLOOR - CATTLE RAMP - NIGHT

The Snoops run up a sloping concrete walkway that takes them further up into the building.

The floor is scraped and scarred with heavy grooves.

DEWEY
(pale, terrified)
What is this place?

Waldo grabs his hand.

WALDO
You're not going to like this.

DEWEY
What? What?

WALDO
This is the cattle walkway. They always go to the top floor.

BEAU
It's a death march. If you listen hard, you can almost hear the funeral dirge.

WILLIAM
Shut up. You're scaring him.

Dewey looks at them, then the narrow pathway ahead. They could be talking about themselves.

BEAU
And by the time they're on the ground floor, they're pimento loaves.

Jim throws up. William gives him a handkerchief to wipe up. Then all of them freeze as they hear a familiar voice behind them.

HERMANN (O.S.)
Five little piggies in the slaughterhouse. BAM goes the hammer, one piggy's down.

The Snoops race up the walkway.

INT. CATTLE STUNNING ROOM - NIGHT

Empty metal troughs sit next to the walls. A brick center strip runs down the floor and out the room.

JIM
This place is a maze. We'll never get out.

He's starting to hyperventilate. Waldo tries to calm him down.

WILLIAM
Follow the yellow brick road!

BEAU
What??

WILLIAM
The line of production. You said it yourself. It's an assembly line, right? If we follow it, we'll reach the main exit.

He runs down the brick pathway. The boys follow suit.

INT. SUSPENSION ROOM - NIGHT

A narrow, rectangular room with long metal channels running down the length of the ceiling. Giant iron hooks are attached to the channels.

Dewey shivers at the sight of the hooks.

EXT. BOMB ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

The kids pass the room when William notices it's empty but for the metal boxes that came in the van. He stops.

WALDO
What are you doing? Come on.

WILLIAM
Don't you want to know what was in those boxes?

JIM
Are you crazy? Don't even think about it.

INT. BOMB ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

Strewn with papers, blueprints and --

WILLIAM
Wow.

-- ugly looking explosives lined up neatly to one side. Parts of a small bomb lie on the floor, awaiting assembly.

Dewey grabs William's arm.

DEWEY
Please, let's get out of here.

WILLIAM
They're making bombs!

Beau and Waldo come running.

BEAU
What the hell do you think --

He stops short as he sees the materials on the floor.

BEAU (CONT'D)
Oh shit! They're making bombs!

William examines a blueprint.

WILLIAM
This is a funny picture.

The others crowd around him.

CLOSE ON BLUEPRINT: At first glance, it's an odd looking structure with vertical and horizontal lines and their dimensions written down.

BEAU
It's called a blueprint. I've seen one in my brother's garage.

DEWEY
That's not a building. It's a bridge.

BEAU
You're right. See that tower and those cables running off it?

He stares at it intently.

BEAU (CONT'D)
It looks so familiar. Like I've been here before.

WALDO
Of course you have. We ALL have. It's Brooklyn Bridge.

A PAUSE as the kids absorb this information.

WILLIAM
They're going to bomb that bridge. Why?

The boys look at each other in growing horror.

BEAU
We've got to get out and warn the police.

WILLIAM
Yes we should --

Jim comes running, eyes wide.

JIM
Run! It's Hermann.

The Snoops flee the room. William grabs the blueprint and follows the others.

EXT. BASEMENT - SLAUGHTERHOUSE - NIGHT

The Snoops creep downstairs. Water drips down the walls, pushing past cobwebs and avoiding broken plaster strewn on the floor.

Ahead a room looms in front of them. An odd, huge door. A steel door.

Behind, sounds of footsteps. The Snoops hurry towards the only safe spot. Whatever lies behind that door. They enter, shut the door behind them.

Edmund and Hermann come down the stairs.

HERMANN
They are here.

EDMUND
Lock the door. I just switched on the freezer. They'll be popsicles in an hour.

INT. FREEZER - SLAUGHTERHOUSE - NIGHT

Bizarre is the only way to describe this icy room. It's a giant meat freezer. Ice is EVERYWHERE, on the floor, dripping from ceilings.

JIM
Now I know what an ice cream scoop feels like.

WALDO
An ice cream scoop's dead. It doesn't feel anything.

JIM
That might be us. Soon.

An electrical hum comes on suddenly. The room lights up with an automatic switch.

Dewey screams his head off. In one corner of the room, Fritz is hung from a meat hook.

Jim passes out. Waldo throws up. William clutches his father's binoculars to his heart.

Beau maintains a stoic calm, then turns to throw up.

INT. BOMB ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

Edmund carefully packs a square of TNT into a thin metal tube. Then seals off the ends with plastic discs. Holes run through each of the discs.

Hermann measures and carefully cuts a length of fuse. He runs it through the holes.

HERMANN
(German, subtitled)
What do you think?

EDMUND
We need to make a hundred tubes like this.

HERMANN
It's going to take all night.

EDMUND
Did you have other plans?

Hermann gives him a long look. They resume working.

HERMANN
You're lucky I don't take offence at your potshots.

EDMUND
Why did you come on this mission?

Hermann strings a second tube, then a third and a fourth.

HERMANN
I like blowing things up. You?

EDMUND
I want to see America burn. If it's by my own hands, even better.

By now a series of tubes strung together lay on the ground. Edmund refers to a notebook for instructions.

HERMANN
You have a grudge?

EDMUND
You could say that.

INT. FREEZER - NIGHT

The atmosphere is tense, frigid. Beau and Dewey try to wake Jim. They shake him, plead with him but nothing works. William holds his head to Jim's heart.

WILLIAM
It's beating. He's alive.

Waldo pulls out a match and a lighter.

WALDO
Let's have a dollar bill.

William pulls out a twenty dollar note. Waldo lights it and holds it under Jim's nose. Smoke from the burning paper reaches his nostrils.

Jim gets up coughing. Waldo puts the tiny flame out. He hands it to William.

WALDO (CONT'D)
You can get it replaced at the bank.

WILLIAM
I won't touch that money. Not after I know who they really are.

By now, all the boys are shivering.

BEAU
If you'd taken that money and run, we'd all be okay right now. But no. You sprouted wings and a halo. Look where that got us.

JIM
Let's not talk about heaven. Please. I'm not ready to die.

He takes a long, shuddering look at Fritz's grotesque body.

WILLIAM
We've got to stop them. Don't you see?

WALDO
We've got to get out of here. Look at Dewey, for god's sake.

Everyone turns to look at Dewey who's breathing in great gasps.

WILLIAM
What's happening to him?

BEAU
He's got Raynaud's disease. He can't get too cold.

Beau looks around. Remnants of a plastic curtain hang from a plastic hook attached to a rod on the ceiling. He rips it off and swaddles Dewey with it.

William rubs his arms to warm him up when he notices something sticking out from Dewey's pocket.

He pulls out an exceptionally long, black metallic pen.

WILLIAM
Where did you get this?

DEWEY
B-b-bomb room. My pen ran out of ink.

Beau takes the pen from William. He sniffs at it. His eyes widen.

BEAU
This has gunpowder in it. It'll explode if you want it to.

JIM
What's that wire poking out?

BEAU
It's called the fuse. You light it.

DEWEY
Guys?

He's gone ghostly pale now. His breathing is shallow and labored. Waldo picks up his hands and turns the palms up. They've turned red.

WALDO
In a minute, he'll go into shock. Two, tops.

Beau and William exchange a glance.

BEAU
Are you thinking what I'm thinking.

WILLIAM
Yes. Let's blow up that wall.

He points to the wall opposite the door.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
The way this room looked from the outside, these three walls --
(points out)
-- are part of the main building. This --
(taps another wall)
-- is the only one that could lead outside.

He breaks off a stalactite hanging from the ceiling. Uses it to chip away a slim hole in the wall. He works the ice out of the hole making it as deep as possible.

Beau turns the pen over so the fuse tip is exposed. Waldo hands him the lighter. Beau goes over to the wall. The boys's lips are frozen so they all talk slowly, painfully.

BEAU
Step back, everyone.

Jim, Waldo and Dewey move to the other side of the room. Jim starts chanting a prayer under his breath.

Beau flicks the lighter but it doesn't spark. He tries again. And again. No luck.

BEAU (CONT'D)
Now what?

Everyone checks their pockets.

WALDO
I've got matches but nothing to light them with.

JIM
What about him?

He points a shaking finger towards Fritz.

JIM (CONT'D)
Ugliest yellow teeth..

No one wants to go near the dead man. Jim squares his shoulders.

JIM (CONT'D)
I'll try.

He looks nervous and ready to throw up. Somehow he manages to get close to Fritz.

Puts a hand in one pocket.

JIM (CONT'D)
Nothing.

He tries the other. Brings up a pack of cigarettes and a matchbook. The others try to whoop for joy but they end up coughing.

Beau is about to light the fuse when William stops him.

WILLIAM
Wait. What if it just goes off while you're lighting it?

Beau shrugs. William grasps the binoculars tightly.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
If anyone should do the blowing up, it's me. I got you all into trouble. So I've got to get you out of it, see.

It's a solemn moment. Beau hands him the pen reluctantly. Puts a hand on his shoulder.

BEAU
Good luck.

Jim and Waldo give William a hug.

JIM
It was an honor to have met you.

WALDO
I'll enter your smoke bombs in my mischief manual. When it's published, it'll have your name in it.

WILLIAM
Thanks.

He goes up to Dewey.

DEWEY
Nothing's going to happen to you.

William takes off his binoculars and gives them to him.

WILLIAM
For safekeeping. I don't the explosion to damage them.

The other snoops close in and soon the boys are in a huddle.

SNOOPS
One for all and all for one!

Everyone stands back as William goes up to the hole in the wall. Lights the fuse and pops it in.

He runs towards the others when the bomb EXPLODES. The impact causes shards of ice to fly like arrows in the room.

William falls to the ground stunned.

INT. BOMB ASSEMBLY ROOM - NIGHT

BOOM! Edmund and Hermann feel the walls and ground tremble with the explosion.

EDMUND
Those goddamn kids.

He picks up his pistol and runs out followed by Hermann.

INT. FREEZER - NIGHT

William lays unmoving.

DEWEY
Is he okay? Is he alright?

Beau checks William’s pulse.

BEAU
It’s faint.

Meanwhile, the explosion has revealed a tunnel. Pieces of ice continue to fall.

WALDO
Look. We can escape.

William opens his eyes slowly. The Snoops hover over him.

JIM
You did it, William!

DEWEY
We’ve found a way out. Thanks to you.

Dewey returns the binoculars to him.

DEWEY (CONT'D)
Guess I didn't need to keep them after all.

A smiling William slings them around his neck. Waldo and Beau help Dewey up between them. One by one, the boys disappear into the tunnel.

Edmund and Hermann shout from outside. They pound at the door but it's locked from the inside now.

INT. CATTLE TUNNELS - NIGHT

Beau uses the lighter every now and then to illuminate the passage.

BEAU
God, this place is a bloody labyrinth.

JIM
Stop swearing. You're not supposed to.

Beau gives a near hysterical laugh.

BEAU
Bloody. Bloody.
(shouting now)
B-L-O-O-D-Y. Come on, say it with me.

JIM
Bloody.

BEAU
Louder.

JIM
Bloody!

WALDO
Bloody!

The kids continue to scream their way down the tunnels. Then William trips on a pile of bones. Long, thigh bones.

The screaming fades away. Once more, the kids grow solemn and continue their march.

LATER

The last section is so narrow that Beau has to bend a little. A golden shaft of daylight from outside cuts the tunnel at a diagonal.

Seeing it, Dewey breaks into a smile.

EXT. DESERTED STREET - DAY

One by one, the boys emerge from the tunnel. Dirty, torn clothes, dishevelled hair. Relief shines on their faces.

A milk van passes in the distance.

JIM
I never thought I'd be so happy to see a milk van.

WALDO
My mom is going to kill me.

BEAU
I've got to put Betsy back in the garage before my cousin gets into work.

DEWEY
What are you going to do, William? You've got the money now. Most of it, at least.

William looks at them uncertainly.

WILLIAM
Yes, but it's all gone so wrong. The real thief is roaming scot free, the spies are making bombs as we speak. I can't just stroll back home to my grandma.

BEAU
What else can we do? We're only kids.

WILLIAM
Yes, but we've got a responsibility. We're Americans. We protect our country.

WALDO
What exactly are you suggesting?

WILLIAM
Let's go tell the cops. They'll know what to do.

WALDO
William, listen to me. No one is going to take us seriously.

WILLIAM
You're just saying that because you're afraid of cops.

JIM
But you seem to think we'll walk in and be welcomed with open arms. They think we're a nuisance. They'll shoo us out.

WILLIAM
So you're saying we all go home and pretend nothing happened. You're cowards. All of you.

He pulls out the blueprint out of his pocket that he'd picked up from the bomb room.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
I'll show this to the cops. They'll have to believe me.

He walks away angrily.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

A few COPS sit behind desks making entries. MORE COPS lead out a DRUG ADDICT, a GAMBLER and a PROSTITUTE.

William hangs back in a corner, nervous, not really wanting to do this. A lone kid among stern faced adults.

A cop notices him.

COP
Hey kid! Come over here.

William walks over slowly, dreading this moment. The cop beckons him to be seated.

COP (CONT'D)
How can we help you? Be quick.

WILLIAM
Well, it's like this. My friends and I were chasing two thieves but it turned out they were spies who plan to bomb the Brooklyn bridge. Today.

A long moment as the cop stares at him, absorbing this remarkable piece of information. William stares back, holding his breath. Will he believe?

The cop throws his head back and laughs loudly. Tears stream from his face.

COP
Oho. Ha ha. What a joke! Best one I've heard since Christmas. And that was six months ago.

He clutches his sides in hilarity. Other cops become curious and listen in.

WILLIAM
It's not a joke! It's true. They've got bombs. We used one to escape the slaughterhouse.

COP
Now kid. You're lucky I'm in a fine mood today. You had your fun. Now scoot. I've got work to do.

William pulls out his blueprint of the bridge and spreads it triumphantly on the cop's desk.

WILLIAM
If I'm lying, how do you think I got hold of that!

The cop scans the blueprint.

COP
It's a very good one. They make good ones at the book store down the street. You can buy them for a dollar apiece. An expensive prank, no doubt.

WILLIAM
There's a dead body at the slaughterhouse freezer. A man named Fritz who worked at Fulton Fish market.

Now the cop grows serious.

COP
Okay. Let's check it out.

William turns to move but the cop merely picks up his phone and dials a number.

COP (CONT'D)
Operator, give me the office of Fulton Fish Market.
(MORE)

COP (CONT'D)
(pause)
Hello, this is Officer Hayden from the New York City Police. Do you have or have had a man called Fritz working over there.
(pause)
No? Thanks. That'll be all.

He puts the phone down and looks sternly at William.

COP (CONT'D)
Enough's enough. Or I might be tempted to lock you up. Run along now.

William looks like he's in a bad dream.

WILLIAM
I don't why they said that but his body is at the slaughterhouse. You can see it for yourself. My friends --

COP
Who are they? Where do they live?

WILLIAM
I know their names. I don't know where they live.
(desperately)
Can't you please look into this.

The cop stands up. Picks up his cap and baton. Holsters his gun.

COP
There's a parade on at the Brooklyn Bridge. I'm late already. I can't sit around listening to childish stories.

WILLIAM
But that's exactly why they're at the Bridge. They're going to bomb it.

But the cop has walked away by now and is speaking to another cop. Both look at William who is the picture of dejection. The second cop approaches.

COP 2
Come on, kid. I'll take you home.

WILLIAM
No! I've got to get to Brooklyn Bridge.

COP 2
Senior officers orders. Let's be moving.

EXT. POLICE STATION - DAY

William rides behind the cop on a motorcycle, clutching the blueprint absentmindedly. Tears run down his face.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL BUILDING - BATTERY PARK - DAY

William gets down from the motorcycle and goes inside the building.

INT. GRANDMA'S HOUSE - RESIDENTIAL BUILDING - DAY

The doorbell rings. CYNTHIA DOOLITTLE, 60, sweet faced and a little plump, maneuvers a wheelchair to the door and opens it.

A very tense and anxious William stands outside.

CYNTHIA
Why, it's William! Oh my god. We were so worried about you. Where have you been.

William runs inside and into another room and shuts the door with a slam. Cynthia shuts the door, then follows him in her wheelchair.

CYNTHIA (CONT'D)
William! Open the door. William!

INT. BEDROOM - DAY

William stares out of the window. He's frowning and fidgeting with the binoculars.

Outside, people and cars go by. Kids play a game of catch. William sighs, falls back on the bed.

WILLIAM
I need a sign. I need something to go on.

He looks through the binoculars once more. But there's no inspiration. Suddenly, someone knocks on the door.

AMY (O.S.)
William! William, it's Amy. Open the door.

INT. EXT. BEDROOM - DAY

William opens the door. Amy pulls him into a hug.

AMY
Thank god you're okay. What happened.

William turns away, flops down on the bed. Concerned, she comes to sit next to him and strokes his hair.

AMY (CONT'D)
Where's your suitcase? And the money?

William buries his head in the pillow and howls long and loud.

AMY (CONT'D)
Look. Whatever happened, I'm sure it was a mistake. No one's blaming you, okay?

She looks on in increasing alarm.

AMY (CONT'D)
Did you know they found Dad's plane? Parts of it, at least. There were signs he escaped before it blew up.

At that, William promptly gets up. He wipes his eyes. They're shining now.

WILLIAM
Really?

Amy smiles.

AMY
It means, there's a chance your father might be safe. He may even be trying to come home as we speak.

It's forced optimism but it cheers them up. William gets up from the bed and does a cartwheel.

AMY (CONT'D)
How about a little breakfast? I can make you some eggs and toast.

William grabs his binoculars from the bed.

WILLIAM
If I told you I was going to do something that dad would approve of, even if it was dangerous, would you let me?

Amy grows serious.

AMY
I don't know. That depends on what it is. Can you tell me?

WILLIAM
I've got to get to Brooklyn Bridge now.

Amy sighs. Comes to a decision.

AMY
You can take grandpa's old bicycle. It's still in good shape.

William puts his arms around her and kisses her on the cheek.

WILLIAM
You're the best! One more thing - you wouldn't happen to have a pair of scissors, would you?

Puzzled, Amy reaches into a pocket and pulls out a small pair of scissors.

AMY
They're very sharp.

WILLIAM
Then they're just the thing I need.

He takes them from her, grabs the bicycle and rings it's bell as he wheels it out of the house.

Cynthia and Amy watch as he goes off.

CYNTHIA
Will he be okay?

AMY
He's his dad's son. He'll do great.

EXT. STREET - NEAR BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

A massive war parade is in progress. Thousands of spectators line the sidewalks as the floats go by.

Cops are stationed at the curbs along the line of march.

William comes fast on his bicycle, weaving through the pedestrian crowd.

WILLIAM
Watch it!

He circles around a FAMILY of five kids. One kid steps in his path accidentally.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
Whoa! Whoa!

He manages to control the bike but decides to ditch it. He ties it up to a store front with a padlock.

Ahead, the Brooklyn Bridge stands in all it's glory. William starts walking briskly towards it. Then breaks into a run.

EXT. NEAR BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

A brightly painted red and blue van with the words 'Manhattan Electricals' comes to a halt on a deserted stretch near the bridge.

Edmund and Hermann step out of the van. They are dressed in electricians attire and carry a length of insulated cable slung around their shoulders.

They open the back of the van. Each one pulls out a metal box apiece. A FEMALE COP approaches.

EDMUND
(softly)
Leave it to me.

He smiles charmingly as she stops in front of them.

FEMALE COP
Howdy fellas. Nice day, huh? What's in those boxes?

CUT TO:

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

William squints against the glare of the sun. He scans the bridge but there's no sign of Edmund and Hermann.

EXT. BEAU'S GARAGE - DAY

A few WORKERS mill about, testing brakes and tires of a slew of cars.

Beau slides out from under the engine of a black Buick. He's dressed in greasy overalls, a tool belt attached to his waist. Dark smudges around his eyes.

Waldo, Jim and Dewey peer down at him anxiously.

DEWEY
Hey Beau.

Beau gets up, dusts himself down.

BEAU
What are you clowns doing here?

JIM
Nothing. We just wanted to say hello.

They look mopey and depressed.

BEAU
(too brightly)
Cheer up! Boss gave me an extra fiver today just cause he's in a good mood. We can watch Lady of the Night. What say huh?

He gives Waldo a bump on the shoulder. Waldo slumps against a car.

BEAU (CONT'D)
Hey stop acting like you've got the measles or something. What's wrong with you?

JIM
We were thinking about William.

Beau picks up a pair of wire cutters. Opens the Buick's engine.

BEAU
William made his own decision. He chose cops over buddies.

WALDO
He so did not. He lit the fuse in that human icebox so you'd be safe.

JIM
I just don't see how you can stand there calmly talking about a movie when William's out there by himself, being strangled to death or something by those shit heads.

Beau pulls out a cigarette from behind his ear. Chews on it as he examines the engine.

BEAU
You refused him yourselves. You were there. I don't need to remind you.

DEWEY
I know we have a code and everything. But for once, I say we break the rules.

The others stare in amusement.

BEAU
Dewey, you ALWAYS break the rules. Not at first. But you play along.

DEWEY
Fine. Why can't you do as I do this once? It's for a good cause. William's our buddy. He's one of the Snoops.

Beau closes the car's bonnet with a loud BANG.

BOSS (O.S.)
Beau! You spoil that car, I kill you!

Beau throws the unlit cigarette down.

BEAU
Let's go.

The boys give a whoop of joy as Beau wheels out Betsy quietly. As he starts the engine, the Boss screams and curses. But the Snoops jump on for the ride of their lives.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

Binocular POV: Edmund and Hermann are perched fifty feet above the bridge on a massive steel cable.

WILLIAM (O.S.)
Gotcha!

Hermann carefully strings the 'bomb' lights they made the previous night across each square of crisscrossing cables that hold the bridge up.

Edmund holds on to the other end of the fuse, tying it up so it stays secure.

EXT. CABLES - BRIDGE - DAY

Edmund glances down casually. Sees William staring up at him through the binoculars.

His expression changes at once from contentment to rage.

EDMUND
Why that little son-of-a --

He starts to lose balance but manages to grab on to the steel scaffolding.

HERMANN
You want to kill us before we kill them?

Edmund points below. Hermann follows his gaze to see William.

HERMANN (CONT'D)
Hurry! The little monster is back.

EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

William looks around uncertainly. Licks his lips. Clutches the binoculars close and says a silent prayer.

Then he puts a leg on one cable, grabs another with his hand and starts climbing the steel grid.

CUT TO:

EXT. STREET - NEAR BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

Beau parks at the same deserted stretch near the bridge. The kids jump out.

WALDO
Look! The German's van. The one Fritz brought them.

The Snoops peer into the van.

JIM
It's empty.

WALDO
Duh.

He notices a pair of booted feet sticking out from beneath the van.

He motions the others to be silent. They all surround the feet.

Waldo nudges one foot. It falls limply to the ground. Jim starts palpitating.

JIM
Is it -- is he --?

WALDO
She. She's dead.

Jim clutches his heart in an effort to steady it.

BEAU
Looks like the cops didn't listen to William.

Waldo picks up the cop's baton fallen on the ground. Beau opens up the van's engine. Rips out the distributor arm.

BEAU (CONT'D)
Might help.

EXT. CABLES - BRIDGE - DAY

William is now forty feet above the bridge proper. He's holding on to the steel bars, trying not to look down. But he can't help it. He takes a little peek.

New York City is laid out at his feet. People -- cars -- the parade -- all disconcertingly small, distant. He grows dizzy.

WILLIAM
Wish me luck, dad.

Wind blows through his hair as he continues his spidery path toward the Germans.

AHEAD

Hermann ties his end of the fuse to a steel cable.

Beneath and around him, a fifty by fifty square foot grid is riddled with the 'bomb lights'.

Edmund gives a yell as he sees William approaching. Hermann reacts. He pulls out a gun but his left thumb gets caught in the fuse knot he created.

He gives a yell of alarm. Loses balance. He's about to fall to his death.

EDMUND
Lose the gun, you idiot!

Hermann lets go of the gun and hangs on for dear life. The entire cable grid shudders. William grips his bar tightly.

BENEATH ON BRIDGE

A cop on patrol on the sidewalk sees the gun fallen on the ground.

He stops -- picks it up -- looks around.

ABOVE

-- Their work done, Hermann and Edmund begin their descent.

-- William reaches the trail end of the 'bomb lights'

-- Holding on to the steel bar with one hand..

-- He pulls out Amy's scissors with the other.

-- He carefully snips the fuse knot tied around a cable

-- Unravels it. Great. Another forty nine to go.

ELSEWHERE ON THE BRIDGE

Beau, Waldo, Jim and Dewey scour the bridge, dodging traffic. Then Dewey notices a lone figure on the cables.

DEWEY
Is that William?

They break into a run.

BENEATH ON BRIDGE

The cop also notices William as he works his way across the grids.

COP
Hey! You! Come down at once!

ABOVE

William points towards the Germans and yells something that gets lost in the wind.

The cop sees two electricians dismounting the cables.

He turns back to William and motions him to come down at once.

William falters. His arms hurt. Dismantling the careful arrangement of bombs is tiring work.

BENEATH

-- The cop starts climbing up the cables.

-- Edmund and Hermann reach the ground.

-- Hermann removes his trusty lighter

EDMUND
Seven minutes to reach the first bomb?

-- Hermann nods. Lights the fuse.

-- From behind, Beau and Jim come at Hermann in a flying tackle.

-- Dewey grabs the lighter.

WALDO
You were gonna blow him up with the bridge? Just like that?

He kicks Edmund in the nuts. Dewey hits Edmund with the cop's baton.

ABOVE

William finishes unravelling the tenth square.

BEAU (O.S.)
William!

William looks down to see Beau directly below him, pointing urgently at the lit fuse.

The cop also sees the live fuse. Eyes wide with fear, he blows his whistle long and hard.

BENEATH

Otto appears. He punches Dewey and Jim -- pulls Waldo off Edmund.

Otto, Edmund and Hermann take off like sprinters off the blocks.

WALDO
Cowards!

Dewey helps Jim stand up. Both boys are bleeding.

ABOVE

William, the cop and Beau unravel the bombs together.

The spark snakes further along the fuse.

DEWEY
Get outta there!

WALDO
Come down!

William and Beau rip a section of the bombs. Like a miracle, the whole line comes clear of the bridge.

The fuse nears the first bomb.

COP
Throw it!

William flings the bomb into the water.

Seconds later, a giant EXPLOSION erupts. Traffic stops. People scream. Cops gather on the bridge.

EXT. BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

Waldo, Dewey and Jim rush in to champion William as he climbs down with Beau. Too overcome to speak, the boys disappear into the crowd before the cops can stop them.

EXT. STREET - BROOKLYN BRIDGE - DAY

They reach the curb side where the motorcycle is parked. Beau wears his helmet. William peers at the water. The German's van floats in it, bobbing up and down.

WILLIAM
Hey! That's their van!

WALDO
With a dead body thrown in.
(off his horrified stare)
They killed a cop too.

BEAU
If we go now, we can catch them hoofing it.

Dewey gives William an awkward hug.

DEWEY
I just want you to know that -- um
(embarrassed cough)
-- we're so glad you're okay.

Jim and Waldo give him a neck squeeze each.

JIM
When I saw you climbing up those cables -- you're the real McCoy.

WALDO
We were idiots. Sorry.

BEAU
What are we, sissies? Give the man a proper homecoming.

He grabs them all in a huge bear hug.

EXT. STREET - DAY

The Snoops are back on the motorcycle racing on the streets. The boys search for the Germans.

BEAU
That's the car park zone.

EXT. CAR PARK - DAY

The boys turn into the lot. They're alert for any signs of the perps. They go down one row of cars, then another.

Sounds of a car starting emerge from the far end of the lot. The boys move in it's direction.

They're closing in --

Suddenly, the car comes to life. Tires screeching, it rolls out of the lot and into the street.

Hermann aims at the Snoops and shoots but the car swerves to avoid a fire hydrant. He misses.

They knock over the fire hydrant anyway and cross paths with an oncoming bus before zooming away.

WILLIAM
Don't let them get away this time!

Beau revs the motorcycle and the Snoops shoot out of the lot.

INT. OTTO'S CAR - DAY

Hermann is bleeding on one side of his face.

HERMANN
I'll kill those boys if that's the last thing I do!

Otto reaches into the glove compartment and pulls out a map.

OTTO
Open it. Find pier 22. I'll drop you there. Hide on the boat tonight.

Edmund doesn't move.

EDMUND
If you think we're going to leave the mission unfinished, you're mistaken.

OTTO
(screaming)
You don't understand. You screwed up the job. You're finished. I want you out of my city.

EDMUND
Your city? You helped us almost bomb the bridge.

A look of remorse crosses Otto's face.

OTTO
I wish I hadn't.

EXT. MOTORCYCLE - STREET - DAY

Jim lets out a smelly fart. Waldo gags.

JIM
I can't help it. You're squashing my tummy.

WILLIAM
What's the plan?

Waldo opens a box full of steel pins.

BEAU
We'll throw that in the car's path when we close in.

WALDO
We came prepared this time.

EXT. STREET - DAY

A police car joins the chase. It overtakes the Snoops and closes in on the Germans.

Otto's car veers madly to the left and right.

Other cars on the street swerve violently to avoid a crash. But they're hit by cars from the back causing a road block.

Pedestrians watch the high speed chase in amazement from the safety of the sidewalks.

INT. OTTO'S CAR - DAY

Otto lies slumped behind the wheel. Edmund's foot is on the accelerator and he tries to take control.

EDMUND
Pull him out!

Hermann grabs hold of Otto's shoulders from the back. Heaves and grunts as he manages to pull Otto's limp body and dump it on the back seat. Otto stirs but remains unconscious.

Edmund jumps over the gear box and settles in the driver's seat.

The police siren is deafening now -- COPS racing alongside Otto's car.

COP
(loudspeaker)
Stop the car! Pull over immediately!

Edmund does nothing of the kind. He makes a sharp left turn.

EXT. WATERFRONT - DAY

The Snoops hold on to each other as Beau makes an expert left turn.

Waldo passes the bag of steel pins around. Jim, Dewey and William grab a handful of the pins

BEAU
Get ready.

BEHIND

Two cops on motorcycles join the chase.

AHEAD

A VENDOR wheels a hot dog cart across the street. Edmund shoots past it, barely missing it by a hair's breadth.

The police car behind isn't so lucky. It avoids hitting the cart but skids sideways and SLAMS into a row of parked cars.

The Snoops gain, now riding alongside the Germans. Hermann shoots at Beau but the bullet ricochets off his helmet.

A motorcycle cop from behind shoots at the van, smashing the glass. The van veers.

Dazed from the hit, Beau manages to control the motorcycle. He brings it as close to the van as he can.

BEAU
Now!

William, Dewey, Waldo and Jim chuck the steel pins between the front and back tires.

One tire bursts. The van becomes skewed. Desperate, Edmund turns onto the pier.

EXT. PIER 88 - DAY

Otto's car is speeding out of control. Then starts spinning and rotating towards the water.

The Snoops start to slow down as they reach the edge of the pier.

The motorcycle cops are gaining.

Finally the van screeches to a halt. The Snoops trail behind it warily.

A door opens. Edmund, bleeding heavily, falls out. Then Hermann comes out with his hands up.

The cops pull up, guns on the ready. Edmund gives the Snoops one long look of hate before being handcuffed.

INT. POLICE STATION - DAY

The Snoops come in marching alongside the handcuffed Germans. Several cops swarm around them, taking Edmund and Hermann into the interrogation room.

William sees Amy seated in front of a cop. She's been crying.

WILLIAM
Amy!

She sits up as if jolted. William goes up to her and gives her a hug.

AMY
William, I've been so worried since I let you go. Who were those men?

One of the cops from the chase walks up to her.

COP
If you knew the half of what went on at the pier this morning, you'd be proud of your son.

AMY
Is that true?

WILLIAM
I told you, Dad would approve.

COP
There's a reward waiting for them too. And their pictures will be on the front pages.

The Snoops whoop for joy. William introduces them one by one to Amy.

A familiar voice from somewhere behind speaks conspiratorially.

MAX (O.S.)
I've been drafted into the war. I'm supposed to show up at the war office. This whole thing was a mistake. I'm innocent.

William turns to see Max chat up a young POLICE OFFICER.

WILLIAM
You!

Max turns around. He pales at the sight of William.

WILLIAM (CONT'D)
You thief! Where's my money?

The other Snoops gather around William, ready for another fight.

FADE OUT.