

Everybody Hates Chris

"Everyone Hates the Pilot"

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COLD OPEN

1 INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - MORNING 1 \*

CHRIS, 13, and his brother Andrew aka "Drew", 10, are in separate beds sleeping. On the walls are posters of Rappers and Basketball players.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

1982. That was the year I turned thirteen. I thought being a teenager was going to be really cool.

2 EXT. MANHATTAN - NIGHT - FANTASY 2 \*

A limo pulls up to a nightclub. Chris steps out wearing a fly outfit. He's with four GORGEOUS WOMEN. THE MANAGER, walks Chris past the LINE of PEOPLE waiting an into the club.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

I was going to have women, money, stay out late.....

3 INT. THE CLUB - CONTINUOUS 3 \*

The Party is Jumping. THE DJ waves to Chris as he goes to a VIP BOOTH, the Manager brings CHAMPAGNE. \*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

I thought it was going to be the bomb. I was wrong. \*

4 INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - RESUME 4 \*

BAM! The fantasy ends as the door flies open and ROCHELLE, Chris' mom, clicks on a light. THE CLOCK reads 6:00 A.M.

ROCHELLE

Chris! Get in this bathroom and wipe the pee off the toilet seat!

5 CREDITS: RAPPER GRANDMASTER FLASH PERFORMS "THE MESSAGE" OVER OPENING CREDIT SEQUENCE.

ACT ONE

5 EXT. CROWN HEIGHTS APT. - DAY 5 \*

Chris' family is loading a moving van. \*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

When I turned thirteen my mother convinced my father to move us out of the projects. She always said project is just another word for experiment.

6 INT. LABORATORY - DAY 6 \*

A WHITE RAT in a cage eats cheese.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

In the lab the government gives rats cheese.

7 EXT. PROJECTS - SAME 7 \*

A YOUNG BLACK KID behind a gate eats cheese.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

And in the projects the government gives the people cheese.

8 EXT. BROOKLYN STREETS - DAY 8 \*

Chris' father, JULIUS, drives the family through Brooklyn.

CHRIS

Dad, can we stop and get a burger? \*

JULIUS

You got some burger money? \*

ROCHELLE

Julius, the kids have to eat.

JULIUS

We get one combo meal. Drew gets the burger, Tonya gets the fries, Chris, you can have the drink. \*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

That's my father, Julius. He worked all the time to get money to move.

(MORE)

ADULT CHRIS V.O. (cont'd)  
I think he worked on every street  
in Brooklyn.

ANGLE ON A DRY CLEANERS.

JULIUS  
I used to work there. \*

ANGLE ON A TIRE REPAIR SHOP.

JULIUS  
I used to work there too. \*

9 EXT. 606 VARICK ST. - DAY 9 \*

Mom and the kids are carrying stuff into their new apartment.  
NEIGHBORS watch. A THUG is spray painting "BED-STUY DO OR  
DIE" on a building. Rochelle and the kids watch.

ROCHELLE  
(to her kids)  
If I ever catch one of you all  
spray painting on a wall I will put  
my foot so far up your behind  
you'll have toes for teeth.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
That's my mother, Rochelle She had  
a hundred recipes for whooping ass.

10 INT. HOUSE - QUICK CUTS 10 \*

ROCHELLE  
I'll slap the caps off your knees!

ANOTHER TIME -- ANOTHER OUTFIT

ROCHELLE  
I'll knock you into last night!

11 OMITTED 11 \*

12 INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 12 \*

Chris brings in three bowls of oatmeal on a tray. Drew, 11 is standing by the table. He's clearly taller than Chris. Tonya, 10, sits playing with the sugar bowl.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

That's my younger brother Drew. Everybody thought I was *his* little brother. My sister Tonya was the youngest so she never got blamed for anything.

Tonya knocks over the sugar bowl on purpose. Rochelle, in a robe and curlers, comes in on cue --

ROCHELLE

Chris, clean that mess up!

CHRIS

Tonya knocked it over.

ROCHELLE

Did I ask you that?

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Since I was the oldest, I had to be the responsible one. I was like the emergency adult.

\*

13 EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY 13 \*

Dad is leaving for work. Chris stands at the door.

JULIUS

If you smell smoke and think the house is gonna catch fire, you get your brother and sister and get out of here.

14 EXT. FRONT PORCH - ANOTHER DAY -- ANOTHER UNIFORM 14 \*

JULIUS

If you smell gas and think the house is gonna blow up, get your brother and sister and get out of here.

\*

15 EXT. FRONT PORCH -ANOTHER DAY STILL-ANOTHER UNIFORM STILL 15

JULIUS

If you smell smoke, and your brother catches on fire, I want you to get your sister and get out of here.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Fortunately the house never caught fire.

16 INT. DINING ROOM - SHORT WHILE LATER 16

The kids are still eating. Rochelle has toast and coffee.

CHRIS

Mom, how come Drew and Tonya get to go to school in the neighborhood and I have to go all the way to Brooklyn Beach?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Brooklyn Beach was a poor Italian neighborhood on the other side of Brooklyn. It was like Bed-Stuy without the crackheads.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ROCHELLE

Because all the kids around here your age are hoodlums. At least those white kids have some sense.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

My mother thought anything involving white people was better.

Julius comes in. He and Rochelle hug and kiss quickly. He drops a NEW YORK PAPER on the table.

DREW

What's up, Dad.

They slap "five." Tonya is picking at her oatmeal.

TONYA

Hey daddy...

JULIUS

Hey baby! What's wrong with your oatmeal?

TONYA

Chris made it too lumpy. \*

JULIUS

You don't have to eat it.

Julius snuggles with Tonya. Chris gathered the bowls up. There's some oatmeal left in Tonya's bowl.

JULIUS

I know you're not throwing that away. Eat that. That's thirty cent worth of oatmeal.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

My father always knew what everything cost.

17 INT. HOUSE - QUICK CUTS

17 \*

JULIUS IS LOOKING AT A SPILT GLASS OF MILK.

JULIUS

That's forty nine cent, on the floor!

JULIUS LOOKS AT A HALF EATEN CHICKEN LEG IN THE TRASH.

JULIUS

That's a dollar and three cent, in the trash!

JULIUS LOOKS AT A TRAY OF BURNT BISCUITS.

JULIUS

That's two dollars, on fire!

18 INT. DINING ROOM - DAY

18 \*

Julius is eating and going through BILLS. Rochelle enters and starts to clear Julius's pate away. He opens one and finds a red notice. \*

JULIUS \*

Honey, did you see this? \*

\*

ROCHELLE  
 (looking it over)  
 I paid this.

JULIUS  
 They say you only paid *half*.

ROCHELLE  
 I know.

JULIUS  
 I gave you all the money. How come  
 you only paid half the bill?

ROCHELLE  
 I can't believe you're even asking  
 me that.

JULIUS  
 I'm not trying to upset you. I'm  
 just asking you a question.

ROCHELLE  
 No you're not. You're questioning  
 my judgement. You're either okay  
 with the way I handle the bills or  
 you're not. If you want me to do  
 it, let me do it.

JULIUS  
 You act like there's a not a big  
 red bill sitting on the table.

ROCHELLE  
 You know what? You do it.

JULIUS  
 Alright. I'll do it.

ROCHELLE  
 (challenge)  
 Do it then.

She exits.

19 INT. STAIRWELL - LATER

19

Chris is coming down the stairs in clean white SNEAKERS.

ROCHELLE  
 Boy, you are not going to school in  
 those sneakers.



ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Believe it or not, there was a time when you couldn't wear sneakers everywhere.

CHRIS

How come? Everybody wears sneakers.

ROCHELLE

You look raggedy. You have an assembly today.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

My mother hated raggedy. She always said it's better to be poor and neat than rich and raggedy. I think she said that because we were poor.

She produces a pair of SHINY BLACK LEATHER SCHOOL SHOES.

ROCHELLE

Here.. wear Drew's school shoes.

CHRIS

I hate these shoes. Everybody in school will make fun of me. \*

ROCHELLE

You've only been at the school a week. You don't **know** everybody.

CHRIS

(sotto)

I'm the only black kid in the school. They know *me*. \*

\*

\*

20

EXT. FRONT PORCH - DAY

20

\*

The kids come outside. Rochelle follows. Chris has on the shoes.

DREW

How come he's wearing my shoes?

ROCHELLE

Because you only have one pair of feet. Chris, don't fool around after school. Get back here so you can let Drew and Tonya in.

CHRIS

You won't be home?

ROCHELLE

I'm working today. You know the drill.

\*  
\*

CHRIS

I know. Daddy's going to be asleep so don't wake him up until five o'clock.

\*  
\*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

We had an arrangement; my father got to sleep, we got to eat.

\*  
\*

Chris starts to go.

ROCHELLE

You got your bus pass?

Chris checks his pockets. Rochelle hands it to him.

ROCHELLE

Keep on.. You lose this bus pass and you'll be walking to school.

(beat)

Here's two dollars for lunch.

He puts the money and the bus pass in his pocket.

21 EXT. VARICK ST. - DAY

21 \*

The kids walk toward the school bus stop. Drew is clearly larger than Chris. Chris' shoes CLICK CLACK on the concrete.

ANGLE ON - KEISHA RIDENHOUR - 13, PRETTY, AS SHE COMES OUT OF A BUILDING. \*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

That's Keisha Ridenhour. At thirteen I didn't know a lot about sex, but I knew she had something to do with it.

Chris looks at his watch.

CHRIS

Seven forty. Gotta remember that.

KEISHA

(flirty)

Hey Drew.

DREW  
What's up, Keisha...

CHRIS  
You know her?

DREW  
Yea...

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
Drew was so cool that he got girls  
at ten that I couldn't get until I  
was thirty.

CHRIS  
When y'all get home, don't ring the  
bell, don't knock on the door. Just  
wait. Okay?

TONYA  
What if I have to go to the  
bathroom?

CHRIS  
Go to the bathroom at school.

TONYA  
That bathroom is nasty.

CHRIS  
If you wake daddy up, he'll punch  
me in the face. If he does, I'm  
punching you in the face. And then  
he'll kill me and go to jail. You  
want daddy to go to jail?

TONYA  
No.

CHRIS  
Alright then.

They reach the school bus stop. Chris walks off.

22

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

22 \*

Chris comes running up. He is in front of ANOTHER SCHOOL.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
That's Dolemite Junior High, the  
school my mother wouldn't let me go  
to. I didn't know what was so bad  
about it.

\*

GUNSHOTS and then PANIC are heard as Chris boards the bus.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
Much like rock and roll, school  
shootings were also invented by  
blacks and stolen by whites.

23 INT. THE #26 BUS - DAY

23

\*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
My first bus was the twenty six.

Chris is the only kid on a BUS FULL OF ADULTS. All of them  
are black. He reads the paper.

24 INT. THE #44 BUS - DAY

24

\*

The PASSENGERS ARE MIXED RACE.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
My next bus was the forty four.

Chris is reads a HEADLINE about a "Chain Snatcher". There is  
a PHOTO. Chris realizes it's THE MAN STANDING NEXT TO HIM. He  
snatches a chain off a FEMALE RIDER and hops off the bus!

\*

25 INT. THE #31 BUS - DAY

25

\*

All of the passengers are WHITE.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
My last bus was the thirty one.  
Because I was the only black person  
on the bus, I was always the last  
one anybody would sit next to.

\*

\*

\*

A PREGNANT WHITE WOMAN looks around the full bus for an empty  
seat. The only one is right by Chris. She opts to stand.

26 EXT. CORLEONE MIDDLE SCHOOL - DAY

26

\*

Chris gets off in front of his school. Nothing but young  
ITALIAN KIDS milling around.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
I went to Corleone Middle school.

27 INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

27 \*

Chris walks past an ITALIAN PRIDE DISPLAY. EVERYONE is wearing SNEAKERS. Chris' school shoes CLICK CLACK LOUDLY as he walks. KIDS stare at him and SNICKER.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
My mother thought going to a white school meant I would get a better education and I would be safer.

A tough kid, CARUSO, smacks the books from the hands of a nerdy kid, GREG WULIGER.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
She was wrong on both counts --

\*

Caruso comes toward Chris.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
That's Joey Caruso. Everybody was scared of him. And so was I.

He throws a shoulder into Chris. Chris' books go flying. Caruso STEPS ON CHRIS' SHOE as he walks by.

CARUSO  
Nice shoes, Bojangles.

CHRIS  
Bojangles? That's what your mother called me when I was tap dancing in her drawers last night.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

A COLLECTIVE GASP from EVERY KID in the hallway. Caruso stops and turns. No one talks to him like that.

\*  
\*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.  
I know you think I'm crazy, but if I let him get away with messing with me, he'd be doing it all year. I couldn't beat him, but he didn't know that, so I figured I might be able to "out black" him.

\*

CARUSO  
What?

\*

CHRIS  
 (w/ bravado)  
 Did I stutter?

CARUSO  
 Do you know who I am?

CHRIS  
 Step on my shoe again and you gonna  
 find out who I am. I don't play  
 that. I'm from Bed-Stuy 'boy! I'll  
 bring half of Marcy up in here.  
 I'll beat your ass so bad you'll  
 need crutches in your sleep. I'll --

Caruso punches Chris hard in the chest, stopping the rant  
 immediately. Chris flies backward into DR. RAYMOND, 50, a  
 military type principal. Chris looks up to see Dr. Raymond.

RAYMOND  
 What's your name?

CHRIS  
 Chris.

RAYMOND  
 I'm Dr. Raymond, your new  
 principal. Now get off my feet.

Chris gets up. Caruso laughs. Raymond look him over.

RAYMOND  
 (to Caruso)  
 That's funny? That's not funny.  
 What's your name son?

CARUSO  
 Caruso.

RAYMOND  
 Fix yourself up next time you come  
 to my school.  
 (re: Chris)  
 See those shoes? They say  
 something. They say I'm a student.  
 I want to learn. I want to see more  
 of this.  
 (re: Caruso)  
 And less of that.  
 (to Chris)  
 Don't bump into me again.

Raymond heads off. Caruso scowls at Chris as he walks off.

CARUSO

This isn't over, nigger.

Chris is speechless.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Black people invented open heart surgery, peanut butter, and the perm, but still haven't come up with a good comeback for being called nigger.

Chris and Greg pick their books up.

GREG

You really from *Bed-Stuy do or die?*

CHRIS

Yea.

GREG

Cool. You ever been shot?

CHRIS

No. Not yet.

GREG

Wow. I'm Greg.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Greg Wuliger was a nice kid who couldn't fight. Just a big "ass kicking magnet." He wasn't my first choice for a friend, but you have to be friends with the people that want to be friends with you.

\*

CHRIS

I'm Chris.

GREG

Cool shoes.

Greg has on an older pair just like them.

CHRIS

(re: Raymond)

If he's the new principal, what happened to the old one?

\*

28 EXT. CORLEONE MIDDLE SCHOOL - THE PREVIOUS YEAR 28 \*

The OLD PRINCIPAL is being dragged away by the POLICE,  
screaming out to \*

OLD PRINCIPAL

I didn't touch her! I Don't know  
what you're talking about!! Ask  
anybody!! I Swear! Come on guys!! \*

29 OMITTED 29 \*

30 INT. KITCHEN - DAY 30 \*

Rochelle is dressed for work. Still angry from earlier, she  
SLAMS and BANGS things around the kitchen.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

As hard as my father worked, he  
never really had any expectations.  
He knew he wasn't going on  
vacation, he knew he couldn't  
afford a sports car, the only thing  
he ever asked for, at the end of  
the day, was to have the big piece  
of chicken. \*

She pulls a BIG PIECE OF CHICKEN from a PLASTIC CONTAINER and  
puts it on a plate with VEGETABLES and wraps it in plastic  
wrap. She puts it in the fridge. \*

31 INT. DINING ROOM - CONTINUOUS 31 \*

Rochelle enters. Julius is going over bills. \*



ROCHELLE  
What are you doing?

JULIUS  
I'm paying the bills. It says forty  
dollars. I'm paying forty dollars.

\*  
\*

Rochelle picks up the bills and looks them over.

ROCHELLE  
See that's what I'm talking about.  
You're doing it wrong.

\*  
\*

She puts them in her purse and heads for the door.

JULIUS  
Where are you going?

ROCHELLE  
To work.

\*

JULIUS  
Is Chris going to be home in time  
to wake me up?

\*  
\*

ROCHELLE  
Can I see in the future?

\*

JULIUS  
What's wrong with you?

She walks out -- SLAMMM!!

\*

32 EXT. PIZZA JOINT - DAY

32 \*

Greg and Chris are walking past the KIDS HANGING OUT.

GREG  
I'm going to get a hot dog.

CHRIS  
I'm gonna get a slice of pizza.

Greg walks off. Chris takes his bus pass out of his pocket with his money. He turns around and there's Caruso. Caruso steps on Chris shoes and pushes Chris. His things go flying. CARUSO'S BOYS scoop up the cash and the bus pass in a flash. Chris gets up and bravely faces Caruso.

CHRIS  
Give me back my bus pass, man.

\*

CARUSO  
You want it? Take it.

Chris steps up to Caruso. \*

CHRIS  
I'm not scared of you. \*

On cue, Raymond comes walking out of the pizza joint. Caruso  
deftly steps away from Chris as if nothing is happening. Once  
Raymond is gone, Caruso brushes past Chris and gets right in  
his ear. \*

CARUSO  
After school, *Satchmo*.

Chris turns and watches Caruso walk off.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

33 INT. REALTY OFFICE - DAY

33 \*

Rochelle is at her desk in a small Realty Office. A FEMALE CO-  
 WORKER sits across from her.. Rochelle is on the phone...  
 Rochelle has half of her lunch on her desk, uneaten. He CO-  
 WORKER eyes the un-eaten half of a sandwich.

ROCHELLE

(on the phone)

...Hello? No it is not okay if you  
 put me on hold.. Hey!

CO-WORKER

I hate when they do that. Are you  
 gonna eat the rest of that  
 sandwich?

ROCHELLE

No girl, you can have it..

The co-worker grabs the sandwich up. She is so happy.

ROCHELLE

(into phone)

Hello? Hello? I swear!

She hangs up. Rochelle's manager, MR. CORLISS, black, 40-ish,  
 comes over. He speaks softly to Rochelle

MR. CORLISS

Are you okay?

ROCHELLE

What?

MR. CORLISS

I overheard you on the phone. I'm  
 just wondering if you're okay.

ROCHELLE

(defensive)

If you got something to say just  
 say it.

MR. CORLISS

I was just wondering if you're  
 okay.

ROCHELLE

I don't see you asking nobody else  
if they're okay. I'm on the phone  
for two minutes, all of sudden you  
wanna know am I okay. You act like  
I'm the only one around here making  
calls.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Because my dad always worked two  
jobs, my mother would threaten to  
quit a job for no reason at all.

\*  
\*

ROCHELLE

My man works two jobs. I don't need  
this.

\*

MR. CORLISS

I was just wondering if you were  
okay.

\*

ROCHELLE

I'm fine. You happy?

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Can you believe she had only been  
there three days?

34 EXT. ALLEY - DAY

34 \*

A GANG OF KIDS have gathered a short distance away. Caruso is  
in the center waiting for Chris, who's walking toward the  
crowd with Greg.

GREG

Are you crazy?

CHRIS

No. It's a school fight. All I have  
to do is get in the first punch and  
somebody will stop it.

Greg slides into the crowd. Chris and Caruso square up.

CIRCLE OF KIDS

(chant)

Fight... fight...

CARUSO

What you waiting for Cornbread?

POW!!! Chris throws a haymaker! He quickly turns to Greg.

CHRIS

This should be over any minute.

35 TIME PASSAGE FIGHT MONTAGE - CHRIS IS LOSING THE FIGHT AS: 35 \*

STOCK: CLOUDS ROLL BY HIGH SPEED IN THE SKY

STOCK: A FLOWER GROWS THRU THE CONCRETE AND FULLY BLOOMS

A COP WALKS BY, SEES THE FIGHT, AND CONTINUES ON

CHRIS

Is somebody gonna stop this!?

CHRIS SEES HIS BUS

as it pulls up across the street. He tries to run for it but Caruso grabs him in a headlock.

CHRIS RAISES HIS FOOT HIGH

and stomps on Caruso's foot with all his might. Caruso SCREAMS and falls to the ground. Chris reaches into Caruso's shirt pocket, grabs his bus pass, and takes off after the bus with TWENTY KIDS CHASING HIM.

36 EXT. STREET - CONTINUOUS 36 \*

Chris races after the bus...

CHRIS

WAITTTTTTT!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

37 EXT. ONE BLOCK AWAY - SAME 37 \*

The bus is at the next bus stop. SEVERAL PASSENGERS get on.

38 INT. BUS - SAME 38 \*

The driver checks HIS MIRROR. He sees Chris running and the kids chasing him.

BUS DRIVER  
 (to Passengers)  
 Come on. Let's go. Hurry up.

The NEXT TO LAST PASSENGER gets on the bus.

PASSENGER  
 (to Driver)  
 There's a kid trying to catch you.

BUS DRIVER  
 Yea.. I see him. Hurry up.

The LAST PASSENGER gets on and the doors start to close.  
 Chris flies between them with the mob hot on his tail. They  
 BANG THE DOORS as the bus pulls away. Chris flashes his bus  
 pass. He sits next to a WHITE MAN. The White Man moves. \*

39 EXT. VARICK ST. - DAY 39 \*

Chris comes running around the corner... He hears Tonya IN  
 THE DISTANCE. He runs faster.

TONYA (O.S.)  
 DADDDDDYYYYYYYYYYYY!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

40 EXT. FRONT PORCH - SAME 40 \*

TONYA  
 Dadddddyyyyy!

Tonya goes to bang on the door. Chris appears out of nowhere  
 and grabs her hand and throws HIS other hand over her mouth. \*

CHRIS  
 You want daddy to go to jail?

DREW  
 I told her to quit.

He pulls out a cigarette and lighter, and prepares to light  
 up. Chris smacks the cigarette out of his mouth.

TONYA  
 I have to go to the bathroom.  
 DADDYYYYYYYY-----

Chris throws his hand over her mouth again.

CHRIS

Will you be quiet!? Now when we get inside, I don't want to hear any noise. None. You understand?

She nods.

- 41 INT. UPSTAIRS HALLWAY - LATER 41 \*
- Tonya comes out of the bathroom. Chris is waiting there with a large blanket and several pillows.
- 42 INT. BATHROOM - CONTINUOUS 42 \*
- Chris covers the toilet with blankets and pillows to muffle the sound. He FLUSHES. You can barely hear it.
- 43 INT. LIVING ROOM - SHORT WHILE LATER 43 \*
- The kids are watching SILENT TELEVISION. Tonya starts to LAUGH OUT LOUD. Chris smashes a cushion over her face.
- 44 INT. PARENT'S BEDROOM - MOMENTS LATER 44 \*
- Chris peeks in. Dad is asleep in his uniform.

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

My father slept in his uniform.  
That way, when he woke up he would be ready to go.

Chris opens the door with a long SQUEAK. Dad fidgets. Chris freezes. Dad settles in. Chris tip toes across the room as quietly as he can. Dad GRUNT/SNORES, Chris freezes. Chris creeps to the closet, and goes inside. He finds a small SHOE SHINE KIT. He gets it and creeps out.

- 45 INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - MONTAGE 45 \*
- Chris tries to clean his shoes.
- HE USES SOAP AND WATER FROM A BUCKET
- HE USES SPRAY CLEANER (FORMULA 409)

HE USES SOS PADS.

Finally all of the dirt is gone but the shoes aren't shining.

Chris has his shoes in front of him, the polish, A CUP OF WATER, AND A WHITE BATH TOWEL. He takes the white towel, and scoops up a wad of polish.. He gets to work on his shoes.

LATER

He picks up his school shoes. They're like new. He puts them in the closet. He picks up the once white towel. It's covered with BLACK SHOE POLISH. Chris takes the towel and shoves it deep in the bottom of a hamper. His stomach GROWLS.

46 INT. KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS 46 \*

Chris looks in the Fridge. He sees SOMETHING WRAPPED IN FOIL. He takes it out and unwraps it. There's one BIG PIECE OF CHICKEN on his father's plate.

47 INT. KITCHEN - SHORT WHILE LATER 47 \*

Chris is eating the chicken. He looks at the clock. It's five o'clock. He finishes the chicken off.

48 INT. DAD'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS 48 \*

Dad is asleep. Chris creeps back in and puts the shoe polish back. Then he shakes Julius gently to wake him.

CHRIS

Dad.. Dad.. it's time to get up.

JULIUS

(groggy)

Is it five o'clock?

CHRIS

Yes.

JULIUS

Not four fifty-nine?

CHRIS

No. It's five.

Julius sits up. Yawns and stretches.



JULIUS

Good.

49 INT. KITCHEN - MOMENTS LATER 49 \*

The PHONE RINGS. Chris picks up.

CHRIS

Hello.

50 INT. REALTY OFFICE - SAME 50 \*

ROCHELLE

It's mom. Is your father up?

INTERCUT

CHRIS

Yep.

ROCHELLE

Good. Take his plate out of the refrigerator and put it in the oven.

CHRIS

What plate?

ROCHELLE

The one with the big piece of chicken.

Chris looks down at the chickenless plate and SCREAMS.

CHRIS

NOOOOOOOOOOOOOOO!!!

51 INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT 51 \*

Julius is at the table. HIS LARGE MAN HANDS are holding a teeny tiny chicken wing. He takes a little tiny bite.

52 INT. BOY'S BEDROOM - SAME 52 \*

Rochelle is trying to contain her anger.

\*

ROCHELLE

Chris, haven't I ever told you --  
DO NOT EAT THE BIG PIECE OF  
CHICKEN! How's your father supposed  
work two jobs on a chicken wing?  
Huh?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CHRIS

I was hungry.

\*  
\*

ROCHELLE

Eat a cracker. Have a biscuit. You  
could eat anything. But if all we  
got in the house is big pieces of  
chicken, you find the smallest one  
and eat that. Your father gets the  
big piece of chicken. You  
understand?

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

CHRIS

Yea.

\*  
\*

She notices his shoes.

ROCHELLE

Well at least you didn't mess up  
your school shoes. Give me some  
sugar.

\*  
\*

She hugs and kisses Chris. Then pulls the hamper from the  
closet and heads to the door. Chris watches, very concerned.

\*  
\*

ROCHELLE

Go to bed.

\*

53

INT. DINING ROOM - LATER

53

\*

Rochelle walks past Julius without saying a word.

JULIUS

Rochelle...

ROCHELLE

What?

JULIUS

I wasn't trying to tell you what  
you do. I'm working hard to pay for  
this place...

\*

ROCHELLE

Just because you make money doesn't mean you know how to spend it. You have to know how to work the system.

JULIUS

What system?

ROCHELLE

The debt system. I run this house just like they run the country, on a deficit. Rent is due on the third and I pay that on the ninth with your check from the seventh. If you pay the whole light bill now, I'm not gonna have money for food, the rent will be late, and then you gotta work overtime. If I didn't make sure we owe people money, we wouldn't have any money at all.

JULIUS

Oh. Why didn't you say that then?

ROCHELLE

Because you didn't ask.

She starts to walk off. He grabs her gently by the arm.

JULIUS

Hey, I'm sorry. Okay.

ROCHELLE

(kidding)

Who told you to open the mail anyway?

54 INT. BOYS BEDROOM - LATER

54 \*

Chris' CLOCK reads 11:10 p.m. Drew is in bed asleep. Chris is staring at the ceiling. The door opens. Julius peeks in...

\*

CHRIS

Dad..

JULIUS

Hey man, I thought you were asleep.

CHRIS

I'm sorry I ate the big piece of chicken.

JULIUS

That was eighty nine cent worth of chicken. You didn't get enough to eat at lunch?

CHRIS

I was just still hungry.

JULIUS

Next time eat a little something extra at breakfast, okay?

CHRIS

Okay.

Julius gives Chris A DOLLAR.

JULIUS

Don't go pulling this money out, somebody will try to rob you. And don't tell you mother about this.

(beat)

Everything okay at school?

Chris considers his next words...

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

I didn't tell him about the fight. because my dad went to school in the south during civil rights.

55 **STOCK: KIDS BEING ESCORTED INTO SCHOOL BY TANKS, WHITE PEOPLE SCREAMING AT STUDENTS.**

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

After hoses, tanks, and George Wallace

**SHOT: JOEY CARUSO STARES MENACINGLY INTO CAMERA**

56 INT. BOYS BEDROOM - RESUME

56

ADULT CHRIS V.O.

Somehow Joey Caruso didn't compare.

CHRIS

(waits a beat)

It was okay.

JULIUS

Good. I'll see you in the morning.

ADULT CHRIS V.O. \*

My father wasn't the type to say "I love you." He was one of four fathers on the block. "I'll see you in the morning" meant he was coming back. Coming back was his way of saying I love you.

Julius is almost gone. He turns back. \*

JULIUS \*

Turn that clock off boy. You can't tell time when you sleep. That's two cents an hour. \*

Chris unplugs his clock. He closes his eyes to go to sleep. \*

ROCHELLE (O.S.)

Chris!! What the hell happened to my towel!!

Chris eyes pop open!

BLACK.

END OF ACT TWO