

INT. MIDDLE CLASS KITCHEN - MORNING

JOEY "JO-JO" RODRIGUEZ (17) a huge Latino teenager in a dark band T-Shirt, pours milk on his cereal.

His MOTHER and FATHER rush around him. His BROTHER (9) and SISTER (7) chase each other through the kitchen.

It's a nice room. A few Catholic items hang on the walls. Jo-Jo wears a gold crucifix.

His parents slip in and out of Spanish when they speak. They're both annoyed at Jo-Jo.

MOTHER

If you think you're staying here all day and playing video games, you have another think coming.

FATHER

True. True. I don't care where you go, but you can't stay here.

MOTHER

That goes for every day of your suspension. You're such a good student. I don't understand how this could happen.

FATHER

And don't even think about going down to the river to hang out with those older boys. They're the reason you're in this mess. I know it.

MOTHER

And god help us all if you run into Louis's sister.

The Brother stops chasing the Sister.

BROTHER

She's a boy now. Louis said.

The Mother crosses herself. Jo-Jo slips a pair of over the hear headphones on. They're attached to a WALKMAN.

He presses play. His family talks around him but his world is filled with the sound of Los Profetas.

They're a 1960's MEXICAN GARAGE BAND.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK TRAIN STATION - DAY

Jo-Jo, world still filled with music, leans on a wall outside the train station.

GIL (16) a ratty looking short Latino kid, chatters away. Jo-Jo makes no move to take off his headphones.

Gil sits on a bike. His feet are planted on either side.

GIL
What huge bullshit. Louis gets off scot free and we get suspended for a week. My dads gonna be so fucking pissed if he finds out.

Jo-Jo opens a candy bar.

GIL
We get punished for having some neighborhood pride? His gramps owned that junk shop for thirty years. And they washed the tag off right away. We should have smashed a window or something. Bullshit, man. I hate it.

SAMMI (17) a pretty, punkish girl in a dirty Aus Rotten T-Shirt, skateboards across the parking lot.

GIL
Check it out, it's Sammi. I heard she's down to fuck.

Jo-Jo slaps him on the shoulder.

GIL
Oh right. Sorry. I forgot "Mister Chivalry." It's super hot that she skates, though. Right?

Jo-Jo considers. Then nods.

GIL
Yeah. She's cool.

Sammi hops of her skateboard and trots up to them.

SAMMI
Hey Jo-Jo. Hey Gil. You guys ditching school today?

GIL
Nah, man. We totally got suspended.

SAMMI

For what?

GIL

Being bad ass.

She drops the skateboard on the ground.

SAMMI

Cool. Come by the river later. This dude Andy is scoring us a twelve pack. Supposedly.

She shoots Jo-Jo a pointed look.

SAMMI

Delia might swing by after school.

GIL

Cool.

She skates off.

SAMMI

Later.

EXT. SYCAMORE GROVE PARK - DAY

Gil bikes around in circles in the short, narrow park. Jo-Jo sits on a picnic table.

The music fills his world. DEE and JENNA, two vibrantly pretty, tall girls, lay on a blanket.

They have a pretty fancy picnic spread laid out around them. Jenna pours Dee a glass of wine.

Gil skids to a stop in front of Jo-Jo.

GIL

White chicks, man. Only they could have a picnic at ten fifteen on a Tuesday. Doesn't anyone in L.A have a job anymore? They're pretty foxy, though. I'll give them that.

Jo-Jo grins.

GIL

Ha. I made you smile. Louis owes me five bucks.

He bikes off to get a better look at Dee and Jenna. The music fills the world again.

He looks away from the girls. JACKSON (30's) a big, hard-living homeless guy, throws rocks at pigeons.

Jo-Jo watches. Fascinated.

EXT. THE HP CAFE - DAY

Gil walks the bike across the street from a very crowded, very adorable cafe. It takes up two store fronts.

A third is being converted to a Kitchen Mouse market. Jo-Jo flips the tape in his Walkman.

GIL
Look at that shit. Spreading like a
fungus, man.

THERESA (60's) an affable, harried woman with a little extra weight on her, gets out of an Uber in front of the cafe.

SCOTT (16) her grandson races to the back of the line, which winds down the street.

Gil stops. Jo-Jo keeps walking.

GIL
(Yells)
Fuckers!

Theresa turns to look. Gil hops on the bike and races off. Jo-Jo shakes his head and TUTS.

EXT. ARROYO SECO PARK - PATH TO THE TENNIS COURTS - DAY

OLIVIA (18) an athletic, Latino girl, smacks balls shot at her from a machine.

Gil rides the bike in circles around Jo-Jo, who walks at an incredibly slow pace.

GIL
We gonna head down to the river or
what? I wouldn't mind cracking into a
tall frosty one.

Jo-Jo shakes his head. Gil gets frustrated.

GIL

You know what, man? Hell with this. You do you. I'll do me and you can do you. Doing me means having a fine tall frosty cold one down at the river. Later. I'll text you if Delia shows up.

He pedals off. THWACK. Olivia nails a shot perfectly inside. Jo-Jo turns up the volume.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

Jo-Jo changes the batteries in the Walkman. He looks both ways down a flat stretch of Figueroa Avenue.

Not a bus in sight. LUCY (30) a hip, lovely woman, paces back and forth.

JOHN TRAIN (40) a pretty average guy with an unkempt beard and an ungroomed look about him, sends a text.

LUCY

Why are we riding a bus for an hour to get a slice of pizza again?

BLOOP. John receives a text. He reads it and laughs.

LUCY

John?

JOHN

You saw the pictures on Instagram. Do I really need to say more?

He holds up a picture of a very fancy looking slice of pizza. She doesn't look at it.

LUCY

We could have waited until the car was ready. I have work to do.

JOHN

You'll live.

Her posture tenses. Her hands clench into fists. Jo-Jo watches her breathe the tension away.

LUCY

Did you at least talk to your mom about chipping in for the car? It ate up my whole pay check.

John is lost on his phone. She's about to say something angry. CLICK. Jo-Jo presses play and looks away from them.

The bus appears down the street.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Jo-Jo stands across the street from the athletic field of an institutional high school. It's not the best neighborhood.

He stares at a flow of kids going in and out of a side door. DELIA JANE (17) a sullen, pretty girl, walks out.

She wears a bright yellow cardigan with limes stitched on the chest. She finds a bench and sits.

Jo-Jo smiles. He watches her take out a brown paper bag. Her fingers wander to the limes on her cardigan.

One of them is loose. She tugs at it until it falls off. He slips out his phone and points it in her direction.

SNAP. He gets a good pick. He opens his texts and swipes over to ones from "LOUIS."

He attaches the picture and presses send. A second later the three dots of a response appear on the screen.

THOM (a handsome 40) appears behind him before the dots turn into a text. Jo-Jo slips his phone in his pocket.

THOM

Jose. You know you're not supposed to be here today.

Jo-Jo pulls the hood of his hoodie over his head.

THOM

I went to bat for you and all, but the suspension still stands. You can't be anywhere near the school until it's up.

Jo-Jo presses the headphones down on his ears. The world fills with MEXICAN PSYCH MUSIC again.

THOM

Dude, I'm trying to be friends.

Jo-Jo gives Thom the finger and turns before he see's his response. Thom stays where he his but keeps talking.

The music drowns him out pretty effectively.

EXT. LOS ANGELES RIVER - NEAR A BRIDGE TUNNEL - DAY

A GROUP OF KIDS hang out and drink a few beers in the mouth of the tunnel. Jo-Jo sits on the incline by himself.

Gil hoots it up with Sammi. She looks bored. JULIETTE (20) a cute, slightly chubby Latina, approaches Gil.

CASSAVETES (25) a lean Latino man with fine features and a figure like a swimmer, walks a little behind her.

They talk to Gil and ask him a couple of questions. He shrugs and motions at Jo-Jo.

EXT. LOS ANGELES RIVER - INCLINE - DAY

Juliette and Cassavetes stand in front of Jo-Jo. Their shadows block out the fading sunlight.

CASSAVETES

You have no idea where he is?

Jo-Jo shakes his head.

CASSAVETES

Fuck.

JULIETTE

Well look. Something happened with our Grams. She had a pretty bad stroke. You don't have to tell him, but if you see him could you make sure he gets in touch with one of us? It's kind of a big deal.

Jo-Jo nods. Juliette walks away.

CASSAVETES

You OK, man? I know you like our Grams. She turned you on to that band you dig so much, didn't she?

Jo-Jo looks down at his Walkman.

EXT. HIGHLAND PARK STREET - NIGHT

The music fills the world. Jo-Jo walks past a row of mostly closed shops. Light shines from a white brick building.

He crosses the street.

EXT. ART GALLERY - NIGHT

Jo-Jo looks through the wide window into the all white interior. Small miniature paintings hang on the walls.

ANGELA (30's) a honey-blonde with an exhausted expression on her face, sits behind a counter.

LOUIS (17), a Latino teenager in a punk shirt and jeans, stands in front of one of the paintings with a sketch book.

LA GRAN ESCAPADA comes on. Jo-Jo cranks the volume. After a verse he knocks on the window.

Angela looks up. Louis doesn't. Jo-Jo motions for Angela to get his attention. She does.

Louis looks. He waves. Jo-Jo takes the few steps to the door so he's there to greet Louis when he exits.

Louis shoves his sketchbook into his bag and lifts his hand in greeting. CLICK.

Jo-Jo presses stop and takes off the headphones.

JO-JO

Hey, man.

CUT TO BLACK: