

SPLIT SECOND

In a split second, a friendship is tested by a catastrophic event that changes the trajectory of two friends' lives.

23-DE04-W20

EXT. PARK, BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Playing one-on-one...BOBBY (10), energetic and athletic with COOPER (10), slight chub but good hustle.

Watching from the nearby picnic table is TIFFANY (10), radiant and full of life with flowing hair.

Bobby sinks a shot...

BOBBY

I win!

COOPER

Good game.

They head over to the picnic table to join Tiffany.

TIFFANY

That was intense, you guys!

COOPER

Bobby's really good.

They drink water and settle in on the table. Bobby looks at the housing projects across the street.

BOBBY

Do you all ever want more than this?

COOPER

More than what? I got my sister, Tiffany and my best friend, Bobby. What more could I want?

TIFFANY

Awww...so sweet. I love you guys.

They scrunch in for the group hug and reciprocal "I LOVE YOU'S".

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

Bobby's the third twin.

COOPER

You're like a brother to us.

BOBBY

You're the family I never had.

As they release from the hug...Bobby jumps up and dribbles the ball onto the court.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Rematch!

Cooper slumbers fatigued but won't quit as he follows Bobby.

Bobby dribbles to the basket, passes it back to Cooper who throws it up in the air. Bobby bends his knees and jumps up to catch it...

DISSOLVE TO:

BOBBY (18) completes the catch with a slam dunk...

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Booyah!

COOPER

You got skills, man.

Bobby flexes with a chiseled body, cockily smiles and grabs the basketball, walks to the picnic table with COOPER (18). Both exhausted from playing one-on-one ball.

They sit across from each other.

BOBBY

You goin' to State with me next year?

COOPER

And walk on? Nah, high school is fun but - You know my uncle that does construction? Yeah.

Bobby bounces the ball while seated, looking starry-eyed.

BOBBY

I want to go to the NBA one day. Get outta this joint.

The boys look around at the dilapidated housing projects that surround them.

TIFFANY (18), radiant smile with long hair that bounces with her every move; gets off her bike and walks towards the boys.

COOPER

Hey, Sis!

BOBBY

You're really growing up, Tiff. You're becoming the better looking twin.

COOPER

Stop man. She's practically your sister. And she already got a big head.

TIFFANY

He's just jealous 'cause I'm the favorite.

She giggles as she sits down on the picnic table. Her flirtatious smile rolls at Bobby.

He can't help but to be mesmerized by her deep dimples as he ponders...

BOBBY

Who you goin' to prom with, Tiff?

TIFFANY

Was supposed to be Alex but he's trippin'. I don't like the jealous type.

COOPER

(to Bobby)

What you tryna' say?

BOBBY

Nothing at all.

Tiffany puts her hand on her hip and whips her head at Bobby like she doesn't believe him.

COOPER

Just ask her fool. It's obvious.

Bobby laughs trying to hide his shyness as Tiffany giggles in a bashful way.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - NIGHT

A banner high above a bunch of elegantly dressed teenagers reads: "SENIOR PROM".

Walking away from the crowd is Bobby in a tux as he leads Tiffany by the hand - Decked in a long flowing gown with her hair up and a flower in it.

Cooper right behind in a tux with his FEMALE DATE and another BOY and GIRL couple.

Bobby opens the door for Tiffany before walking around to the driver's side as the others pile in the back.

EXT. CHEVY TAHOE - MOMENTS LATER

Bobby cruises with Tiffany riding front passenger. Cooper and the others LOUD in the backseat.

A whiskey bottle gets passed from the back seat to Bobby, he takes a swig and passes it to Tiffany.

COOPER

You guys shouldn't drink and drive.

TIFFANY

Relax bro. Your boy can do anything.

(giggling)

Even kiss.

"OOH's" and "CHEERS" from Cooper's Female Date and the other Boy and Girl being festive in the back.

FEMALE DATE

Y'all had your first kiss tonight.
I saw you on the dance floor takin'
it slow!

BOY

What y'all gonna do when Bobby goes
off to State on his FULL RIDE,
BABY?!

TIFFANY

I'm goin' to Community College and
then transfer so we can be
together.

Bobby and Tiffany sharing a happy smile as he takes another swig of the whiskey.

COOPER

That's great but y'all shouldn't
drive drunk. Pull over Bobby so I
can drive.

BOBBY

I got this, man.

GIRL

Cooper, you're such a prude.

The energetic teens GOSSIP in their own world as an oncoming truck heads down the lane.

The GOSSIP turns to LAUGHTER as Bobby swerves - Snaps alert, whips the wheel hard left to swerve off the road but not in time as the truck SMASHES into Tiffany's door...

FADE OUT.

EXT. CEMETERY - DAY

Cooper stands alone over a grave:
"R.I.P. Tiffany Ann Buchannon".

Tears swell in his eyes.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

Bobby, clean cut in a suit before the JUDGE. The respectable attire does little to cover the shame on his face.

JUDGE

One count of Driving While
Intoxicated. One count of First
Degree Manslaughter, I hereby
sentence you to 10 years...

He drops to his knees in despair and breaks down in tears.

EXT. PRISON BUS - DAY

Bobby in shackles stares hopeless out the window.

Cooper standing over the grave, looks at the bus moving by.

Bobby and Cooper make eye contact as the bus keeps rolling...

The flame in Cooper's eye boils to an all out fire of hatred as he watches the boy he once called his brother roll away.

SUPERIMPOSE: 8 YEARS LATER

INT. COOPER'S HOUSE - DAY

COOPER (26) opens mail at the table. Still in his construction clothes, exhales from a long day. Finds a letter from "BAYSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - BOBBY TAYLOR"

He takes a breath, throws it in the trash without opening it.

KAREN (26) bounces in the house, giving Cooper a kiss. She looks with a somber face as she notices the letter in the trash from Bobby Taylor.

COOPER

Hi, Honey. How was bible study?

Karen straightens up her demeanor, and turns upbeat.

KAREN

They're asking me if I want to volunteer for jail ministry.

COOPER

Never understood that. Those people are a lost cause.

KAREN

God can forgive anyone.

Cooper sarcastically mimics her words behind her back.

KAREN (CONT'D)

But I'm too busy anyway. I just want to serve the Lord in some way though.

COOPER

Why don't you minister at the homeless shelter? Now those people really have a chance. Just need direction.

KAREN

Okay, thanks Honey.

She gives him a kiss.

INT. COURT ROOM - DAY

BOBBY (26) in orange jumpers and shackles, stands before the judge.

JUDGE

After 8 years served on good behavior, the courts are granting you early release.

The gavel SLAMS. Bobby with a warm smile mouths 'Thank you' to the judge. Shakes the public defender's hand.

EXT. HALFWAY HOUSE - DAY

Dilapidated house on a corner with grass that hasn't been cut in months. Yelling can be heard inside.

INT. HALFWAY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Bobby lays in a cot, staring at the ceiling clenching his fist as ARGUING continues in the hallway where two mentally ill patients, more filthy than the house, bicker.

ANOTHER PATIENT in his room, shoots a needle of heroin on the other cot.

ANOTHER PATIENT

Want a shot?

As he pulls the needle out of his arm, extends it to Bobby.

ANOTHER PATIENT (CONT'D)

I can give you tips on how to pass
a urine test.

Bobby gets up, grabs his things and storms out the door.

EXT. SKID ROW - DAY

Bobby pitifully walks among the tents and scattered vagrants. Not sure what to do he sits back. Puts his pillow on the dirty ground to lay his head.

EXT. AROUND THE CORNER - CONTINUOUS

Karen with other members of her church, get out of the church van. She takes out her phone, taps numbers and puts to her ear...

KAREN

Honey, I don't know. This place
gives me the creeps.

COOPER (V.O.)

Babe, God is with you all the time.

KAREN

(sighs)

I know. I'm just being
pretentious. Forgive me, God.

The church members make their way down the street with warm meals. Bobby sits up as he smells the warm aroma.

Suddenly Karen steps up, handing him a tray.

KAREN (CONT'D)

Are you hungry, Sir.

BOBBY
Yes. Thank you.

Getting uncomfortable, Karen begins to turn away until the PASTOR shews her back.

PASTOR
Karen, they're human beings. Get to know his story.

BOBBY
It's alright, Sir. Not much to tell here.

She gets intrigued. Then notices he's a little cleaner cut than the others. Slowly sits down.

KAREN
Hi, I'm Karen.

BOBBY
(reluctant)
John.

KAREN
Do you have a last name?

BOBBY
Doe.

KAREN
(pauses)
Okay; names are irrelevant. Most of these people have addictions. What's yours?

BOBBY
Guilt, I guess.

She nods, taking it in.

KAREN
Whatever you've done. God forgives you. If you ask him.

BOBBY
Many times. Doesn't feel any different though.

KAREN
What happened? If you don't mind me asking?

FLASHBACK - CRASH SCENE

Young Bobby and Cooper sit on the curb next to the crashed car. A little bloody but not much. Others from the back seat consoling each other.

A coroner van rolls up.

The bag zips over Tiffany's silent face - Eyes wide open.

They load the body into the back of the Coroner's Van.

Cooper SCREAMS and runs toward her but has to be restrained.

As the van drives away several cops restrain Cooper as he screams MOS at Bobby.

Bobby is then escorted in cuffs to a police cruiser...

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Bobby with a long face as Karen sheds a tear.

BOBBY

It was a split second...I lost the only family I had. I lost the love of my life. My future...

KAREN

I'm so sorry.

Karen softly and timidly puts her hand on his shoulder.

KAREN (CONT'D)

We all go through seasons. Life is full of ups and downs, mistakes. It's how you end that matters most.

BOBBY

One mistake and everyone gives up on you.

Bobby gets up and leaves as Karen watches him go.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - EVENING

Bobby sits on the picnic table of where he used to play. Faint FLASHBACKS of one-on-one's with Cooper. A clouded version of Tiffany and Bobby appear next to him on the picnic table.

He walks over to the court and just stands with his hands in his pockets, staring up at the rusty rim. A tear trickles down.

INT. COOPER'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Cooper at the table as Karen, on her feet, tells the sad story of John Doe...

KAREN

He lost his family in an accident.
His brother, the love of his
life...

(weeping)

When he talked about the love of
his life - It was so emotional.

Cooper's face clenches up as he grits his teeth...

FLASHBACK - CAR CRASH

The body bag zips shut and is loaded in the Coroner's Van.

KAREN (V.O.)

He was in love. Everything was
going right for him.

As the van drives away several cops restrain Cooper as he screams at Bobby...

COOPER

I hope you die a painful death.
May God curse you!

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

Cooper in tears...

KAREN

Are you okay? It's moving isn't
it? I'm sorry, babe. I was remiss
because of how your sister...

She trails off as he rushes out the door.

EXT. PORCH - CONTINUOUS

Cooper on the steps, weeping. Karen comes out from behind and embraces him as he weeps.

COOPER
I've tried, I just can't forgive
him.

Karen softly rubbing his back, suddenly freezes...Her eyes go blank, jaw drops, covers her mouth. She looks down at her weeping husband then squeezes him tighter...Her eyes well up.

FADE OUT.

EXT. COOPER'S HOUSE - MORNING

Cooper sits with a long face over his coffee.

Karen walks out with a shoebox. He looks intrigued as she sits down and pulls out a bunch of letters.

A stack of letters, all postmarked from "BAYSIDE CORRECTIONAL FACILITY - BOBBY TAYLOR".

COOPER
(annoyed)
What is this?

As he flips through the unopened letters.

KAREN
I've been pulling these out of the
trash for years now.

COOPER
I threw them away for a reason.

KAREN
And now you should read them
because it's time to move on.

Cooper SCOFFS as she gets up, kisses his head and walks out the door.

EXT. SKID ROW - DAY

Karen walks up with a fresh lunch tray where Bobby sat before but he isn't here. She looks around frantically but no sight of him. Pastor walks up.

PASTOR
What did you say to that guy?
After you talked to him he said he
was never coming back.

Pastor turns to leave disappointed...

Karen whips out her phone and taps numbers, puts it to her ear...

KAREN
He's not there!

COOPER (V.O.)
Who's not there?

KAREN
John Doe...or Bobby. Now he's gone
and nobody knows where he is.

Shakes her head, hanging up.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

Bobby stands on the basketball court.

FLASHBACK - OLD TIMES

Cooper dribbling as Bobby guards him. Cooper drives the lane...SLOW MOTION - Each dribble that Cooper takes ECHOES.

BACK TO PRESENT DAY

The dribble ECHOES continue as Bobby stands alone.

Perplexed, he glances right, left, toward the hoop...

He turns around - Cooper approaches.

Bobby gasps speechless. Cooper, all serious no smile, throws up a shot to kill the awkwardness of the moment.

Bobby runs and gets the rebound. Passes it back.

Cooper drives a little, dribbles around, passes it to Bobby for a lay up.

Wide shot - The two men hustle back and forth, shooting and guarding.

THE END