

1989 The Musical

Story by

Kris Kemp

actual experiences

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1989 The Musical

script: kris kemp

notes: have music playing throughout, at low volume during the dialog

1

High school hallway

A battery of high school lockers. A banner, that reads: 1989 Homecoming Game - Friday.

NARRATOR

Welcome to 1989 the musical.

This is an interactive musical, meaning that you, the audience, will be participating.

Before each scene starts, we will instruct you as to what you are portraying. If you do not wish to participate in the scenes, move yourself to the back of the audience.

This musical is based on a true story.

Almost everything you're about to see actually happened.

This story takes place during the last week of 1989.

At the time, I was in 12th grade, attending a private, Christian school. After school, and on the weekends, I worked at McDonald's. Most of my coworkers attended a public school, whose football team, was our rival.

During this musical, you will experience loud music, lights, and you will be guided to move around by our ushers, who are dressed in white. We encourage you to dance.

While the musical is happening, we ask you to please be respectful and refrain from using your cell phone. This is 1989 after all.

If you must make a call or answer a text, please use the hallway lobby area, which is also the smoking area.

Feel free to take photos. Also, you will be given an opportunity to take photographs with the cast and crew after the show.

Following the show, there will be a 15 minute intermission, then a dance party.

Welcome to 1989 the musical.

NARRATOR

It was 1989. High school. It the was final week of school before summer.

Everyone was excited to get out of school. You could feel it in the air, the possibilities. Anything seemed possible.

In this opening scene, you, the audience, are portraying high school students. You are excited that this is the last week of school.

When you hear the bell ring, that is your cue, that you're getting out of your last class, and you're heading home for the day.

It all starts when the bell rings.

The bell rings.

The music starts.

"Don't you forget about me" - Simple Minds

The song ends.

Kris Kemp and Joce Lin enter the stage. They are wearing backpacks. They have Casio or Sony Walkmans on their hip.

Joce pulls a cassette tape out of her backpack and hands it to Kris.

note: Another song plays at low volume during dialog. Maybe "I touch roses" - Book of Love

KRIS KEMP

Final week of school, then we're free.

JOCE LIN

You're free. I still got three more years.

(beat)

You are going to graduate, aren't you?

KRIS KEMP

Let's hope so.

JOCE LIN

Are you going to the party after the homecoming game on Friday.

KRIS KEMP

The party?

JOCE LIN

You're a senior. Didn't you get invited.

KRIS KEMP

(beat)

Oh yeah. That party. Yeah. I'm going. Definitely going to the party.

(beat)

Are you going?

JOCE LIN

Yeah. I got an invite yesterday.

KRIS KEMP

Cool.

JOCE LIN

I made something for you.

(reaches into backpack, pulls out mix tape, hands it to Kris)

KRIS KEMP

(looks at mix tape)

A mix tape.

(looks at Joce)

Thank you.

JOCE LIN

I put some of the more obscure bands on there. Clan of Xymox, Peter Murphy, Echo and the Bunnymen.

KRIS KEMP

Cool.

(checks watch)

I gotta be at work.

(holds mix tape up)

Thanks for the mix tape.

Kris walks away.

NARRATOR

I worked at McDonald's, so after school, I would walk there, with my uniform stuffed in my backpack. Getting the mix tape put me in a good mood. Joce always made the best mix tapes. It was going to be a beautiful day.

2

School Campus

Kris continues walking through the school campus, and to the sidewalk that runs alongside the road that leads to work, his job at McDonald's.

3

Sidewalk

Kris is walking on sidewalk.

Kris slips mix tape into cassette player. Puts on headphones. Presses play.

The music starts.

"Evelyn" - Clan of Xymox

As Kris walks to work and the music fills the room, he starts walking in rhythm to the music.

Kris enters the audience and everyone dances to the song.

The next song starts.

"I Ran" - Flock of Seagulls

Kris dances with the audience.

Near the end of the song, he returns to the stage.

He continues walking, bopping to the music.

A passing car slows down, riding alongside Kris. The driver and a passenger in the backseat, both appearing to be 17 years old, are eyeing Kris.

DRIVER

Here's one. Get him.

PASSENGER

(to driver)

Slow down.

(to Kris)

Bluebird. Gaywad!

PASSENGER leans out the window and throws a bag of leftover Taco Bell food at Kris. It knocks his headset off.

The music stops abruptly.

The kids are laughing as the car races away.

Kris looks at them and flips them the bird.

KRIS KEMP
Assholes!

Kris watches them drive off.

NARRATOR

I was covered in Taco Belle. I smelled like hot sauce and beef. I looked like a walking burrito. At least I had the mix tape.

He picks up his headset, and earphones, wipes it off, then puts his headphones back on, and continues working to work.

He presses play.

The music starts.

"Shout" - Tears for Fears

He arrives at McDonald's.

NARRATOR

I arrived at McDonald's, where I worked after school and on the weekends.

4

McDonald's - Lobby

NARRATOR

This next scene takes place in McDonald's. You, the audience, are portraying McDonald's customers. You don't really have to do anything for this scene.

The music starts.

"The Ghost in you" - Psychedelic Furs

McDonald's. Lobby.

*Mr. Hoffman, the manager, is sweeping the floor.
He eyes Kris.*

MR. HOFFMAN

What happened to you?

KRIS KEMP

Some assholes. Threw Taco Belle at me.

MR. HOFFMAN

Why?

KRIS KEMP
I don't know.

MR. HOFFMAN
Did you know them?

KRIS KEMP
No.

MR. HOFFMAN
Well, hurry on up. You're late.

Kris walks into McDonald's bathroom.

5 McDonald's - Bathroom

Kris enters bathroom and changes into McDonald's outfit. He exits bathroom.

6 McDonald's - Lobby

He exits bathroom, walks through McDonald's lobby, and enters the crew area behind the counter.

7 McDonald's - Crew Area

He walks past a guy at the cash register and another guy on the grill.

He walks to the manager's office.

The manager, Mr. Hoffman, is on the phone, a rotary phone, with a tremendously long cord.

Kris peeks into Mr. Hoffman's office.

MR. HOFFMAN
(speaking into phone)
Hang on.
(speaking to Kris)
You're working register.

KRIS KEMP
I don't know register.

MR. HOFFMAN
(places hand on phone)
You were trained last week.

KRIS KEMP
That was a week ago. And

Mr. Hoffman, busy with his phone call, closes the door.

KRIS KEMP

(continued)

it was only half an hour.

(beat)

Crap.

Kris approaches the register and looks at the buttons. He's pressing them, testing them out, trying to get familiar with the machine.

The other guy on the register, noticing Kris appears perplexed, approaches him.

DANNY

You look like you don't know what you're doing.

KRIS KEMP

I don't, know what I'm doing.

DANNY

These are the main buttons, for the most popular items. These green buttons on the side, that's for the up sell, supersize. This equal button is for the total.

KRIS KEMP

What about these buttons? They're scratched off.

DANNY

Uhhh. That's not good. Hu-hu-hu.

Kris runs over to another register and looks at the buttons, then grabs a pen and writes on his register.

(continued)

That's not good, either.

KRIS KEMP

What?

DANNY

We just got a bus.

NARRATOR

Now, you, the audience, are portraying hungry bus passengers. You've just arrived at McDonald's, and you're at the counter, ordering food.

The ushers guide the audience toward the register.

KRIS KEMP

Crap.

Danny brings up his ghettoblaster, his boombox, a portable tapeplayer with huge speakers, and begins playing music.

KRIS KEMP

You're gonna get in trouble.

DANNY

(to Kris)

He's on the phone in the office.

As the sounds of heavy metal start playing, the boombox eats the tape.

Kris notices.

Shit. It ate my tape.

(to Kris)

You got any music.

KRIS KEMP

Yeah.

Kris pulls the tape from his nearby Casio Walkman and slips it into the boombox and presses "play".

The music starts.

"Lips like sugar" - Echo and the Bunnymen

An 80's music song plays as Kris Kemp and Danny do their best to handle the large crowd of customers.

Halfway through the song ...

DANNY

This sounds like fag music.

(beat)

Oh, I get it. You're a progressive.

KRIS KEMP

My friend made it for me.

DANNY

Are you a new waver? Hu-hu-hu. I gotta fast forward this.

Danny fast forwards the tape to the end. The next song starts.

"Love like blood" - Killing Joke

DANNY

This is more like it.

Kris fumbles through the orders, growing more exasperated.

He grabs a soda and knocks it onto his register, which fries it, rendering it useless.

Danny notices.

DANNY

You're crazy.

As the song ends, the ushers lead the crowd away from the stage.

The manager, still on the phone, walks out to the front cash register area, the long phone cord trailing behind him, a dangerous booby trap tripwire at neck height.

MR. HOFFMAN

What happened?

DANNY

Kris Kemp happened.

KRIS KEMP

I accidentally knocked over, accidentally, a coke and it -

MR. HOFFMAN

(interrupting)

I don't wanna hear it. Now I gotta call repair. Dagnabit.

(checks watch)

My 10'o'clock are coming in. I'll put them on register.

(to Kris and Danny)

Danny, Kris, you got a 15-minute break.

(to Ben)

Ben, you got a 15-minute break, too.

Kris, Danny, Ben grab a soda and head to the break room, then exit the backdoor, climb the ladder to the rooftop.

McDonald's - Rooftop

Ben lights a cigarette. Ben pulls a bottle of whiskey from his pocket.

NARRATOR

For our breaks, we'd exit the backdoor and climb the ladder to the rooftop. I was actually pretty shy at the time, so would usually just listen as my co-workers chatted and smoked.

Our McDonald's sat on the corner of a shopping plaza, at a major intersection (Okeechobee Boulevard and Military Trail) in West Palm Beach, Florida. From our perch on the rooftop, we watched the world of Florida, 1989, go by, in the form of cars with fashionably-dressed high schoolers, with friends, on dates, on their way to parties, the movies, and Palm Beach, where the make out sessions happened.

These were warm summer nights, and anything seemed possible.

Cell phones, at least the kind you have in your pockets right now, didn't exist. At this time, the cell phones that were around, were rare. And they were called car phones, as they were usually the seen in the fancy cars of rich people, sometimes only on TV.

Texting wasn't invented. People actually talked to each other. People actually had conversation skills. The conversations were more authentic. No time to wait an hour before sending a clever text that you copied from the internet. And social media was actually talking to someone face to face.

Sometimes I feel that the deluge of technology has crippled us from making real human connections. Being a witness to different decades enables you to see the dark side of progress.

They bring the boombox up. The music starts.

"Under the Milky Way" - The Church

Ben and Danny and Kris sit on the rooftop by an industrial AC unit.

Ben pulls a bottle of rum from his pocket, unscrews the cap, pours some into the cup of coke that Kris is holding.

KRIS KEMP
What are you doing?

BEN
Making it better.

KRIS KEMP
Uggg. Smells like gasoline.

BEN
Just drink it you pussy.

Kris Kemp shoots Ben a look. Ben glares at Kris.

BEN
It'll put hair on your balls.

DANNY
He doesn't have any.

KRIS KEMP
Screw you.

DANNY
No thanks. Hu-hu-hu.
(to Ben)
Told you he's a fag.

Ben takes a long swig from the bottle.

Kris takes a big drink from the coke.

BEN
You a gaywad?

KRIS KEMP
No. I'm not a gaywad. I like girls.

DANNY
He drank it. This I've got to see.

Kris holds the cup to Ben who fills it with more rum.

(continued)

No way.

Kris looks at Danny and then slams the rum.

BEN
Now you're talking.

DANNY

Oh shit, he's drunk.

Ben puts his hand in the air as if to say "I didn't make him drink it".

DANNY

(to Ben)

You going to that party this weekend?

BEN

Which one?

DANNY

Roger's house. The one with the hot sister.

BEN

Yeah, I'll go. You got a flier?

DANNY

I'll bring it to work tomorrow.

BEN

Cool.

KRIS KEMP

I wanna go to the party.

Ben and Danny look at each other.

DANNY

No fags allowed.

Ben and Danny laugh and high-five each other.

V.O. - Mr. Hoffman

Breaks over. Need you guys back.

Ben, Danny, Kris prepare to climb down the ladder.

KRIS KEMP

I'm not a fag.

BEN

You're in the marching band.

DANNY

So that makes you a band fag.

KRIS KEMP

(beat)

But I'm not a fag-fag.

Kris, Danny, Ben return to the McDonald's crew area.

Mr. Hoffman, the manager, walks into the area.

9

McDonald's - Lobby

MR. HOFFMAN

Danny, you're on register. Kris, you're on register. Ben, you're on grill.

KRIS KEMP

I don't know how to work register. And it's broken.

MR. HOFFMAN

Use that one next to it. If you have any questions, Danny can help you. I'll be in my office. Looking at the ... reports. Don't bother me. Unless it's an emergency.

Danny and Kris look out at the audience.

NARRATOR

I was drunk. I didn't know how to work the cash register. And a lot of people arrived, a lot of kids from the school I went to. This was going to suck.

The music starts.

"Where is my mind?" - The Pixies

Kris looks out at the audience in horror.

KRIS KEMP

Where'd all these people come from? Oh crap, I know that person. I know him. And her. And her. They go to my school.

(pulls McDonald's hat down low to hide identity)

A preppy-looking GUY and GIRL approach Kris's register.

Kris approaches the cash register.

NARRATOR

Then I saw the couple approach my cash register up close. Ughhh. It was Robby and Wendy.

Wendy was in my math class. I had the biggest crush on Wendy. She had black hair that looked like a birds nest that went through foreclosure: unruly, tangled, and full of possibilities.

She was petite. She was pale. And, wait for it, she had big boobs.

I liked her so much that I went through the phone book looking for her last name. There was forty of her last names and I called every single one of them. I was persistent. (We never kissed or even went on a date, but at least I tried.)

Anyway, back to the present. She's here with her date. Looking cute as ever.

I'm a senior. I'm supposed to be cool.

I was a little drunk, a lotta embarrassed.

KRIS KEMP

Hi, welcome to McDonald's, can I take your order.

ROBBY

(looking up at menu on wall behind him)
Yeah, we'll have a -
(notices Kris)
Hey. You go to King's Academy. You're a senior, right?

KRIS KEMP

Yeah.

WENDY

You're in my math class.

GUY gives GIRL an incredulous look.

KRIS KEMP

Yeah. I had to take it to graduate.

WENDY

It's no big deal.

NARRATOR

It's no big deal. Those were the kindest words ever said to me. At least within the last 48 hours. Then again, I lived, and still live, sometimes, in a world of my own imagination.

ROBBY

I'll have a Big Mac, large fries, medium coke, and an apple pie. And whatever she wants.

WENDY

I'll have a filet-o-fish, small fries, and a small sprite.

KRIS KEMP

Would you like to super-size that order, for only \$1.25 more?

Wendy and Robby look at each other.

ROBBY

Sure.

KRIS KEMP

That'll be \$6.53. Is that for here or to go.

ROBBY

Go.

WENDY

(overlapping)

Stay.

Guy looks at girl. Girl is looking at Kris, then notices Guy is looking at her. She turns to look at Guy.

Guy looks at Kris.

NARRATOR

Stay. I think she's trying to tell me something. I think she wants me to stay.

ROBBY

Stay.

KRIS KEMP

Okay.

The music starts.

"Head over Heels" - Tears for Fears

"Space Age Love Song" - Flock of Seagulls

NARRATOR

Stay. That's the answer I was hoping for. She wanted to stay with me in this McDonald's. Forever. We'll dance to 80's music, and we'll go to the rooftop, eat ice cream with apple pie, we'll count the stars, and we'll grow old together. And since we're at McDonald's, we'll grow fat together. But because we're growing fat at the same time, we won't notice it. We'll never run out of food because we're at McDonald's. And when the nuclear war comes, we'll lock ourselves inside. Everything will be perfect.

Kris pulls out a tray, puts the food on it, and watches them take a table nearby.

He walks over to the table.

He starts dancing with Wendy.

The song ends.

BECKY

We need you on drive-thru.

Becky hands Kris headset. He puts it on.

Kris and Becky at McDonald's, working the drive-thru area.

Kris is at the drive-thru station, putting burgers into a bag. Becky is near the drive-thru window. They are wearing headsets.

NARRATOR

I put on the headset. We took a few orders. A few minutes later, I hear a familiar voice placing an order. It sounds exactly like the voice of the guy -

V.O.

Bluebird! Gaywad!

NARRATOR

who threw the Taco Belle at me. No way, I think to myself. I turn up the volume. I go over to the drive-thru camera. The same car. The same assholes.

Kris looks at the drive thru camera, his expression changes to one of recognition, then smiles.

KRIS KEMP

Hang on, Becky. I forgot the fries.

Kris takes the bag of food to the break room, opens the burgers, spits in it.

Danny walks in.

DANNY

What are you doing?

KRIS KEMP

(holds out the open burger to Danny)

Danny spits in the burger. Kris folds it together, puts it in bag, walks to drive thru. Stops. Lowers his McDonald's hat. Hands it to Becky.

Becky gives it to the guys. Kris waits anxiously, watching them, until they drive off.

NARRATOR

Returning to the drive-thru with the bag of spit-burgers in my hand, I was so nervous. What if they saw me. I lowered my hat.

At the same time, I felt so powerful. I felt unstoppable. I felt like anything was possible.

Sometimes, at these moments, is where the bad ideas are born. Ones that are mixture of courage and stupidity. Then again, sometimes it's better to regret what you did do than what you missed doing.

Kris grabs two apple pies and fills two cups with ice cream, pulling the lever, then walks into the lobby.

NARRATOR

I knew what I would do next. Everything would be perfect. I got two apple pies and filled up 2 cups with the soft ice cream. I brought them to Robby and Wendy.

Kris brings the desserts to their table.

KRIS KEMP

Here you go. On the house.

Robby and Wendy give him a strange look.
(cont)

You know, for your date.

ROBBY

Thanks.

WENDY

(overlapping)
We're not a date.

Robby gives Wendy a crestfallen glance, then regains his composure.

ROBBY

Yeah, we're just friends.

KRIS KEMP

Wendy. Can I talk with you for a second? Privately?

Kris motions for Wendy to come to another section of McDonald's. She does. As soon as they are out of Robby's view ... he places her hands on her shoulders.

WENDY

What are you doing?

KRIS KEMP

Look into my eyes. What do you see?

WENDY

I don't know. They're brown. With some yellow specs.

She sniffs.

(cont)

Have you been drinking?

KRIS KEMP

A little.

WENDY

But you're at -

KRIS KEMP

(overlapping)

Ask me what I see, when I look into your eyes.

WENDY

What do you see?

KRIS KEMP

The future.

He leans in to kiss her and she pulls away. He leans in closer. He kisses her. She pulls away. They kiss simultaneously. A few seconds later, she pulls away.

KRIS KEMP

Let's keep this our secret.

She walks off, perplexed.

(cont)

Wendy.

Wendy turns.

(cont)

We had a moment.

The music starts.

Song here.

"Space Age Love Song" - A Flock of Seagulls

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cut this entire scene?

10

Galaxy Skateway - Skate Night

NARRATOR

Every other Wednesday night, Galaxy Skateway, a nearby roller skating rink, would host a Skateboard Night. They'd put launch ramps on the rink and allow people to ride skateboards. They'd play a different kind of music, the kind of music that my friend Joce would put on the mix tape.

"Push" - The Cure

"What's that song?" - The Replacements

"Could you be the one?" - Husker Du

NARRATOR

One night at the skate night, I met this cute pale girl with short dark hair and eyeliner. We talked and even skateboarded a bit. She invited me back to her place. I had borrowed my Dad's Toyota Corolla stick-shift, and I followed her back to her house. She lived in a run-down area of town. We arrived and she leads me to her room.

Her dad's sitting on the couch, with a beer in his hand, hypnotized by the TV. I said hi to him. He might as well have been a sculpture.

I walk into her room. She shuts the door. I sit on the floor. She pulls out a record. The Smiths. She puts it onto her record player. "The Headmaster Ritual" starts playing.

The music starts

"The Headmaster Ritual" - The Smiths

Sitting there, in my long shorts, cut off t-shirt, a bit sweaty from skating, she sits closer and leans in to me. She gets very close. I kiss her. And she kisses me. We start making out. It's pretty wonderful.

NARRATOR

Then she pulled away.

LISA

Why haven't I seen you at school before.

KRIS KEMP

I don't go to Twin Lakes.

LISA

Oh. Where do you go?

KRIS KEMP

Uh. King's Academy.

LISA

Oh. I hate that school. But it's a good school. You should be proud to go there.

KRIS KEMP

Twin Lakes is a good school, too.

LISA

You don't have to say that.

KRIS KEMP

It is. A lot of my friends at work go there. At McDonald's.

LISA

I used to work at Wendy's.

KRIS KEMP

You guys use real meat. Not frozen. The shakes are good.

(beat)

What time is it?

LISA

(checks watch)

11:20

KRIS KEMP

I gotta go. I got curfew.

LISA

Curfew. How old are you?

KRIS KEMP

I still live at home.

The GIRL walks Kris Kemp out to his car. They make out.

KRIS KEMP

I'll call you.

Kris drives off.

NARRATOR

I did call her, but she only called back once. She said she was busy and she'd see me at the skate night. I went and talked to her, but she was with some guys and she was acting different.

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Picnic bench. Afternoon. The King's Academy campus.

Kris sits at picnic bench with his tupperware lunchbox while other kids have their bag lunches.

NARRATOR

Even though I was a senior, I was still bringing my lunch to school. Most of my classmates bought their lunches. This, and the fact that I didn't really fit into any of the cliques ... I wasn't a jock, I wasn't a nerd, I wasn't the class clown, I wasn't the bad boy ... left me sitting with the leftovers in the cafeteria. So, I started eating lunch at the picnic bench in the campus yard that sat underneath these towering Australian Pines trees. I would sit there and eat lunch with the 9th and 10th grade nerds. Although I tried to be nice to them, friendships didn't blossom. Why? They were weird and bitter and lived in a world of their books or their computers. At this time, 1989, computers were only for real nerds. No one knew that 25 years later everyone would own a laptop, a tablet, or a smartphone to spend hours staring into.

Conversation about upcoming Homecoming Game and parties afterward.

NARRATOR

After lunch I had drama class. Everyone was in such a food coma from eating lunch, including the teacher, that even the bad acting looked good.

High school drama class.

Kris Kemp and Joce Lin.

KRIS KEMP

When I look at you, I see my future.

NARRATOR

The words fell to the ground like homesick earthworms.

JOCE LIN

There is no future.

NARRATOR

The bus turned the corner.

JOCE LIN

Except for a nuclear winter.

KRIS KEMP

You don't believe that, do you?

NARRATOR

The words hung in wind, like a broken cobweb strand,
hoping to find a nearby branch to cling to.

Wendy nods.

JOCE LIN

Don't bother trying to lead a normal life because it's
a trap. Be free. Always be free.

NARRATOR

Her words landed in his hands like a butterfly, only
for a moment, before taking flight once more.

JOCE LIN

Keep moving. That's the only way to be safe.

KRIS KEMP

Sounds like your running. Away. What about us?

NARRATOR

He asked, his voice crackling with earnestness like
static on an old record player. As soon as the words
left his mouth, he knew how trite they sounded.

JOCE LIN

There is no us.

NARRATOR

He opened his hand to find a worm. The earthworm
looked at him and said "One day I'll be a butterfly".

- - - - -

Respectable Street Cafe

*Respectable Street Cafe. Clematis Street.
Downtown West Palm Beach, Florida.*

Kris is waiting in line.

NARRATOR

On the weekends, the cool kids in my grade started going a club in the downtown area. The club was called Respectable Street Cafe. Waiting in line, I'd see all the cool kids in my grade, wearing trench coats, stone washed jeans, doc martens, smoking cigarettes and they didn't even smoke.

Once I got inside and saw them on the dance floor, they treated me equally. Now that we were outside the ranks of high school, they were willing to break the ranks of their cliques.

I was still shy, but it was easier to talk to people here, especially to girls. Maybe they were drunk or just happy to be dancing to music they liked. Who knows? But I do know this: I I saw a girl dance to the same obscure song that I was dancing to, that we had something in common. Join me on the dance floor as I enter Respectable Street Cafe.

Once inside, he sees Ben and Danny and Geri. When Fugazi's "The Waiting Room" starts playing, everyone, including the audience, slam dances.

NARRATOR

On my first night there, I wasn't expecting to see any familiar faces. But I did. I saw Danny and Ben from work. And later, Geri arrived. This is when I was introduced to slam-dancing.

The music starts.

"I'll Fall with your Knife" - Peter Murphy

"Cuts You Up" - Peter Murphy

"Crystal Wrists" - Peter Murphy

"A Light That Never Goes Out" - The Smiths

"Waiting Room" - Fugazi

"Rain" - The Cult

"Hollow Man" - The Cult

Everyone, including the audience, starts slam-dancing.

"No New Tale to Tell" - Love and Rockets

"Love will tear us apart" - Joy Division

"So Alive" - Love and Rockets

"Lucretia, My Reflection" - The Sisters of Mercy

"Amadeus" - Falco

"China" - Red Rockers

"She's lost control" - Joy Division

"Charlotte Sometimes" - The Cure

"The Promise" - When in Rome

"Don't Change" - INXS

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Kris puts in mix tape as he walks home from party or work.

Listens to music as crowd dances with him.

"Head over Heels" - Tears for Fears

"Space Age Love Song" - A Flock of Seagulls

"Amadeus" - Falco

"Don't Change" - INXS

"I Ran" - Flock of Seagulls

"Wishing (If I Had A Photograph of You)" - Flock of Seagulls

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McDonald's - Crew Area

McDonald's. Nighttime.

Kris and Becky are working the drive-thru. Danny and Ben are on the grill.

KRIS KEMP

I'm gonna put on some music.

MR. HOFFMAN

Go for it.

Kris presses play on boom box.

"Situation" - Yazoo

Becky presses button on her headset and speaks into microphone.

MR. HOFFMAN

I'm sorry. We're closed.

REDNECK IN TRUCK

You're not closed. Your lights on.

MR. HOFFMAN

We're closed. Sorry.

REDNECK IN TRUCK

You got my order wrong. I'm missing a fries and a cheeseburger and you gave me the wrong size nuggets.

MR. HOFFMAN

I'm sorry. Please pull up.

Sound of screeching tires. Redneck in truck pulls up to drive-thru window. Becky greets him, while Kris stands watching.

REDNECK IN TRUCK

What the hell are you guys stoned? You done right messed up my order.

MR. HOFFMAN

I apologize for the mistake. We'll give you a coupon good for \$10 dollars.

(writes onto a coupon)

REDNECK IN TRUCK

A coupon? I'm fixin' to eat.

(notices Kris watching, to Kris)

What'ch you looking at. You a fucking faggot.

MR. HOFFMAN

(extends her hand with coupon in it)

Here's the coupon.

REDNECK IN TRUCK

(takes coupon and eats it, then slams a beer)

I'm fixin' to eat.

(points at Kris)

Tell that guy to cook me up a burger, some fries, an nuggets.

MR. HOFFMAN

I'm sorry. We already shut down the grills and the fry machine. If you come by tomorrow, we'll gladly reimburse you for the missing food items.

Becky closes the drive thru window and locks it. The redneck revs his engine, then screeches away.

Ben walks up from the grill area.

BEN

What was that all about.

KRIS KEMP

That guy was crazy.

MR. HOFFMAN

Let's hurry up and get out of here.

Kris grabs his boombox, puts in a mix tape, and mops the floor, quickly and skillfully, as the song plays.

The song ends.

Becky and Ben approach the lobby.

MR. HOFFMAN

Kris, you ready?

KRIS KEMP

Yeah.

MR. HOFFMAN

Let's get out of here.

Kris, Becky, Ben walk to the door. Suddenly, a screeching sound is heard and a roaring engine. The redneck that was there earlier, is racing in circles around the parking lot.

BEN

What the?

MR. HOFFMAN
He's hungry.

BEN
No shit.

KRIS KEMP
Maybe you should call the police.

MR. HOFFMAN
(shoots him a look)
Really?

The sound of the truck roaring stops. Now, the truck can be heard idling. Blinding lights cast over the stage as the truck puts on its high-beams.

BEN
He's just sitting there. Watching us.

KRIS KEMP
How many people are in there?

BEN
Can't see with the high beams on.

The lights on the stage go dark.

BEN
They turned the light off. How many people are in that truck? Three? Four?

KRIS KEMP
What are we gonna do?

MR. HOFFMAN
I have a plan.

Becky opens door and they all go outside. She closes door.

The lights of the truck turn on, high beams, casting them in a bright glow.

(cont)

Run.

All the employees run to their cars, as the truck races by them, riding in circles, hurling eggs in their direction.

NARRATOR

They, Ben, the co-worker, and Mr. Hoffman, sped off in their cars. I had a bicycle locked up near the entrance, so I ran toward the loading dock of a grocery store located in the same plaza. The rednecks in the truck were busy pelting eggs at the cars of the employees, even chasing them a little as they raced off. I waited for half an hour, then, seeing the coast was clear, raced to bicycle, unlocked it, and pedaled off.

It was late Thursday night. Tomorrow would be the last day of school, the homecoming game, and the parties that followed.

Nights like this one were exhilarating. More importantly, nights like this one were memorable by the recipe of risk, adventure, uncertainty.

I put in the mix tape and pedaled to the beat of the music.

The music starts.

"Major Tom" - Peter Schilling

16

McDonald's - Lobby

NARRATOR

It was Saturday morning and I arrived at 7:30am to work grill. I noticed a bunch of decorations in the lobby and inflatable amusement park type toys being set up in the parking lot, a section which had been coned off.

Kris arrives at McDonald's. Looks around the lobby, outside the window.

Mr. Hoffman is setting up the registers.

KRIS KEMP

What's going on?

MR. HOFFMAN

Kid's event. You're working grill. Start with the biscuits.

KRIS KEMP

Okay.

Kris enters crew area, walks into break room.

17

McDonald's - Breakroom

A 50-something year old man, dressed in Ronald McDonald outfit, sits in chair, trying to squeeze on the shoe whose opening is too small.

JOE

Dang freaking shoe!

Joe throws the shoe against the wall of lockers. Joe notices Kris.

(cont)

What'ch you looking at?

KRIS KEMP

Sorry.

Joe glares at Kris. He takes out a flask of alcohol and swigs it.

(cont)

You need some help? A coffee?

JOE

They make these openings too small. That's cuz they're made in China. Everything in China's small. I was killing those gooks in 'Nam.

KRIS KEMP

I can get scissors and cut 'em so the hole's bigger.

JOE

(overlapping)

If you cut 'em to big they won't fit. This ain't my first time at the rodeo. I used to work the McDonald's stores in North Florida.

(beat)

I went from being a soldier to being a clown.

KRIS KEMP

Hey at least you have good stories.

JOE

No one's reading my story, kid.

KRIS KEMP

Kris grabs the shoe and tries to fit it onto Joe's foot.

JOE

My ankle's been swelling up. Medication.

KRIS KEMP

Don't take it.

JOE

I got to, or I don't get disability.

(beat)

You got any weed?

KRIS KEMP

No.

(beat)

Ben should have some weed. He's coming in at 7.

(beat)

You want a biscuit.

JOE

Kid. I don't want a coffee. And I don't want a biscuit.

BECKY - V.O.

Kris, need you on grill.

KRIS KEMP

Be right there.

McDonald's - Grill

Danny and Ben and manager Mr. Hoffman arrive. Danny is on cash register. Ben is on drive thru. Shift supervisor Becky is on drive thru. Mr. Hoffman is on phone with long cord.

NARRATOR

Two hours later, about a hundred kids with their parents arrived. I watched the Ronald McDonald pose with them for pictures. He even made balloon-shaped animals. He was a pro. And I don't think any of the parents suspected anything.

A beautiful girl, wearing a McDonald's uniform enters the store. Mr. Hoffman puts down the phone, walks over to her, and leads her into the crew area.

As she walks in, Danny stops tapping at the register, and stares at her, Ben, with his drive-thru headset, stares at her, and Kris stares at her. The only person who continues working is shift supervisor Becky.

MR. HOFFMAN

Everyone, meet Geri. This is her first day.

EVERYONE

Hi Geri.

GERI

Hi. Nice to meet you, all.

MR. HOFFMAN

She'll be working the cash register.

EVERYONE

I'll train her.

The music starts.

"Alive and Kicking" - Simple Minds

"Take on Me" - Aha

"Obsession" - Animotion

"Wishing (If I had a photograph of you)" - Flock of Seagulls

NARRATOR

One week later, Geri invited me over to her house to hang out. She sat outside on the front porch. Her brother sat about ten feet away. He was smoking cigarettes and talking up a storm. I was so enamored with this girl, the guy's talking sounded like background noise. Geri and I started making out. Then, she I put my hands on her stomach and even lower. Half an hour later, she said she had to go. She walked me to my car, the battered Toyota Corolla, and we made out some more. When I got home, my mom asked if I'd been smoking. I told her no, that I'd been near someone who was smoking. I called Geri but she never returned my calls. A few weeks later she quit work. After that, I didn't see her again.

19

Homecoming Football Game

The music starts.

"A sort of homecoming" - U2 (The Unforgettable Fire)

NARRATOR

I was in the marching band. I played cymbals. The big cymbals. I had not a clue how to read music, so I would strike the cymbals whenever the chorus rose to a crescendo.

During the halftime show for the homecoming football game, I'm marching with the band, carrying the cymbals, when I notice some familiar faces on the opposing teams bleachers: Geri sitting some some guys, one of the guys was the guy who throw Taco Belle at me.

After we did our march, I saw Geri at the concession stand and we talked for a bit. She seemed distant. I saw Ben and Danny from work in line, too. Ben looked drunk. He was friendly and glad to see me. Danny was being sarcastic, but he'd heard I'd made out with Geri and told me it was a good start.

21

Palm Beach Party

NARRATOR

After the football game, I went to the party. With Joce Lin, my friend from 9th grade who had an invite. The party was in Palm Beach, Florida, at a beautiful house on the waterway. Alex, the girl who lived there, was hosting the party. Her parents were away for the weekend.

Kris arrives at party with Joce Lin. They separate.

He sees Ben and Danny from work. He sees Geri with a guy. He sees Wendy with Robby.

Party in Palm Beach, Florida, at Alex Palagio's parents (away on a trip) mansion on Intracoastal waterway.

Kris sees Joce Lin at the party and walks around with her a bit. Then, he sees Wendy and Robby. He sees Geri, Danny, Ben.

The audience walks around the party with Kris.

music:

"True Faith" - New Order

"Don't Forget Me When I'm Gone" - Glass Tiger

"Pour Some Sugar on Me" - Def Leppard

"True" - Spandau Ballet

"Scoundrel Days" - Aha

"Space Age Love Song" - Flock of Seagulls

"Don't Change" - INXS

Kris listens to "Never Let Me Down" - Depeche Mode while smoking a bong for the first time.

Cops arrive. Everyone runs to neighbors, climbs fence, fence collapses, they run into pool on the other side. People drive off, bumping into each others cars as they leave.

Kris races off and thinks he is being pursued by the cops but it's Ben who got him to smoke the bong, who is giving him the high-beams. Kris gets lost and drives in a big circle ending up at the party, with a few other strays.

He finds Wendy. They make out, and fall asleep on a beach chair with a few others.

Kris wakes up, finds himself laying in the beach chair, in the patio. The sun is rising.

The music starts

"Don't Change" - INXS

"Take on me" - Aha

"Bad" - U2

NARRATOR

It was such a beautiful sunrise. And waking up at someones mansion in Palm Beach, Florida, surrounded by scattered, sleeping bodies, with a complete stranger on my arm, I knew everything would be okay.

Did I graduate? Surprisingly, I did.

Living as a teenager in the twilight years of the 1980's was a wonderful experience. Sometimes, riding the subway into New York City, I slip my earbuds in, and play an 80's song, one that brings me back to a simpler, more innocent time.

The music starts.

"Don't you forget about me" - Simple Minds

"Take on me" - Aha