

BUDDY'S WORLD PILOT

Written by

Paul J. Marano

509-570-2687
Pjmarano129@gmail.com

COLD OPEN

EXT. LITTLE OLD VALLEY - MORNING

We open on an overview of the small, American town of Little Old Valley as the sun rises. It looks like a once picturesque town that has now since declined. It's main street is mostly boarded up and its prize mall at the center of town now looks empty and devoid of business.

BUDDY (V.O.)

Little Old Valley, Washington -
we're the biggest small town in
America. It ain't much more than
that little old name, but it's my
home and it's my world. I was born
here, raised here, and have lived
here every day of my life.

We follow a blue bird flying around town. After breathing in polluted air, we see the bird crash land on a small, suburban home's windowsill. It is then opened by a young, innocent looking boy named BUDDY RUSSO(12) who looks at the camera.

BUDDY

That's twelve years now. Wowza,
time sure does fly when you're
having fun.
(notices blue bird)
Oh hi there little fella.

The sickly bird looks up at Buddy.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Oh, not much an early bird I can
tell.

The bird keels over.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

That's alright, I know just the
thing that'll lift your spirits and
help you get that worm. A good, old
song!

The bird pukes blood. Buddy takes a big gulp of air and begins to sing. He keeps getting interrupted by yelling off screen.

JOAN (O.S.)

God dammit Frank, where do you need
to be at 5 pm over your own son's
birthday party!

INT. RUSSO HOME KITCHEN - MORNING

FRANK RUSSO, blond mobster looking type, (late 40s) is trying to leave for work while JOAN (late 40s) a red headed model of a housewife, is stopping him. The two dogs, MUGGSBEE, a very old looking pug, GOLDIE, a very happy looking golden retriever, and the black cat PANTHER, sit and watch.

FRANK

I told you the Digiorno delivery is gonna take a lot more manpower than they thought.

GOLDIE

Oh, he's so full of shit I can smell it.

PANTHER

Frank Russo is not a man I trust, but a man I will tolerate for chin scratches.

GOLDIE

I know girl! Still I want to bite his dick off every time he comes home with it smelling like his secretary.

PANTHER

I want to claw his fucking eyes out for what he does to the Queen Mother. But, these things are not up to us petty mortals.

The PETs mouths do not move despite us hearing their voices. It's as if they're all sharing a psychic connection that we're all tuned in on as well.

JOAN

Can't Nicolas handle it?

FRANK

Nah, he uh... hurt his ankle playing with his kids.

JOAN

Well, he's still making an effort to interact with them at least.

FRANK

And now due to that, I can't go to my son's 9th birthday!

JOAN
12th... it's his 12th birthday.

FRANK
Really! He's 12 now... and we're
still sure he's not...
(a beat)
Never mind. I gotta go to work and
it breaks my heart that I'm gonna
miss Buddy's big day. I mean that
truly.

GOLDIE
God, what bullshit!

PANTHER
Don't let him off for such lies
Queen Mother Joanne.

JOAN
Do you ever tell the truth Frank
Russo. Do you ever?

Frank stops before leaving and turns back towards her.

FRANK
Yeah, I love you.

JOAN
Oh, here we go. You can' just sweet
talk your way out of this one.

Frank gets closer.

FRANK
I could eat a whole bag of sugar
and I wouldn't have words sweet
enough for you, babe.

Joan and Frank get very close.

JOAN
Ooooh,
(forced New Yorker accent)
Is that right?

GOLDIE
Oh no, the fake Brooklyn accent is
coming out.

PANTHER
Oh Queen mother, why do you always
forget your midwestern roots when
that silver tongued brute flirts.

FRANK
That is right.

Frank pulls Joan in.

FRANK (CONT'D)
You know, I wonder how a big, ugly
oaf like me got such a beautiful
wife.

JOAN
Not pulling out 30 years ago.

FRANK
Haha, you'll never let me live that
one down.

JOAN
Well, I'm partially to blame. I
really wanted a taste of that
Italian sausage.

FRANK
Do you still?

JOAN
Ooooh Frank...

The parents begin kissing.

GOLDIE
Oh wow, that escalated quickly.

PANTHER
And it will end even quicker.

GOLDIE
Hey Muggsbee, wake up. You're gonna
want to see this... Muggsbee?

Muggsbee appears to be motionless.

GOLDIE (CONT'D)
Oh shit, Muggsbee isn't breathing.

PANTHER
What, no way.

GOLDIE
Oh my god, I think it's happening!

PANTHER
Oh my god, really? You're not
jesting with me.

GOLDIE
No, oh god, no!

PANTHER
Goldie, can I be a real bitch for a moment?

GOLDIE
Yes, I need a real bitch moment right now!

PANTHER
I'm not ready to live in a Mugsbeeless world.

GOLDIE
Me neither, let's just get them to take him to the hospital like the other 12 times.

PANTHER
In the words of the children, no medical bill too big for Mugsbee!

The dog and cat attempt to get the parents attention.

GOLDIE
Hey, hey, hello Mugsbee is dying again!

PANTHER
Curses, they can't hear us.

GOLDIE
Yeah, well they're both busy imagining someone else right now.

Buddy with his new bird pal cradled in his arms walks in.

BUDDY
What's all this yelling about?

Buddy looks over at his parents.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Oh no, did mother get stuck again?

GOLDIE
Oh fuck, it's Buddy!

PANTHER
He was always such an early BIRD!

GOLDIE

Oh no Panther, don't do it!

BUDDY

Good morning, petzees. Would you like to meet my new bird friend and potential new member of our family pending mother's approval of course. Hey, mother!

Panther hisses at Buddy. Joan notices Buddy. She pulls away from Frank.

FRANK

Ohhhh... fuck...

BUDDY

Hello mother and father.

Panther continues to hiss.

GOLDIE

Hey Panther, try to stay calm alright.

PANTHER

It could be an assassin sent to destroy the family!

JOAN

Buddy!

FRANK

Oh hey sport, I was just helping your mother get unstuck again.

BUDDY

That's wonderful father. Look at what or should I say who I found on my windowsill this morning.

JOAN

Oh honey, that's...

She stops once she sees the bird.

JOAN (CONT'D)

What is that in your hands!

BUDDY

This is my new bird pal mother.

JOAN

Put that down right now Buddy! It might have diseases.

BUDDY

He looks fine to me mother.

The bird dies and shits all over Buddy.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Oh my Mr. Birdie, are you alright?

Buddy pokes the dead bird.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Oh no, Mr. Birdie isn't breathing!

JOAN

That's because it just died Buddy. Frank, get that from him.

FRANK

You want me touch that thing?

JOAN

I don't know, which of us is missing his birthday today?

FRANK

Oh God, she's definitely not gonna ever let me live this one down.

Franks grabs a trash bag and a mop and puts the bag on the end of the mop.

BUDDY

Daddy, we need to help him.

FRANK

And I will. You just need to give him to me sport.

BUDDY

But he's not gonna be able to breathe out of a plastic bag.

FRANK

Well he's not breathing at all is he now Buddy, so you know, it can't get any worse for him.

BUDDY

I think he's still breathing, look!

Frank pushes Buddy back with the mop.

FRANK

Woah sport, remember just because
COVID is over doesn't mean six feet
apart isn't still smart.

BUDDY

But father...

FRANK

Buddy, these are daddy's work
clothes so you better not get them
dirty.

JOAN

You work in a factory Frank!

FRANK

So I should go into work covered in
bird shit.

JOAN

I think you shouldn't go into work
at all. Call out. It's your son's
birthday for crying out loud!
(switches to cheery voice)
Happy birthday Buddy.

FRANK

You really want to continue this
argument right now!
(switches to cheery voice)
Yeah, happy birthday kiddo.

BUDDY

Well thank you both, but it's about
to be a unhappy death day for Mr.
Birdie if we don't get him help
fast!

FRANK

Buddy, put the bird in the fucking
bag!

JOAN

Frank! Don't curse at him!

FRANK

Do you want to help me here or
what!

PANTHER

That is it! This bird has brought
too much strife to this home. I
shall rid it once and for all from
the realm!

GOLDIE

Panther no!

Panther attacks the bird in Buddy's arms. They have a tug of
war over it.

BUDDY

Panther, what are you- No! Stop
Madam Panther, stop!

JOAN

Oh no, stop the cat Frank.

FRANK

What?!! It'll get rid of it for us.

Panther rips the bird in half covering Buddy and her in blood
and guts. She then runs around the kitchen spewing the bird
blood everywhere. Joan and Buddy scream, while Frank expertly
takes cover behind a wall from the viscera. We hear the sound
of someone running in and see ROBBIE (17) red headed pretty
boy, rush in and slip. He is followed by twin sister APRIL
(17) and his burn out oldest brother LOGAN. (29)

ROBBIE

Ow!

APRIL

Is this normal morning screaming or
is today a special occasion?

She notices the mess.

APRIL (CONT'D)

Holy shit...

LOGAN

And you guys think I make a mess of
the kitchen.

ROBBIE

Ah man, I stepped in dog poo!
Muggsbee, was this you?

A Phone notification goes off and April looks at her phone.

APRIL

Oh, happy birthday Buddy.

LOGAN

Shit, is that today? Y-yeah happy
birthday Budd. Big 1-O!

BUDDY

(In between sobs) Thanks guys.

Robbi checks Muggsbee.

ROBBI

Oh my god guys, Muggsbee isn't
breathing.

Stunned silence follows before Robbi's phone goes off.

ROBBI (CONT'D)

Also happy birthday Buddy.

CUT TO THEME SONG - BUDDY'S WORLD

END OF COLD OPEN

ACT 1

EXT. CUL-DE-SAC - MORNING

Buddy, while holding Panther, is being hosed down at max power by his siblings. Meanwhile, Muggsbee is being loaded into a pet ambulance by a paramedic. Frank stands by.

BUDDY (V.O)

My 12th birthday wasn't off to a great start, but if Muggsbee was gonna pull through, then Good God above had given me the best birthday gift a boy like me could ask for.

PARAMEDIC

The dog is dead.

FRANK

And you guys are sure this time?

PARAMEDIC

Well, with his highly advanced age and the fact that his heart exploded, I'd say he's finally gone for good this time.

FRANK

Exploding heart! Damn, didn't think that was possible.

PARAMEDIC

I didn't either. Anyways here's the bill for the body disposal.

He hands Frank a bill.

FRANK

About that, could you possibly keep him around that pet hospital on some like fake life support? It's my youngest son's birthday and I'd hate to have our dog legally die on it.

PARAMEDIC

Alright, but it'll cost you extra.

FRANK

Surly, it won't be that much extra.

PARAMEDIC

Not if you want it to look good. I gotta set him up in a fake pet hospital bed, put him on fake pet oxygen, not to mention I have to program a fake pet heart rate monitor to beep like he's still alive. Trust me, that last step is a real pain in the ass and I'm not doing it unless I get paid like...500\$.

FRANK

500!

The others, still washing Buddy up, look over at their dad.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Oh well then, no medical bill too big for Muggsbee!

RUSSO SIBLINGS

Yeah! No medical bill too big!

BUDDY

No medical-
(chokes on hose water)

LOGAN

I told you not to open your mouth Buddy.

FRANK

Ugh fine...

Frank starts counting the money as the kids approach.

ROBBI

We know it's a lot of money, but no medical bill is too big for Muggsbee.

APRIL

Yeah, look that dog has been around my entire life and I'm just not in a selfless enough place right now to let him go.

BUDDY

Sir, tell me the truth. Is Muggsbee gonna make it?

Buddy makes his baby eyes and the paramedic, who looks now like he has seen the most cute and heart warming thing in the world, kneels down to Buddy's level.

PARAMEDIC

Oh, what's your name little guy?

BUDDY

It's Buddy sir.

PARAMEDIC

Oh well, Buddy...

Paramedic puts his hand on Buddy's shoulder. We now see Frank sorting cash from one hand to the other as the paramedic wags his finger to indicate for more cash. They'd settle on an amount and the paramedic nods.

PARAMEDIC (CONT'D)

He's gonna fucking make it and come back better than ever!

RUSSO SIBLINGS

What! Yes! Really!

Frank stands behind his kids taking cash away from the paramedic's tip/bribe.

PARAMEDIC

Or maybe not. It's just as possible for him to live as it is for him to die.

BUDDY

It's in God's hands then.

Frank grabs the paramedic by the shoulder and stuffs the money in his pocket.

FRANK

Good, we can blame it on God then if he dies. Here's your tip now get the hell out of here.

Frank pays the paramedic. He leaves in a hurry.

BUDDY

God bless ya!

FRANK

Well, since that's dealt with I'm off. Happy birthday Buddy!

Frank hesitantly pats Buddy's wet head and gets in his car and drives away. The kids are alone now.

ROBBI

(to Logan)

You're the one buying the stuff right?

LOGAN

You mean I will, because I'm the one getting the weed and beer.

APRIL

Yeah and who is paying for it?

LOGAN

Not all of us can sell feet pics April.

APRIL

Yes you can, because all of those pics were of Robbi's feet, not mine.

ROBBI

It's true, I have extremely feminine looking toes.

Joan & Goldie come out of the house.

JOAN

Well, the mess is cleaned up. Thanks for all the help.

LOGAN

You didn't ask.

JOAN

It should have been assumed! It was bird blood and guts, not dirty dishes!

APRIL

That's exactly why it was not assumed.

JOAN

Well, there's still a mess of bird viscera in the laundry room sink if any of you feel motivated.

Silence from the kids.

JOAN (CONT'D)
That's what I thought. Where's your father?

ROBBI
You just missed him. He left for work.

JOAN
Lucky him...

Joan glares off into the distance.

JOAN (CONT'D)
No...

She checks her phone which has a tracker on Frank with a heat map of his past movements. He's NOT heading towards his work to the east and instead heading west toward another hot spot on the heat map, the red light district.

JOAN (CONT'D)
He is going to the red light district.... On Buddy's birthday...
(her eye twitches)
Kids, you have to take Buddy today to school. I have too many errands to run.

CUT TO:

The Russo twins look annoyed.

ROBBI
But mom uhh we can't.

JOAN
I don't really see why you can't. Rocky Middle is right across the street from Creed High.

APRIL
(Flustered)
Oh you know Robbi, he just forgot Buddy's birthday was on the same day as the first day of school. We'll drive him no problem.

JOAN
Ok, great...

Joan looks at her phone.

JOAN (CONT'D)

I gotta go. Happy birthday Buddy!

Joan comically leaps into her car and drives off.

ROBBI

Woah, mom was driving the speed limit there. She must be pissed.

APRIL

Dad must be cheating again.

ROBBI

Ahem, April...

Robbi points to Buddy who is clearly listening, though still oblivious.

BUDDY

Wowza, did mom say I get to ride with the big kids today. I really am getting older.

APRIL

Actually, Buddy...

April kneels down to Buddy's level.

APRIL (CONT'D)

It's actually not our first day of school, but in fact our last day of summer.

BUDDY

What! But Mom said today is a school day for all big kids. Even me! I'm a big kid now. Wow wee, time sure does fly when you're having-

LOGAN

Mom thinks today's a school day because she's drinking again Buddy.

Robbi grabs Logan by the shoulder.

ROBBI

Please Logan, let her handle this.

APRIL

Well little guy, let me put it this way. You know how when Mom gets all mixed up and we tell her and she gets...

BUDDY

Mad as a dragon! Yeah, you don't need to remind me.

APRIL

Well, that's why we're all just going along with her. There is no school today. It's actually the last day of summer Buddy.

BUDDY

Wowza! I thought that was yesterday.

APRIL

Nope, it's today.

BUDDY

Oh golly gee willikers! I planned to invite everyone to my birthday party at school today. I guess I'll just have to go around town and hand em out that way. April, would you be the best big sister in the world and give me a ride?

Buddy does a cutesy, begging face.

APRIL

Ahh Buddy...

(a beat)

No. We're heading to the beach in the opposite direction of all your little friends.

BUDDY

Ah shucks! Still, why can't you drive me around first? You're giving Logan a ride.

Buddy points at April's car, which now has Logan in the passenger seat, window down. April & Robbi glare at him.

LOGAN

What? I called shotgun.

APRIL

Well, uh we need a parent guardian for where we are going.

BUDDY

Like a field trip?

APRIL

Yes Buddy, exactly like a field trip!

BUDDY

Did you get your permission slips signed?

APRIL

Of course!

Buddy looks to Logan.

BUDDY

Logan, as their adult guardian for the day, can you tell me the truth, did they get their permission slips signed?

A long pause as Logan ponders.

LOGAN

Fuckin-fudge yeah they did Buddy. Who do you think I am?

BUDDY

That's great and responsible of you all, but if you all go, that leaves me...

(scared)
home alone...

Zoom in on Buddy's scared face.

SMILEY (V.O)

Buddy...

We hear an echo a demonic clown laugh that Buddy does his best to ignore.

LOGAN

Buddy, we've been leaving you home alone since your were three, what's the big deal now?

BUDDY

I get scared.

LOGAN

You're 10 now, be less of a bitch.

BUDDY

Well, 12, but that just proves your point more. Still, what am I gonna do about the invites?

APRIL

Buddy, ask one of your little friends down the street to post a Snapchat or something ok.

BUDDY

You got it big sis.

APRIL

Wonderful, let's go!

April heads for the car. Robbi stops her.

ROBBI

What happens when his friends tell him it's the first day of school?

APRIL

Then I'll play the dumb redhead card.

ROBBI

It's blondes that are stupid.

APRIL

Exactly.

April gets in the car. Robbi goes and kneels down to Buddy.

ROBBI

Hey Buddy, I just wanted to tell you that I know how scary, and certainly for you, how difficult of a change middle school will be. I just wanted to let you know that there are always people you can talk to about any of the issues you face.

BUDDY

Oh wowza, it's good to know I always got you to talk to big bro.

ROBBI

Oh no, not me Buddy. I'm not equipped for that. Mr. Kujo is. He's the guidance councilor at Rocky Middle. Talk to him when kids start bullying you ok.

BUDDY

When?

Car horn beeps.

APRIL

Robbi, we gotta go!

ROBBI

Good luck today Buddy.

Robbi pats Buddy's head and gets in April's car to leave.

ROBBI (CONT'D)

Hey... and happy birthday Buddy.

APRIL & LOGAN

Yeah, Happy birthday Buddy!

April peels out of the driveway and zooms off. Buddy is left there with the pets.

END OF ACT 1

ACT 2

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Buddy is running real fast towards the bus stop.

BUDDY (V.O)

Yeah, today wasn't off to the best start. It wasn't even off to a good one either, but so long as my two best friends in the whole wide world are there for me on my big day, then nothing could get me down.

EXT. BUS STOP - DAY

At the bus stop stands two fuckboys in waiting. MIKE RODGERS, (12) a hip looking black kid, and REN PARK(12) an Asian wannabe eboy, scroll on their phones.

MIKE

Yo, look at what Tiffany Camden sent me. She said, "You are such a..." and then she put a clown emoji at the end.

REN

Damn dude, she thinks you're funny as fuck!

MIKE

Ladies love funny guys, so it's safe to say me and her are gonna be a thing by recess.

REN

Does middle school still have recess?

MIKE

I don't know man. They still got to let us outside right?

Ren shrugs as Mike notices someone coming.

MIKE (CONT'D)

Oh shit!

REN

What?

MIKE

It's Buddy Russo.

The two look at each other in terror.

REN

I thought he didn't take the bus?

MIKE

Me too!

Buddy reached them a bit out of breath, but no less excited.

BUDDY

Hey fellas!

Buddy notices how much bigger his friends have gotten.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Wowza, you all are giants now or I was shrunk with a shrink ray.

MIKE

We doing this for another year?

REN

It's looking like it.

Mike and Ren close their eyes, sigh, and then nod at each other. They answer with plastic smiles.

MIKE

(Fake as fuck)

Oh hey, Buddy.

REN

(Fake as fuck)

Hey bro, what's up?

BUDDY

What are you all doing on this special day?

MIKE

Oh, just waiting for the bus?

BUDDY

On the last day of summer?

Mike and Ren look at each in bewilderment. Mike has an idea.

MIKE

Yeah? Just prepping for our first day of school is all.

REN

Gotta be prepped. We're not in elementary anymore Buddy.

BUDDY

Oh golly, you can say that again. I'm so nervous and yet so excited.

MIKE

I'd be very nervous if I were you Buddy.

BUDDY

Oh gosh, you think so?

MIKE

Yup! Very nervous. I'd be very nervous.

REN

You, yes Buddy, oh god yes. I'd be very nervous.

BUDDY

Well, no matter. That is a problamo for tomorrow. Today is far too special. You know what today is?

Buddy grins at his friends. They have no idea.

REN

Buddy, do you know what day it is?

BUDDY

Of course, it's my birthday! Ah shucks, I just let it slip.

Mike and Ren look surprised.

MIKE

Oh Buddy, we knew that.

REN

Yeah dude, we wouldn't forget our best Buddy's birthday.

Mike elbows Ren.

MIKE

(Whispering)

Best buddy. We're not trying to be best buddies with him anymore.

REN

Yeah, but he has a pool and hot tub.

MIKE

That pool, hot tub, and eventual warning text to not go to school the next day, isn't worth the damage that being friends with Buddy Russo will do to our social lives. Must I remind you this is the same kid who had an imaginary friend up until sixth grade.

REN

Oh God, I forgot about Mr. Smiley. Looking back, that was like legit creepy as fuck.

MIKE

Looking back? You mean like last year?

REN

Maybe he's grown out of it. A lot can change in one year. I mean look at us?

Mike points at Buddy who is blowing in a tube to make his propeller hat spin.

MIKE

(louder)

Hey Buddy, what happened to your friend Mr. Smiley?

Buddy ceases his tomfoolery and scowls.

BUDDY

Mr. Smiley and I are no longer speaking terms. The less I say the better.

Mike looks at Ren with a look on his face that says, "Need I say more."

REN

Yeah but bro
(a beat)
His sister...

Mike does a 180.

MIKE

Shit, you make a good point.

BUDDY

What are you guys talking about over there?

(less cheery)

It's not Mr. Smiley is it? He's not invited.

MIKE

Oh no, not at all Buddy. It's nothing.

BUDDY

Okie dokie then.

REN

So you having a party?

MIKE

Your sister gonna be there?

BUDDY

Of course, they all will! Once they all get back from their field trip that is.

MIKE

Field trip?

REN

I think he means senior skid day.

MIKE

Senior skip day. One day that will be us Ren.

REN

Not if we always have goody two shoes tagging along.

The two aren't even hiding their discussion from Buddy. He just watches and smiles like he doesn't understand.

MIKE

Does he know it's not the last day of summer?

REN

His siblings probably gaslighted him so they didn't have to take him to school.

BUDDY

Anywho fellas, I just need you guys to get on your snapplechats and let everyone know about the big party.

REN

Everyone Buddy?

BUDDY

Except for you know who, everyone is invited. The more the merrier I always say.

MIKE

Wait, so nobody is at your house right now?

BUDDY

Just me and the petzees.

Mike and Ren look at each other. Both begin to type away on their phones.

MIKE & REN

Dude...

MIKE

We'll let everyone know.

REN

I'm sending out invites right now.

BUDDY

Right now!

REN

Right now!

BUDDY

Wowza, you pals sure are the best.

MIKE

How soon can we come.

BUDDY

As soon as you want.

MIKE

We'll be there in an hour. Get the hot tub ready, because we'll be bringing mad bitches over.

BUDDY

Oh golly gee willikers, I'll get on
it right away!

Buddy runs off.

REN

An hour? I thought we'd head over
as late as possible?

MIKE

Nobody is home all day and hot tubs
make bitches horny.

A snap notification goes off.

REN

And Tiffany Camden wants some pics
of the place to see if its big
enough for her and all her friends.
She said she'd much rather be hot
tubbing than be trapped in
homeroom.

Mike winks at Ren and the two snicker at each other.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Joan awkwardly walks along with the massive cake. She puts
the cake into her car. She gets in the front seat and we
watch her switch between her tracker on Frank in the red
light district and a google search of the address he's at,
which is a strip club. Her eyes dart between her phone and
the liquor store right across the street from the bakery.

EXT. RUSSO HOME BACKYARD - DAY

Buddy opens the hot tub, cleans the pool and bird guts, and
puts out a bunch of snack and drinks.

BUDDY

That should do it.

He heads back indoors.

INT. RUSSO HOME LIVING ROOM - DAY

BUDDY

Now we wait until our guests arrive
Petzees.

(MORE)

BUDDY (CONT'D)

I want you both on your best behavior you guys. Especially you madam Panther.

PANTHER

I apologize for nothing and would do it all again.

The doorbell rings. Buddy opens the door to see a bunch of random kids in period specific outfits.

MEDIEVAL KID

(entranced)

Hello, we are here for Buddy B. Russo's 12th birthday party.

BUDDY

Oh golly, Mike and Ren were awfully quick about getting the word out. Please, come on in! Chips and dip are on the table.

Some of the kids walking by are dressed in clothes from the distant and ancient past. Others look more recent, but only if you consider the 1980s as recent. They viciously fight over the chips and dip or stand around aimlessly.

GOLDIE

Why won't any of them pet me!

PANTHER

They're walking dead Goldie.

There's a knock at the door.

BUDDY

Oh boy! We got more all ready!

Buddy opens the door to see Mike and Ren.

MIKE

Yo people aren't going to show unless I get snaps of the place.

REN

Yeah Buddy, you gotta put your best face forward if you want people to come to your birthday party. So Buddy, could you please move out of the way while we take pictures of your house.

BUDDY
Alrighty then, but it seems like
enough people got the invites.

Buddy moves and the duo now notice the quiet yet countless
new guests in the Russo home.

REN
Yo, hold up.

MIKE
Hold up!

REN
Hold the fuck up Buddy! Where did
all these fine looking exotic
honies come from?

BUDDY
Oh, I assume you guys invited them.

MIKE
Shit Buddy, we're popular, but we
ain't this popular.

BUDDY
If you didn't invite them, then who
did?

REN
I don't know. Who gives a shit
Buddy, you got fine ladies at your
party, that's all that matters.
(a beat)
Speaking of, Mike, you see that
chick in the powder wig?

It's a boy from the 1700s.

MIKE
Yup, may the best man win.

REN
Oh, you're on.

The two head off to flirt and take more pics of the place.

BUDDY
Hmm, who invited all these folks?

Buddy looks around at the dead eyes children from God knows
when and comes to an awful conclusion.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Oh no...

There's a sudden knock at the door. Buddy gulps as he goes to answer it. There's a plume of vape smoke as he does and Buddy starts to cough like crazy.

SMILEY (V.O)

Buddy? Buuuuudy? I miss you
Buddy...

Buddy seems like he's falling into a trance. A shadow emerges from the vape smoke. The silhouette looks sinister until the vapor clears.

Out steps TIFFANY CAMDEN (12), the soon-to-be most popular girl in school. She walks in along with her entourage. There is the conceded DORA (12) and the anxious CARLY (12). She takes a hit of her vape and walks past Buddy, completely ignoring him. He seems relieved that it's not who he thinks it was.

TIFFANY

Oh wow, is this a costume party?

DORA

Oh, that's kind of cringe.

CARLY

Yeah, but everyone is doing it, so
we better conform fast or else
we'll be cringe!

TIFFANY

Please Carly, I'm already wearing a
mask.

Buddy gets up and approaches.

BUDDY

Howdy ladies.

(coughs)

Welcome to my birthday party.

The girls eye him up and Tiffany smiles.

TIFFANY

You must be Buddy. I love your
costume.

BUDDY

This isn't a costume. This is just
how I dress.

Tiffany laughs and the other two awkwardly join her.

TIFFANY

You're funny. Could you find my friend Carly a costume? She has anxiety and doesn't like standing out.

CARLY

Why would you say that out loud!

BUDDY

Well of course. You want me to look for you two as well?

TIFFANY

Sure

DORA

No-yes.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)

We'll need something to change into after we swim.

BUDDY

Well, I'll look through my sister's old costumes. Carly was it?

CARLY

No! I mean yes.

BUDDY

If you'll follow me to the basement.

Buddy begins to lead Carly away.

DORA

Pick something cute for us!

CARLY

Don't put that pressure on me!

INT. RUSSO HOME BASEMENT - DAY

Carly and Buddy are walking through the basement, which is filled with more of the undead kids.

CARLY

Wow, it's like every kid in Little Old Valley is here right now.

BUDDY

I know! I'm so lucky. Though,
between you and I, I don't know who
half these people are. I don't even
know who invited them.

SMILEY (V.O)

Buuuudy...

Buddy frowns and ignores the voice in his head.

CARLY

It's makes me nervous though,
skipping the first day of school
like this. I know the seniors do
it, but we're only in the 7th
grade.

BUDDY

Skipping school? It's the last day
of summer.

CARLY

(nervous)

I mean yeah no, maybe, I don't
know, what was I even talking
about? I'll agree with whatever you
say.

BUDDY

You ok?

CARLY

I'm just nervous around a lot of
new people.

BUDDY

Oh, I'm sure everyone is as
friendly as they look.

Two of the undead kids get in a feral brawl.

Buddy opens a door and enters a musty, storage room. Carly
follows, but doesn't take her eyes off the fighting kids.

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Buddy starts grabbing costumes.

CARLY

You're not worried some of these
random people might be trouble?

BUDDY
What do you mean?

CARLY
Well, you don't know who they are
or who invited them. You let
complete strangers into your house.

BUDDY
That's true, but you were a
complete stranger to me only a
moment ago Carly and now you're my
friend.

CARLY
Friend? Wow, we're moving a little
fast here Buddy.

BUDDY
Ok,
(in slow mo voice)
I'll sloooow doooown.

Carly laughs and blushes. She frantically takes the costumes
out of Buddy's hands.

CARLY
Uh thanks, I'll see you around.

Carly rushes off. Buddy is left alone in the storage room. He
starts to put some costumes away when a red clown nose comes
bouncing into view. Buddy sees the nose and scowls.

SMILEY (V.O)
Buddy...

Buddy picks the nose up.

BUDDY
I said I never wanted to play with
you ever again...

Buddy throws the nose into the darkness. The red nose bounces
like a ball until it hits something. A long, gangly clawed
hand grabs the nose and we pan around see the entity in
question.

SMILEY(???) A demonic looking clown with hollow, black eyes
places his red nose back on his face and gives Buddy a
toothy, razor sharp smile.

SMILEY

Oh, Buddy please. I could never
forget my best friend in the whole
wide world.

(a beat)

Happy birthday Buddy.

Smiley lets out a demonic clown laugh.

END OF ACT 2

ACT 3

INT. STORAGE ROOM - DAY

Buddy stares down the terrifying Smiley without fear.

BUDDY (V.O)
I know he may look nice with that
big, old grin of his...

Zoom in on Smiley's razor sharp teeth.

BUDDY (V.O) (CONT'D)
And those giant, jolly eyes...

We stare into Smiley's dead black eyes.

BUDDY (V.O) (CONT'D)
But don't be fooled. This clown not
was not invited to my birthday
party.

We see Smiley's full body to really reenforce the dissonance.

SMILEY
You like my gift?

BUDDY
Go away Smiley. You're not welcome
in this home anymore.

SMILEY
Now come on Buddy. That's no way to
greet an old friend.

BUDDY
Friends don't eat people Smiley!

SMILEY
Those kids had it coming Buddy and
you know it.

BUDDY
I don't believe you!

SMILEY
They were all going to grow up into
some very shitty people Buddy.
(MORE)

SMILEY (CONT'D)

I could see the stink of their souls and let me tell you, if their auras were that putrid at such a young age, I shudder to think of what monsters they could have become all grown up... it's a good thing I ate em all.

(clown laugh)

BUDDY

Well, I have friends over and I don't want you snacking on anybody's soul, so get lost Smiley.

SMILEY

Oh come on Buddy. I miss my best friend. How long has it been? One year, two, 5000, I can't keep track since time works different for me, ya know.

(clown laugh)

But you know what, no matter how long it's been since I last saw ya Buddy, you're still the same. You haven't changed a bit. That's what I love about you Buddy. Your mind quite literally arrested development at six years old.

BUDDY

Well, I'm 12 years old now.

SMILEY

I know, happy birthday Buddy!

BUDDY

Thank you, but go away Smiley! You hurt people and that can never be forgiven!

SMILEY

Look Buddy, I know I messed up and I'm trying to change and I have a gift to prove it to you.

Smiley opens the door telepathically to the basement so Buddy can see all his "guests".

INT. BASEMENT - CONTINUOUS

Buddy steps out and looks at the other kids further. They all look lifeless in the eyes.

SMILEY

Who do you think invited all these guests?

BUDDY

What in the heck! Who are all these folks?

SMILEY

Buddy, they're all the kids I've eaten. I spit them all out to show ya Buddy that I am done eating children. I am done! I would swear to God if he wasn't my sworn enemy.

Some of the kids walking by are dressed in clothes from the distant past.

BUDDY

Wowza, you've eaten a lot.

SMILEY

I know, some of these kiddos go back a few centuries...

Cave kids walk by.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

Or millennia maybe. I'm an old demon Buddy, what can I say.

BUDDY

And we don't have permission slips or a proper legal guardian for any of them!

SMILEY (O.S.)

What do you mean?
(voice changes to Joan)
Yes we do honey bunny!

Pan over to see Smiley has transformed into Joan but with a toothy demonic grin.

BUDDY

No!

Smiley manifests a plate of alcoholic beverages.

SMILEY

Yes.

He hands one beer to a kid and it starts a riot in the basement.

INT. LIVING ROOM - DAY

Ren and Mike are taking pics of the place like they're doing a showing. Ren points out the window.

REN
Should we turn on the fire pit by
the pool?

MIKE
Yeah, that be perfect. Bitches love
fire.

REN
And bitches love water.

MIKE
Bitches love fire and water.

REN (CONT'D)
Bitches love fire and water.

REN (CONT'D)
But not wind, they hate that shit.

SMILEY (O.S.)
(in Joan's voice)
Who wants some refreshments?

Pan over to see Joan handing out beers.

SMILEY (CONT'D)
I imagine without licenses, none of
you are driving home.
(clown laugh)

Ren and Mike rush for a beer and are almost attacked by a feral kid from the 1950s over one. Smiley in disguise throws the kid away before he can snap at the boys.

MIKE
Holy shit- I mean shucks Mrs.
Russo, you bet I'll take a beer.

Both the boys take beers.

REN
Mrs. Russo, you were always the
hottest of my friends moms.

The two go off and taking pictures of themselves with the beers. Buddy comes rushing in trying to break up a fight between two kids from the 20s.

BUDDY
Wowza, I sure know why they called
it the Roaring Twenties.

Buddy turns his attention to Smiley.

BUDDY (CONT'D)

Smiley, you can't disguise yourself
as my mother!

SMILEY

Buddy, you're gonna thank me for
this later.

BUDDY

I doubt it!

SMILEY

No, trust me, you will...

INT. STRIP CLUB - DAY

Frank enters a dingy strip club during the dreaded day shift.

Upon seeing Frank enter, a look of recognition envelopes the face of one of the strippers who grabs her tips and flees the stage. The BOUNCER, who was previously distracted by the stripper, turns around to face Frank. Despite being bigger than him, he is quite afraid of Frank.

BOUNCER

(nervous)

Oh shit, Frank! I haven't seen you
in a long time. Ya here for
business or pleasure? Pleasure I
hope.

The Bouncer laughs nervously.

FRANK

Business. I'm here on business.

The bouncer stops laughing immediately.

BOUNCER

W-who ya looking for?

FRANK

Tommy Romano.

BOUNCER

He's in the VIP room upstairs, it's
gonna be on the right-

FRANK

I remember...

Frank starts making his way.

BOUNCER

Frank, he's got a lot guys up there with him.

FRANK

It's a good thing it's dead in here then.

INT. VIP ROOM - DAY

INT. VIP ROOM - DAY

TOMMY ROMANO sits with two strippers on his lap while his goons do coke.

TOMMY ROMANO

Ladies, you don't even know what it's like being a gangsta like me in this town. I'm tellin' ya, I'm the real deal. You see, sweethearts, this little town they call Little Old Valley, it's my playground. I got connections you wouldn't believe. I got my fingers in everything, if you catch my drift.

He digs his fingers into the strippers thighs.

STRIPPER 1

Wow, you're such a naughty boy.

TOMMY ROMANO

Yeah, and I'm a tough one too. You wouldn't wanna mess with me. I've stared down some of the meanest sons of bitches ever walk this-

Frank enters. The room shifts instantly. All the goons stop what they are doing.

TOMMY ROMANO (CONT'D)

(laughs)

Speak of the devil and he shall arrive right on cue.

FRANK

You know why I'm here Tommy.

The goons get their guns out and the strippers try to leave. Tommy doesn't let them.

TOMMY ROMANO

I paid for the full hour ladies and it ain't up yet.

FRANK

It will be very soon Tommy if you don't cooperate.

TOMMY ROMANO

Tell me Frank, what brings ya here? You having marital troubles again?

FRANK

No Tommy. I'm not here for me.

TOMMY ROMANO

First time for everything then huh?
(laughs)
I'm just joking. Frank, you should lighten up right now. It be good for your health.

FRANK

Tommy, what did you do with the product?

Tommy snorts and shoots out a wad of coke filled snot at Frank's shoes.

Frank stares down all the coked up goons who are all cackling like hyenas.

TOMMY ROMANO

You really thought you could waltz into my turf and take me out, huh?

Frank looks around.

FRANK

Yes.... Yes I did.

Frank shoots a goon's causing him to fire his gun at the goon next to him and thus begins a John Wick style shoot out between Frank and all of Tommy's goons. The strippers close their eyes and stay still as the bullets fly. Once all the goons are dead, the cuckoo clock on the wall rings to signify Tommy's time is up

The strippers get up to leave, one of the dollar bills falls from her g-string and Frank politely picks it up and hands it to her.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Ma'm, you dropped this.

STRIPPER
T-thank you

She leaves as Tommy cowers before Frank.

TOMMY ROMANO
Please Frank, do the right thing.

FRANK
Killing scum like you is the right
thing Tommy.

As he's about to kill Tommy, a very drunk Joan walks in.

JOAN
Frank, you motherfucker!

FRANK
Joan, what the fuck are you doing
here!

JOAN
What the fuck are you doing here
Frank!

The bouncer, looking like he just beaten the shit out of,
comes in from behind.

BOUNCER
I tried to stop her Frank-

Joan elbows him in the face and he gets a tooth and himself
knocked out. She then finally looks around the room.

JOAN
What the fuck are you doing here
Frank?

TOMMY ROMANO
He's cheating on you!

Frank shoots Tommy in the head.

FRANK
I'm not cheating on you, I'm... I'm
just working is all.

Frank looks embarrassed more than anything else.

JOAN
You're a hitman... again?!?

FRANK
Joan, the kids have put us deeper
in debt and with inflation right
now, come on baby, I have no
choice.

The last guy is crawling away only to be casually shot by Frank.

JOAN
So, you're not cheating on me?

FRANK
No babe, never again I promised.

JOAN
Oh Frank!

The two embrace over the dead bodies. Joan gets a phone call.

JOAN (CONT'D)
Oh, it's our neighbor.
(cheery)
Hey Judy!
(Furious)
what...I'll be right over!
(hangs up)

FRANK
What?

JOAN
Our kids are throwing a party!

Frank takes a deep breath and cocks his gun.

EXT. BEACH - DAY

The seniors are all enjoying their skip day at the beach. The Russo twins and Logan are all sitting together, when ROD (17) runs up to them.

ROD
Yo, have you guys seen Tiffany
Camden's Snapchat?

ROBBI
No, I haven't Rod. Why?

ROD
You gotta check it out man!

APRIL
Who's Tiffany Camden?

ROD
A girl who goes to Rocky Middle.

APRIL
Why are you looking at a middle school girl's Snapchat Rod?

Pregnant pause.

ROD
Because she's at your house right now along with every other kid at that SHOULD be at Rocky Middle.

RUSSO SIBLINGS
Wait what!

April grabs Rod's phone and watches Snapchats of middle schoolers doing cannonballs into a pool and being served drinks by Smiley disguised as Joan.

APRIL
Oh fuck, mom is drinking again!

ROBBI
Oh God, I can't deal with mom having another relapse right now.

Robbi goes to down his drink, but is intercepted by Logan.

LOGAN
Even worse, Buddy and all his little gremlin friends are going into our rooms right now.

Logan downs the drink and crushes the can as he watches the wild snapchats of the party and the feral kids trashing their rooms. April and Robbi look mad now too.

LOGAN (CONT'D)
I'm gonna kill that little shit.

APRIL
Oh, not before I do.

EXT. RUSSO HOME BACKYARD - DAY

Mike and Ren are attempting to hit on two of the undead girls from the Stone Age by the pool.

MIKE

So you girls trying to shed those furs and get a little wet?

REN

We're not talking about the pool BT dubs.

Tiffany and Dora approach. Mike notices.

MIKE

Yo bro, we got Tiffany Camden and Dora Mendez walking towards us!

The boys turn to face the popular, alive girls.

TIFFANY

This is quite the party your friend is throwing.

DORA

There is so many people I don't know and I hate it.

MIKE

You know us don't you?

DORA

Lucky us.

Carly walks in a Teletubbies costume.

CARLY

Hey guys...

TIFFANY

You get us costumes.

CARLY

Yeah, here.

She grabbed a dinosaur and shark costumes.

DORA

What the fuck are these Carly?

CARLY

Sorry, Buddy flirted with me and I panicked.

REN

Wait, Buddy Russo flirted with you?

CARLY

Like yeah he was like talking about
being friends and moving like way
too fast.

REN

Yup, that's Buddy for you.

MIKE

Friendship man, that kid fucking
loves friendship.

Smiley disguised as Joan comes with beers.

SMILEY

You kiddos want some beeros?

MIKE

Ah hell, I mean heck yeah Mrs. R.

They all grab a few beers and crack them while thanking "Mrs
R" before Smiley leaves to attend to more guests.

TIFFANY

(to Carly)

I would marry into this family if I
were you.

Buddy shows up.

BUDDY

Hey guys, I know it looks like my
mother is handing out beers, but
it's not what it looks like. If you
took one to be polite, I
understand, just set it down and
don't drink it.

Ren has downed his beer.

REN

(burps)

Set what down?

Buddy looks around at all the kids drinking.

BUDDY

Oh no, we're all gonna get in big
trouble!

TIFFANY

So, we're already skipping school.
If you're gonna be a bad boy Buddy
Russo...

She cracks her beer.

TIFFANY (CONT'D)
You might as well go all the way
with it.

BUDDY
(blushing)
I'm not a bad boy. Wait?

Buddy shakes his head to snap himself out of it and turns to Ren and Mike.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
You guys didn't tell me that today
was a school day!

MIKE
Buddy, you acted like you didn't
care.

BUDDY
Well I didn't know. We gotta get
everyone to school fast before we
all get in trouble.

Everyone but Buddy and Carly laugh.

DORA
Oh no, you're serious.

LOGAN (O.S.)
Buddy!

BUDDY
Uh oh.

Buddy turns to see his siblings standing in the doorway.

BUDDY (CONT'D)
Big bro, you're back from the field
trip early.

LOGAN
You think you can just throw
parties with all your little rug
rat friends and not have us get
pissed.

BUDDY
Well, I mean, you guys did this all
the time when you were my age.

APRIL

Buddy it's not about that. Mom is drinking again and you're enabling her.

BUDDY

What!

Smiley comes out in disguise with more drinks.

SMILEY

Oh the failed first born and the wonder twins. This will be fun.

LOGAN

Scram you little shits. Party's over!

Logan tries to scatter a group of undead kids, but is felled by them like a group of hyenas taking down an elephant.

LOGAN (CONT'D)

What? What the fuck! No, wait help! Help, help, guys, I need help!

Buddy looks on in horror.

BUDDY

Smiley, look what you caused!

SMILEY

Oh Buddy, I'll just wipe their minds at the end of all this.

BUDDY

No Smiley, you can't just keep wiping people's minds whenever it's convenient for you.

SMILEY

I think you're gonna change your tune real fast here.

JOAN (O.S.)

Buddy B. Russo!

Everyone turns to see Joan and Frank looking mad. Joan's drunken rage turns to confusion upon seeing herself.

JOAN (CONT'D)

Who are you bitch!

FRANK

Ok maybe I have cheated. I didn't know there were two of you Joan.

SMILEY

Buddy, I think it's time to show everyone the light.

BUDDY

I just... I don't... oh brother.

ROBBI

Uhh who's this Doppelgänger of mom?

SMILEY

I'm actually not your mom.

Smiley changes into his true form, much to everyone's horror.

SMILEY (CONT'D)

I'm Smiley the clown. You all thought I was just Buddy's imaginary friend, but I'm real hahah!

TIFFANY

What the fuck!

MIKE

The Russos are wild bro.

CARLY

Are you going to eat all of us!

SMILEY

No, but I'm gonna wipe all your minds for Buddy's sake. He's a very special boy who will one day rule you all. Until then though...

Smiley opens his mouth and spits out an orb of light. It transfixed everyone but Buddy and the pets.

BUDDY

Oh Smiley, I hate when you wipe everyone's minds! It's such a lazy thing to do.

SMILEY

You wanna explain to them that you're the Chosen Anti-Christ, then be my guest.

BUDDY

I just wanted to have a normal birthday.

SMILEY

I know Buddy, but you're getting to that age where things are going to start changing for you.

BUDDY

I don't want things to change.

SMILEY

Well Buddy, I think there is someone you should talk to about that.

Smiley steps aside and Muggsbee enters.

BUDDY

Muggsbee, you're better again!

MUGGSBEE

Yes I am Buddy. But not because of modern medicine. This demon had me brought back to life.

BUDDY

He does that sometimes.

Goldie leans over to Panther.

GOLDIE

Wait, has Buddy been able to hear us this entire time?

PANTHER

Oh no, I've have done so much shit talking in front of that boy.

MUGGSBEE

Buddy, life is always changing and you and I both know you can't run from getting older.

BUDDY

I know but it's just so much simpler being a kid with an imaginary friend than a young man with a demon.

MUGGSBEE

Oh Buddy, you're only 12. You're still but a child and you have so much left to learn. It's ok to be scared and it's ok to still want to be your true self.

BUDDY

But everyone around me is-

MUGGSBEE

Turing into assholes.

BUDDY

Your words, not mine Muggsbee.

MUGGSBEE

Muggsbee is always here to speak the truth child.

BUDDY

That you are... You're getting old Muggsbee. It took demon magic to bring ya back. I'm afraid what we'll need to do next time.

MUGGSBEE

I feel a piece of my soul is lost every time I return from the void.

BUDDY

Maybe it's time to let you go.

MUGGSBEE

I think it is, but that isn't my choice...

BUDDY

No medical bill too big for you Muggsbee.

MUGGSBEE

But there are costs that are too much for even me to bear Buddy. I can't keep doing this. Boochooy!

(an old dog bark)

I ask you...let them forget me.

BUDDY

But Muggsbee!

MUGGSBEE

Your family Buddy, I love them and they love me, but their love, it can be toxic. I want to rest in peace Buddy. If your family won't let me, then please, will you?

A tear streams down Muggsbee's face.

BUDDY

(crying)

I'm gonna miss ya Muggsbee.

MUGGSBEE

I will too my little Buddy Boy. I will too...

The two hug as the orb of light envelopes the screen.

FADE TO: WHITE

INT. BUDDY'S ROOM - DAY

Buddy stands at his window sill. He watched all the people leave. Smiley pops out from behind him.

SMILEY

So, what did you learn today Buddy?

BUDDY

Not much really. I'm just kinda sad now.

SMILEY

Yup, that's growing up for ya Buddy.

BUDDY

What happened to all those kids you ate?

SMILEY

I mixed them among the regular children. They are just regular kiddos now.

BUDDY

Well that's good. They'll be able to grow up in a much safer and kinder world than the one they knew before.

Smiley bursts into laughter.

SMILEY

You got a lot to learn Buddy.
Anyways, you better get your shit
together, because I may have wiped
their memories, but that doesn't
stop today from being a school day.

BUDDY

Oh shucks!

Buddy scrambles to get ready.

INT. RUSSO HOME - DAY

Buddy gets ready along side his bickering, dysfunctional
family who do not recollect the events of the day.

BUDDY (V.O)

Getting older means realizing the
real world can be pretty darn
confusing sometimes, and folks
don't always act the way you expect
'em to. There's no instruction
manual for growing up, that's for
sure. But, you know what? That's
okay. 'Cause even though the real
world can be a bit of a head-
scratcher, it's also full of
surprises and adventures. You get
to meet all sorts of folks, make
new friend and maybe even, forgive
some old ones...

Smiley turns into Buddy's backpack which he hesitantly puts
on.

BUDDY (V.O) (CONT'D)

and love thy family.

Everyone stops their bickering once they all simultaneously
get a notification on their phones.

RUSSOS

Happy birthday Buddy!

The End.