

APPLEVILLE

"Pilot"

Amanda Verwey

1 EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - APPLEVILLE, WISCONSIN - DUSK 1

A BLACK MERCEDES G-CLASS SUV, overstuffed with luggage, cuts across a technicolor sunset.

2 INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS 2

Pan through the SUV to show each member of the MAUFF FAMILY somberly staring out of their respective windows.

Driver's seat is JACKSON MAUFF, 59. Johnny Depp parody complete with goatee and oversized fedora.

Passenger seat is GINA MAUFF, 41. Commes Des Garcon-clad Latina Bebe Neuwirth.

In the back - ERIK MAUFF, 14. A twerp outfitted like Justin Bieber.

And we land on ZOE MAUFF, 16. Nouveau Cher Horvitz/Lady Gaga femme-fatal monster. Black lipstick and long green hair in a high ponytail. Sponge Bob Moschino T-shirt. Heart-shaped sunglasses. The works.

They pass a 'Welcome to Appleville' sign. Zoe grabs her camera and leans out the window.

3 EXT. RURAL HIGHWAY - CONTINUOUS 3

A prairie.

A factory.

A Walmart.

Farmland with cows.

Kids skateboarding outside a 7-11.

An Outback Steak House.

A toppling barn.

A windowless amphitheater with marquee reading "JESUS CAN SAVE YOU RIGHT HERE. TODAY."

It's the contrasting beauty particular to Midwestern cities with an unemployment rate above ten percent.

They turn into a labyrinth subdivision with row upon row of indistinguishable homes and park.

The family stands in disbelief looking at their new two-story-vinyl-siding-beige monstrosity.

4 INT. MAUFF HOME - CONTINUOUS 4

The Mauffs enter as if wading through water. Slow and cautious.

The decor is shabby chic country craft. Floral wall paper. Wicker. Distressed wood furniture. Pastels.

GINA
Oh my god, Jackson.

ZOE
Really, Dad?

JACKSON
Ok, ok. I see that we all have unfulfilled expectations here.

Gina picks up and examines a porcelain teddy bear figurine.

GINA
I knew a home furnished by a Midwestern university would be dreary but this is BEYOND.

5 INT. MAUFF HOME - DINING ROOM - EVENING 5

The Mauffs eat dinner with an icy quiet.

JACKSON
Lets just talk about it then.

He waits in silence.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
I'll start. Yes, I'm disappointed with the house. I was imagining a log cabin in the woods where I would live out some sort of latent Thoreau fantasy - but instead I'm in this bizarre suburban box aching from the decor as much as the rest of you.

GINA
When I imagined university housing I thought, you know, perfect. Some haunted Victorian dollhouse near campus will be charming. This -

(MORE)

GINA (CONT'D)
(gestures around the room)
hadn't occurred to me.

More silence.

JACKSON
Do you all have any thoughts?

Zoe bursts into tears and runs out of the room.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Alright, well, I tried.

Jackson continues eating. Gina tries to fight back tears.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
Not you too.

The tears flow.

GINA
I think this job is a great move for you, Jackson. I really do. The tenure offer was certainly one you couldn't pass up - but you need to be sensitive to the fact that the rest of us uprooted our *LIVES* and *ARTISTIC CAREERS* to join you on this journey. Zoe's website was starting to take off and -

JACKSON
That ridiculous site is just pictures of herself accompanied by indecipherable acronyms.

GINA
She was featured in The Cut, so New York Magazine begs to differ. And I was really on the precipice of something creatively significant as well.

JACKSON
You can endlessly rework vaguely figurative monoprints here just as well as you could in New York.

GINA
How dare you! That project is my Achilles heel!

Gina throws down her napkin and storms out of the room.

Jackson notices Erik sitting quietly.

JACKSON

At least you're taking this like a champ, my boy.

Erik stares blankly at Jackson for a beat then throws up a little down the front of his shirt.

6

INT. ZOE'S NEW BEDROOM - EVENING

6

Zoe sits at a desk in her very pastel pink new bedroom. Canopy bed. Ballet slipper wallpaper. Lamps in the shape of horses. Her bright green hair looks otherworldly in the setting.

She Skypes a group of her New York club kid tween friends. They're piled on a bed licking lollipops and talking over each other. It's all vinyl, faux fur, platforms and glitter.

DWAYNE

...And I was like, Connie, I can not even BELIEVE you're side-eyeing in those tired Zara overalls...

MEGAN

(monotone drawl)
Waaaitt, are people out there, like, missing teeth?

OFELIA

Can I wear my lace-up short-shorts to Nix Club with the rainbow stitched Doc Martins?

ZOE

Nice shade, probably, and no wear your clogs. Oh my God, you guys! I already miss you SO MUCH! I can't even deal.

A chorus of adoration begins over Zoe's sentimental outburst.

DWAYNE

We love you too!

MEGAN

You're the best!

OFELIA

It's not the same without you!

Another TEENAGE BOY enters the bedroom in an outfit so flamboyant it nears drag.

TEENAGE BOY

Hey! If we leave now we can catch
the last B train to Brooklyn!

Everyone forgets about Zoe as they rush to the train. The screen goes blank. She looks around at her new bedroom depressed.

7 EXT. APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY 7

It's a huge complex surrounded by prairie land. Large football field. Flag flapping. Big parking lot. Students are in front chatting, wearing letterman jackets, on their way to class, goofing off. All American.

Gina pulls the SUV to the curb.

8 INT. SUV - CONTINUOUS 8

Zoe and Erik don't get out. They stare through the window.

GINA

Go on! I don't want you to be late
on the first day.

ZOE

I CAN'T EVEN. It looks like the
fifties out there.

Erik's breath quickens.

ERIK

I feel like I'm having a heart
attack. Or maybe drowning.

He clutches his chest.

ERIK (CONT'D)

I'm having a heart attack while
drowning.

GINA

Erik, you need to calm down.

Erik's breathing becomes heaving.

GINA (CONT'D)

Enough! I know you two can handle
this. Everybody out!

9 EXT. APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS 9

As Zoe and Erik step out of the car everything goes slow motion.

Zoe wears a mini-dress and combat boots. Her green hair is up in a high ponytail and her make-up is perfect cat eyes.

Erik has on drop-crotch leather shorts and a pair of fresh white sneakers. His hair is gelled to gravity-defying heights.

Other students stare and part ways as they pass. Reaction ranges from stunned to snickering.

10 INT. APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS 10

Zoe and Erik walk through the front door together. Students continue reacting. Surprise. Whispering. Laughing.

They shoot each other a look before parting ways and heading to their first class.

11 EXT. DOWNTOWN APPLEVILLE - DAY 11

Gina explores the small Downtown Appleville strip wearing an oversized black blazer, flooded trousers and stilettos.

She passes surviving Mom & Pop shops along with storefronts that look long boarded.

12 INT. APPLEVILLE BOOK SHOP - DAY 12

Gina speaks to an ELDERLY FEMALE CLERK in a dusty book shop.

GINA

Hi, I was looking to pick up a few magazines but can only seem to find those religious periodicals in the back.

ELDERLY CLERK

That's our magazine section. We don't typically carry books of a secular nature.

GINA

But your sign just says "Book Shop" - not "Christian Book Shop"...

ELDERLY CLERK
Are these not books?

13 INT. "ASIAN FOOD" TO-GO RESTAURANT - DAY 13

Gina stands next to a large handwritten 'ASIAN FOOD TO-GO' sign.

GINA
Do you specialize in a particular region or is this more of a pan-asian thing?

CAUCASIAN CLERK
Yeah, we use a pan - but in the orient they call it a wok.

14 INT. SMALL GROCERY STORE - DAY 14

Gina approaches a young female HICK CLERK. Hick Clerk is indescribably plain despite being heavily made-over and bejeweled.

HICK CLERK
Why, don't you look sassy! I sure like your outfit.

GINA
Thank you.

HICK CLERK
I always wanna dress funky too but I don't know where to get stuff like that.

Awkward beat.

GINA
There are a few things on my shopping list I can't seem to locate. Would you mind pointing me in the right direction?

HICK WOMAN
Shoot.

GINA
Almond milk.

HICK WOMAN
Whattya mean?

GINA
(hesitates - then)
Seaweed?

HICK WOMAN
The beach is 175 miles east.

GINA
Unscented detergent?

HICK WOMAN
Don't carry it. Lemme ask you
something - does that give your
clothes like, a wet dog smell?

GINA
Um... no...

Gina returns to the list. Her lower lip quivers.

GINA (CONT'D)
...Avocados?

HICK WOMAN
We don't got a lot of exotic foods,
ma'am.

SMASH CUT:

15 INT. HARDWARE STORE - DAY 15

GINA
Sledge hammer?

CLERK
Aisle 7.

16 INT. APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - CHEMISTRY CLASS - DAY 16

CHEMISTRY TEACHER
Alright, for today's experiment
we're going to break off into
groups of three. Lisa, please pass
out worksheets...

Zoe looks around for a pair to join. She approaches two
beautiful blonde girls in preppy clothes. STACEY, 15, is
clearly queen bee.

ZOE
Hi. Do you mind if I join your
group?

STACEY
 Seriously?

ZOE
 Yeah...?

Stacey gives her a once-over.

STACEY
 Um, no. I'm freaked just looking at
 you.
 (turning away)
 Hey! James!

Stacey waves over a neanderthal-looking teenage boy in a
 letterman's jacket.

Zoe resumes her search.

RACHEL (O.S.)
 You can join our group.

RACHEL, 15 and BERNIE, 16 - a couple of small town goth girls
 - sit nearby.

Rachel has long stringy hair parted down the middle, wears an
 oversized black T-shirt, real dog collar and light-wash
 flared jeans. Bernie is overweight and masculine, wearing a
 Slipknot T-shirt and JNCOs.

RACHEL (CONT'D)
 I'm Rachel and this is Bernadette.

BERNIE
 (reaching out her hand)
 Everyone calls me Bernie. Don't
 worry about Stacey, she's just like
 that.

ZOE
 I'm Zoe.
 (to Bernie)
 I like your pants.

BERNIE
 Thanks, they were my Dad's.

Pan down a line of students in gym clothes. End on Erik
 dressed in impractical, avant garde workout gear.

Reveal that we have been seeing from the GYM TEACHER's POV.
He stops at Erik.

GYM TEACHER
What're you wear'n, boy?

Erik looks afraid. His voice comes out a squeak.

ERIK
Opening Ceremony?

A group of CUTE GIRLS snicker.

18

INT. GYMNASIUM - LATER

18

A whistle blows indicating the beginning of Dodge Ball. The group of CUTE GIRLS lock arms and stand still in front. They are all struck with dodge balls and "out" immediately.

Erik watches confused as they happily retreat to the sidelines together.

A dodge ball hits him HARD in the side of the head.

A jock punks him on his way out.

He sits near the girls.

GIRL ONE
(to Erik)
Hey. Come here.

Erik moves closer. They all look at him with awe.

ERIK
Why do you guys do that?

GIRL ONE
We hate Dodge Ball.

GIRL TWO
We would rather sit out and talk.

GIRL THREE
Where are you from?

GIRL ONE
Are your sweatpants made of tarp?

GIRL FOUR
What's Opening Ceremony?

On Erik- overwhelmed.

19

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

19

Rachel and Bernie go down the food line accepting every piece of slop and meat offered. Zoe follows with a grimace and rejects everything but fruit and salad.

They enter the dining area and Zoe spots Erik sitting at a table with all the cute girls. She looks confused.

ZOE

(to Bernie and Rachel)

I'm gunna say hi to my brother.

As she walks over to the table Erik tells a story and gesticulates wildly. The girls giggle.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Hey, Erik. How are you pulling *this* off?

Erik looks nervous. He gets up and tries to shepherd Zoe away.

GIRL ONE

(to Erik)

Is this your sister?

(to Zoe)

Oh my god - we LOVE your brother. We've always wanted a gay guy friend and he's PERFECT!

ZOE

(laughing)

A what?!?!

ERIK

Hahaha Zoe, you're so funny! Hahaha We'll be right back!

Erik moves them aside.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Okay, they think I'm gay.

ZOE

Why do they think that?

ERIK

I dunno, they just assumed. Play along. I wanna get invited to a slumber party.

ZOE

Ew, no way perv. I'm blowing you up.

ERIK

No no no, please please please.

Erik looks at Zoe gravely.

ERIK (CONT'D)

Please let me have this.

Zoe gives him an amused "I guess so" look.

20

EXT. APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - AFTERNOON

20

Rachel, Bernie and Zoe lay in the prairie after school. A smattering of burn-outs around them suggests this is a hang-out spot for less socially fortunate students.

In the distance other kids board buses or cars to head home.

RACHEL

(to Zoe)

I know who you are.

Bernie and Zoe look confused.

RACHEL (CONT'D)

I mean, I know your website, SPACE RAT. I commented on your video about moving to Appleville. Just a dumb welcome letter. I'm sure you get a million comments so -

ZOE

Oh my god - are you 666RACHEL666?

RACHEL

Yeah!

ZOE

I saw the letter! Your tumblr is sick.

Rachel tries not to smile as big as she wants to.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Alright, what is there to do around here? I don't feel like going home yet.

BERNIE

You're look'n at it.

RACHEL

I know where to take you.

21 INT. HUGE THRIFT STORE - LATER

21

Zoe photographs a panoramic view of a warehouse-sized thrift store with her dirty Hello Kitty-case covered phone. Racks as far as the eye can see. Big disorganized bins full of fabric. A large sign that says "ALL CLOTHES 59 CENTS".

ZOE

This is amazing.

Rachel and Bernie smile at a job well done.

22 INT. MAUFF HOME - LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON

22

Jackson sits on the couch reading. Gina is in safety goggles, a kerchief and black satin jumpsuit. She holds a sledge hammer next to a partially knocked down wall.

Zoe enters with Rachel and Bernie. Each girl is carrying a garbage bag full of thrift clothes.

ZOE

Hey - these are my new friends
Bernie and Rachel. We're gunna do a
photoshoot for Space Rat in the
backyard.

GINA

Wonderful! I'll bring out snacks in
a little while.

The girls exit and Gina takes a crack at the wall with the sledge hammer.

Jackson begins speaking to her without looking up from his book.

JACKSON

Since the college owns this home,
you realize we'll be paying out the
nose for each one of these
renovations when the time comes,
don't you?

GINA

Without an open floor plan I feel like I'm suffocating. Do you want me to suffocate? Is that what you want?

JACKSON

(still reading)
As you were, my darling.

Gina swings the sledge hammer again.

23

EXT. BACKYARD - LAPTOP SCREEN - LATER

23

A video scored with DU HAST by RAMMSTEIN plays. Words SPACE RAT - VINTAGE - NOW FOR SALE flash across the screen interchanging with photos of Bernie, Zoe, and Rachel modeling avant-garde outfits. Zoe has given them a high-fashion makeover and they look great, albeit slightly racy.

Erik mans the computer as the girls inspect over his shoulder.

ZOE

This looks amazing, Erik! You're THE BEST intern ever!

ERIK

My title is Executive Producer of Digital Media and you know that.

Gina enters the backyard carrying a plate of artfully arranged snacks.

GINA

Stop bickering! I have snacks! It's the last of our New York imports so savor them.

She puts down the plate. Kale chips. Green juice. Unrecognizable dried fruit. Zoe and Erik dive in but Rachel and Bernie hesitate.

ZOE

(to Erik)
Show Mom the pictures.

Gina looks at the computer while Erik scrolls through seemingly endless photos of the girls in different looks.

GINA

Oh, these are marvelous! What a transformation! Bernie, you have real Isabella Rossellini potential.

Bernie looks lost.

GINA (CONT'D)

Isabella Rossellini? Model turned actress? Blue Velvet? Green Porno?

Even more lost.

GINA (CONT'D)

Oh, nevermind - look it up, dear...

(beat)

Alright, I'll leave you little geniuses to it. If anyone has a sweet tooth there's blood orange sorbet and leftover budino in the fridge. Might be a little runny from traveling in the cooler.

24

INT. MAUFF HOME - NEXT DAY

24

Gina reclines on the couch reading Vogue. The house is still in disarray from her "renovations".

Zoe bursts through the door, drops her vinyl smiley face backpack and flops down on a chair across from Gina.

GINA

What are you doing home?

ZOE

I'm suspended.

GINA

Excuse me?

ZOE

The blog post of Rachel, Bernie and I started circulating around school - thanks, Erik - and some teachers saw it and suspended us for the week.

GINA

On what grounds?!

ZOE

On the grounds that I was
"distributing pornographic
material."

GINA

Oh, no no no no no. Wait here and
don't get too comfortable. You
won't be getting this vacation so
easily.

25 INT. APPLEVILLE HIGHSCHOOL - DAY 25

Gina storms the hall in a particularly witchy, heavily
knotted Comme Des Garcons sweater dress.

Her gaze begins to wander and she notices more things that
disturb her:

An army recruiter on school grounds.

A Right to Life club.

Christian Prayer Circle.

Junior NRA Club.

At the end of the hall she enters a door labeled PRINCIPAL
AKERMAN.

26 INT. PRINCIPAL AKERMAN'S OFFICE - CONTINUOUS 26

Gina enters the room without knocking.

GINA

I'm here to discuss my daughter's
suspension -

PRINCIPAL AKERMAN

I've gathered as much. Please, have
a seat. Zoe's pornographic website
is completely unacceptable and
anymore activity that disrupts
school decorum will result in full
expulsion.

GINA

Space Rat is by no means
pornographic.

PRINCIPAL AKERMAN

Oh really? Shall I pull up the photo of Bernadette Wilson posing with prophylactics pinned to her shirt?

GINA

Oh, that's a reference to TLC. How old are you Principal Akerman? Surely you remember.

PRINCIPAL AKERMAN

I certainly do not.

GINA

Well, frankly, after walking the halls of this school Zoe's suspension is just the tip of the iceberg. An army recruiter on school grounds? A Right for Life club? Abstinence meetings? The Scandinavian Heritage Club? What is that even? Some sort of covert Klan meeting?

PRINCIPAL AKERMAN

They mostly just bake.

GINA

My point is the conservative agenda of this school is astonishing.

PRINCIPAL AKERMAN

If you have so many criticisms about the way things are run I encourage you to get involved. There is a PTA meeting tomorrow afternoon. Perhaps if you took an active interest in school life your voice would carry a bit more weight here.

GINA

Fine, I'll attend. And as for Zoe?

PRINCIPAL AKERMAN

Suspension lifted. Consider this her first warning.

(beat)

Welcome to Appleville, Mrs. Mauff.

Gina exits the office in a huff. Principal Akerman shifts papers on his desk and returns to work for a beat.

MABEL (O.S.)
Principal Akerman, is Bernie's
suspension lifted too?

Reveal a forgotten MABEL, 42, sitting beside Gina's now vacant chair. She wears a baby blue sweatshirt that appears to have doilies sewn all over it, holds a crumpled Kleenex and is practically whimpering.

PRINCIPAL AKERMAN
Yes, Mabel. Bernie may return to
school tomorrow.

Mabel looks up towards the ceiling.

MABEL
(whispering)
Thank you, Jesus.

27 INT. HALLS OF APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

27

Stacey sidles up next to Zoe as she exchanges books in her locker.

STACEY
Hey.

ZOE
Hey?

STACEY
Heard you were suspended.

ZOE
Yeah.

STACEY
So lame.

ZOE
It was, but I'm back now.

STACEY
Totally.

ZOE
(beat)
So... What's up?

STACEY
I saw your website. Pretty cool.

ZOE

Thanks.

STACEY

Do you really know Willow Smith?

ZOE

Yeah. I mean peripherally, but yeah.

STACEY

That's crazy.

ZOE

I guess...

STACEY

What are you doing tonight?

ZOE

Going to the movies with Bernie and Rachel, why?

STACEY

Ditch that. Come over to my house. 9pm. My parents are up north so I'm having a party.

ZOE

Ok, for sure, thanks! Wait, this isn't some kinda fake 'Carrie' invite, is it?

STACEY

Ew, no, I hated that movie. Who can be scared by the chick from Neighbors Two?

ZOE

Sissy Spacek was in Neighbors Two?

28

INT. BERNIE'S CAR - NIGHT

28

Zoe, Erik, Rachel and Bernie are parked outside the largest house in the suburb. A party can be seen raging through the windows.

BERNIE

Are we really doing this?

ZOE

What's the big deal?

BERNIE

Stacey has hated me since the fourth grade. She *specifically* invited us?

ZOE

Yeah.

BERNIE

Really?

ZOE

It was implied.

BERNIE

That's it! I'm out!

RACHEL

I still wanna go. I haven't been invited to a party since elementary school.

ZOE

Yes!

Erik slaps Bernie on the back.

ERIK

Looks like you're outvoted, buddy!
Lets do this.

Bernie reluctantly acquiesces and they exit the car.

29

INT. STACEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

29

When our crew enters Stacey spots them immediately. She looks upset but plasters on a big fake smile as she approaches.

STACEY

Hiiii! Zoe, so glad you could make it! Can I talk to you over here for a minute?

Stacey pulls Zoe into a nearby hallway.

STACEY (CONT'D)

Hey, you've gotta get Rachel and Bernie out of here. I said you could come, not them.

ZOE

This party doesn't look particularly exclusive to me.

STACEY

Well, it is, and the guest list
doesn't have those lesbos on it.

ZOE

No lesbos but you're fine with Gay
Erik?

Cut to Erik talking to a group of cute girls. His "gay" hand
gestures are so exaggerated it looks like voguing.

STACEY

That's different. Now, do you want
to tell them to leave or should I?

ZOE

No, I got it.

30 INT. STACEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

30

Zoe approaches Bernie and Rachel shifting awkwardly in a
corner.

ZOE

Do you mind if we leave? I'm not
really feeling this party.

BERNIE

Yes! OH MY GOD, THANK YOU!

RACHEL

Lets stay a few more minutes. We've
got to at least try.

Stacey catches Zoe's eye. She looks pissed and thumbs toward
the door. Bernie notices this.

BERNIE

She's kicking us out, isn't she?

ZOE

What? No! I don't know what she's
tripping about. I'm down to stay a
little longer but let's take a cue
from Erik and get out of the
sidelines.

Erik stands on a table in the middle of everything now
literally voguing. His outfit has magically acquired a
feather boa and tiny hat. Kids surround him chanting, "GAY
ERIK! GAY ERIK! GAY ERIK!"

Rachel and Bernie follow Zoe to the dance floor. They try to mimic her dance moves but only produce modest arrhythmic undulations.

The music stops with ear-piercing feedback.

Stacey stands holding an unplugged cord beside a bewildered DJ.

ZOE (CONT'D)

Um... What's up?

STACEY

You tell me. I'm just waiting for you to put a leash on your dogs and take a walk.

A smattering of giggles in an otherwise silent room.

ZOE

If that's the vibe here then gladly.

Zoe turns to leave but Rachel and Bernie are already out the door.

31 EXT. STACEY'S HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

31

Bernie starts the car as Rachel slides into the passenger seat.

ZOE

Hey! Wait up!

BERNIE

Why don't you just stay?

ZOE

I wanna come with you.

Zoe tries to get in but the doors are locked.

BERNIE

We're cool on our own. Thanks.

ZOE

But I didn't do anything!

RACHEL

You tricked us into being publicly humiliated for like, the millionth time.

BERNIE

Yeah, I don't know what teen movie you're living in but some makeover montage isn't going to fix a lifetime of being treated like garbage.

Bernie floors it.

ZOE

Wait!!!

Stacey and a small group of cool kids gather at the door. Zoey walks across the lawn to meet them.

STACEY

You can come back now. Thanks for taking out the trash.

Stacey hands her a beer. Zoe smiles wide.

ZOE

You're welcome.

Zoe pours the beer over Stacey's head. The surrounding crowd is more laughing than concern.

Zoe walks away and doesn't look back.

32

INT. APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - PTA MEETING - DAY

32

Folding chairs are set up in a circle. Conservative moms inhabit them, each with their own unique take on the Kate Gosselin hairdo. We pan the circle and stop at Gina and Jackson looking hideously out of place.

LAVERNE stands and begins speaking to the group.

LAVERNE

Hello! For all you new-comers I'm Laverne Williams, chair of the PTA and local Junior League, respectively. Principal Akerman informed me that Gina Mauff would like to air out some, um, issues she's having with our extracurricular programs, but before we get to that I'd like to invite Mabel to lead us in opening prayer.

Everyone bows their head, folds their hands and closes their eyes. Gina and Jackson are the only ones left upright, wide-eyed and confused.

MABEL

Dear Heavenly Father, we would like to give thanks for all the glorious gifts we have received. Thank you for keeping us fed, clothed and healthy. Thank you for protecting our American freedom and the sanctity of Christian life. And most of all, thank you for our beautiful babies. May they grow up and walk with you on the path to righteousness. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

WHOLE ROOM

Amen.

LAVERNE

That's wonderful. Thank you, Mabel. Gina, the floor is yours.

Gina is stunned. All the women look to her. Jackson interrupts.

JACKSON

I just want to say, had I known this was a women's meeting I wouldn't have intruded. It's not my intention to 'take up space' with my masculinity, as they say --

LAVERNE

It's quite alright. All are welcome. Gina, please continue.

GINA

Ok. Mabel, I appreciate what you just did, but it's a perfect example of what I'm finding problematic here in Appleville. I believe that a public school should at the very least hold up a separation of church and state.

MABEL

(under her breath)
You would say that...

GINA

Pardon?

MABEL

I said, I'm not surprised that this is coming from a *Satanist* like you.

GINA

Excuse me, I am not a Satanist, although social liberalism and justice are held as tenants of The Church of Satan which resonates with me FAR MORE than a lot of the hateful drivel being peddled around here.

JACKSON

(whispers)

Easy, Gina.

MABEL

Did you hear that?! She just admitted it!

LAVERNE

Alright, Mabel, calm down. Gina, what are you proposing?

GINA

All religious clubs be banned from school grounds.

The PTA erupts in opposition.

LAVERNE

Ladies, ladies. Let's have a little order here.

(beat - everyone settles)

As you can see, your suggestion is out of the question. But how about this - I'll make you the chair of... *Alternative Programs* so you can be sure that *other students* feel comfortable. How's that sound, huh?

Gina realizes she's being pandered to but defiantly takes on the challenge.

GINA

Yes, fine. I accept.

LAVERNE

Wonderful! Ok, our next order of business, The Creationist Bake Sale!

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EXT. PRARIE NEXT TO SCHOOL - LATER

33

Bernie and Rachel lay in the grass reading comics. Zoe approaches cautiously.

ZOE

Hey. Haven't seen you guys all day.
Not trying to stalk but took a
guess you'd be here.

BERNIE

Genius guess. You found a couple of
losers hanging out in the only
place they ever hang out.

ZOE

I'm so sorry about yesterday. Here.

Zoe hands them an Ipad.

ZOE (CONT'D)

I wrote something for you.

They start reading a Space Rat blog post entitled "*Beauty and The Basic: My First and Last All American Kegger.*" The header image is a Terry Richardson-esque portrait of Rachel and Bernie sitting in the prairie. Their acne, Marilyn Manson/Pink Floyd shirts (respectively), vans and ragged jeans clash perfectly with the picturesque nature surrounding them.

RACHEL

Is this really on Space Rat?

BERNIE

Did you really spill beer on her?!

ZOE

Yes and yes. I wrote this to sort
of, apologize *and* introduce you
guys. Now that we're doing the
vintage store I seriously need help
with the website. Would you
consider being my first like,
Midwest corespondents?

Bernie and Rachel are softened by this. They seem touched.

BERNIE

Yeah, that sounds cool.

RACHEL

Yeah. Definitely.

(beat)

(MORE)

RACHEL (CONT'D)

And I know that wasn't your fault
last night. Sorry I was so mad.

Just as things are getting sentimental, the door to the school swings open and Stacey exits with her ANGRY FATHER leading her by the arm. As they pass she notices Zoe.

STACEY

Thanks a lot, Zoe. Your freak blog just got me suspended. You're never coming to another party again!

ANGRY FATHER

Because that's the last time you'll ever have a party. Come on.

Zoe smiles and shrugs.

ZOE

Oops.

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INT. APPLEVILLE HIGH SCHOOL - HALL - CONTINUOUS

34

Zoe reads a sign on the classroom door: PTA MEETING IN PROGRESS. PLEASE WAIT FOR YOUR MOTHERS OUTSIDE.

Kids hang out on the floor. Erik is already there entertaining his all-girl fan club.

The door opens. Gina and Jackson are the first to exit.

GINA

Lets get out of here.

Zoe and Erik follow down the hall. A cute girl yells after them.

CUTE GIRL

Bye, Gay Erik!

Jackson stops and smiles wide as if he's won a bet.

JACKSON

See, Gina! I told you so. Nothing to worry about.

Gina turns to Erik. Her eyes fill with tears. Her face is pure hope and pride.

GINA

You're gay?

She hugs him tightly.

GINA (CONT'D)

I always knew it.

(beat)

And now my first project can be the
Gay Straight Alliance!

On Erik panicked, Zoe laughing.

END.