

Retro

An Original Screenplay
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

A two-story house with a wide front porch sits on a corner lot in small town America.

EXT. ACROSS THE STREET - DAY

Two kids on bikes stare at the house.

ASHLEY MARIE GAGE, 9 years old, wears pink shorts with a Barbie-themed tee-shirt. Wispy blonde hair held in a French braid, tied with a bow in the back. She straddles a pink bike next to --

DYLAN ROBERTS, 9, skinny boy, knobby knees, new Nikes.

DYLAN

My Dad says he smokes weeds.

ASHLEY

I'm going over there.

She crosses the street. Dylan drifts away.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ashley pedals up the front walk. She sets her bike on the kickstand and climbs the porch steps.

EXT. PORCH - DAY

The front door looms with beveled glass inserts.

Ashley presses the doorbell.

Off-screen, a deep-throated CHIME.

No answer.

EXT. HOUSE - DAY

Ashley pushes her bike around to the side yard.

EXT. BACKYARD FENCE - DAY

Narrow gaps in the fence reveal lush greenery. A thin wail of TINNY MUSIC wafts from the backyard.

Mid-fence, a knothole draws Ashley's attention.

EXT. KNOTHOLE - DAY

Ashley peers through the hole.

ASHLEY POV --

Lush greenery blocks the view. A thick, bent form shuffles back and forth, amid the foliage, like a bear digging grubs.

The bear-like body crouches, then jumps at the fence.

BEAR

Boo!

EXT. KNOTHOLE - DAY

Ashley blinks but doesn't move.

ASHLEY

Was that supposed to scare me, Mister?

ASHLEY POV --

The bearish body moves away from the fence.

EXT. KNOTHOLE - DAY

Ashley watches.

ASHLEY

Can I come in, Mister?

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Ashley parks her bike behind the fence in the alley.

ASHLEY

Can I come in, Mister?

She lifts the gate latch, and the gate swings open.

EXT. BACKYARD - DAY

Ashley steps into WONDERLAND.

A cedar walkway snakes between flowers, foliage and garden. Hanging baskets overflow with every color in the rainbow. Nearly ripe tomatoes weigh down dark green vines.

In a wicker basket, carrots repose like soldiers at attention.

Sitting on a bamboo mat, next to the basket, PETER (KOOCH) MURPHY, 58, wearing fading khaki shorts and a tank top sporting the faint logo, *FRODO LIVES*.

Dishwater blonde hair, shot with silver, hangs halfway down his back, tied in a pony tail with a piece of leather shoestring. Sparse beard covers cheeks puffed to whistle.

ASHLEY (O.S.)

Can I come in, Mister?

Kooch stares at her like she materialized from Alpha Centauri. He stands. Backs up a step.

She walks toward him.

KOOCH

Whoa.

Ashley freezes like she forgot to say, *Mother may I?*

KOOCH

Didn't your mother ever tell you not to talk to strangers?

Ash walks right up to him. Extends one hand.

ASHLEY

My name is Ashley Marie Gage.

She waits. Kooch looks at her hand. Slowly offers his.

Ashley grabs his hand and energetically shakes it.

ASHLEY

I know your name is Peter Murphy. I saw it on your mailbox. My grandma knew your mother and she said you were a good boy.

Ashley releases his hand, steps back and smiles.

KOOCH

(beat)

Call me, Kooch.

He sits next to the basket of carrots.

KOOCH

Carrot?

Ashley politely takes a carrot.

KOOCH

You live down the street?

She nods.

Kooch picks up the garden hose and sets the water to irrigate a cucumber patch.

KOOCH

What can I do for you, Miss Gage?

Ashley stares at a very large flower. She touches a petal with one finger. Stands up straight and faces Kooch.

ASHLEY
Miss Pritchard says hippies stopped
the war in Viet Nam.

Kooch moves the water hose a bit.

KOOCH
And who, pray tell, is Miss Pritchard?

ASHLEY
My teacher.

KOOCH
What grade?

ASHLEY
Fourth.

Kooch rests his chin in one hand and his elbow on his knee.

KOOCH
You study the Viet Nam War in fourth
grade?

ASHLEY
It's history.
(recites)
Those who don't know their history
are doomed to repeat it.

KOOCH
All too true.

Ashley looks him right in the eye.

ASHLEY
Will you come to show and tell?

Kooch snorts a laugh. Shakes his head, no.

ASHLEY
Please?

Kooch stares into big baby blues.

KOOCH
I think I hear your mother calling.

Ashley cocks her head to listen.

Kooch waves one hand at the back gate. Ashley looks at the
gate, back at Kooch. Sighs. Winds her way to the back fence.

ASHLEY
Thank-you for the carrot.

With a grand gesture, Kooch bows to her. Exit, Ashley. The back gate swings closed.

EXT. ALLEY - DAY

Ashley tosses the carrot into a dumpster. Climbs on her bike, and pedals away.

EXT. GARAGE - DAY

Early morning sun buffs a garage door as it slides open.

Kooch pushes a red Flight King bike hitched to a small trailer out of the garage. He wears jeans, tee-shirt and sandals. He closes the garage door and turns to see --

Ashley riding her bike into the driveway. She wears a pink striped crop top, white shorts and pink jellies.

ASHLEY

Hi.

Kooch stares at her, then up and down the street in what looks like a ghost town.

ASHLEY

Can I, may I come with you?

He pushes his bike to the end of the driveway.

KOOCH

Does your mother know where you are?

ASHLEY

Yes. Can I go?

KOOCH

This is still a free country where one person can make a difference.

ASHLEY

Really?

KOOCH

What?

ASHLEY

One person can make a difference?

KOOCH

Of course. A committed citizen can change the world.

Ashley peers at him. He points at her.

KOOCH

They should teach that in fourth grade.

ASHLEY

Can I come with you?

One look around, a *whatever* shrug, Kooch climbs on his bike.

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - DAY

Yellow sawhorses barricade two blocks of downtown.

Booths line the street. Homemade crafts, flowers and vegetables fill tables. PEOPLE stroll between booths, chatting, peering at goods, buying this and that.

Kooch glides to the end booth. Ashley stops next to him.

EXT. HAWTHORNE'S JAMS AND JELLIES BOOTH - DAY

ABIGAIL HAWTHORNE, a 73-year-old, elf of a woman, greets Kooch with a hug.

KOOCH

Good morning, Mrs. Hawthorne.

Mrs. Hawthorne peers around him at Ashley.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

Is this your granddaughter?

KOOCH

God, no!

ASHLEY

My name is Ashley Marie Gage.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

Pleased to meet you, Ashley.

Kooch lifts a brown bag out of his bike trailer.

Mrs. Hawthorne looks warily over her shoulder.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

Don't let old man Snyder see.

She blocks the view of the bag with her body as she takes it from Kooch and tucks it under the table in her booth.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

His tomatoes smell like manure.
Organic, he says.

She SNIFFS.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

P-U, says I.

Ashley giggles.

KOOCH

Well, there's organic in the literal sense and there's organic in the cosmic sense.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

That smell is cosmic. What will it be today?

Kooch rubs his chin while he browses the length of Mrs. Hawthorne's table.

KOOCH

Peach.

Mrs. Hawthorne smiles as she lifts a bagged jar of peach preserves from under her table.

Kooch places the bag in his trailer.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

Have a nice day, dear.

KOOCH

Back at you, Mrs. H.

MRS. HAWTHORNE

Nice to meet you, young lady.

ASHLEY

Thank you.

EXT. FARMER'S MARKET - DAY

Ashley follows Kooch through the Farmer's Market. Kooch stops at most booths and trades bags of tomatoes.

Midway through the market, a BALD MAN scoots across the street and grabs Kooch by the arm.

BALD MAN

Hey young fella, whadda ya think of this here vegetable?

KOOCH

Actually, Mr. Snyder, tomatoes are a fruit.

MR. SNYDER

Bah. That yer granddaughter?

KOOCH

No!

Mr. Snyder waves his tomato in Kooch's face.

MR. SNYDER

Organic's the only way to go.

And he stomps back to his booth across the street.

EXT. MEDITERRANEAN BREADS BOOTH - DAY

An ARAB MAN, ALI AMIN, leans over his booth arranging plastic wrapped loaves.

Kooch pushes his bike to the booth.

KOOCH

Good morning, Ali.

ALI AMIN

Greetings be upon you, Kooch.

Kooch lifts a straw basket holding a towel-wrapped bundle.

Ashley stops mid-street.

ALI AMIN

Would the young miss be -- ?

KOOCH

Neighbor girl.

ALI AMIN

Aah.

KOOCH

Here they are. Ripe and hot.

ALI AMIN

Very good. Thank you.

Kooch trades hot peppers for two loaves of flat bread. He gestures at Ashley.

KOOCH

Come meet Mr. Amin.

ASHLEY

No.

KOOCH

Pardon me?

ASHLEY

I won't talk to no dam raghead.

Startled, Kooch turns toward her.

KOOCH

Apologize.

Ashley glares from beside her pink bike.

KOOCH

Apologize to Mr. Amin.

ASHLEY

You're not the boss of me.

Ashley scowls. Head down, lower lip out. She jumps on her bike and flees.

Kooch turns back to Ali.

KOOCH

Ali, I'm sorry. I don't know what's up with that.

ALI AMIN

Children are a gift from God.

KOOCH

Except that one maybe.

ALI AMIN

What do they know, but what they are taught?

KOOCH

I suppose.

Ali shrugs.

ALI AMIN

A blessing, to teach such a treasure.

Kooch snorts a laugh. Looks at the Arab. Sees he's serious.

KOOCH

Right.

He tucks the bread in his trailer, gets on his bike.

KOOCH

Have a nice day, Ali.

ALI AMIN

Back at you, Kooch.

Ali smiles at his use of idiom. Kooch waves and rides away.

EXT. HART LAKE - DAY

A small holding reservoir glistens muddy blue.

Kooch reclines in a beach chair as he casts a fishing line into the water. He wears denim cut-offs and a faded tank top.

DR. ERNEST JORDAN (SLUG), 58, wearing Bermuda shorts, polo shirt and belt, digs a can of beer out of an ice chest. He moves as if every breath is articulated with great care.

KOOCH

What do you think is the greatest impact the 60s had on the country?

Slug flicks ice off his beer can.

SLUG

You know the seven words you couldn't say on TV?

KOOCH

Yeah.

SLUG

Now you can say them on TV.

KOOCH

That's the first thing that came to mind?

SLUG

I apologize, Professor. I wasn't prepared for a quiz.

Slug tugs his fishing line.

KOOCH

What about, end the war in Viet Nam? Contribute to an egregious corruption of public mores. Cast off the bourgeois.

SLUG

Yuppies brought bourgeois back.

KOOCH

Erode resistance to drugs resulting in a hard-core, entrenched drug culture.

SLUG

There's a big difference between disenfranchised college kids smoking grass in the dorm, and a ghetto kid,

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SLUG (CONT'D)
with an Uzi, selling crack on a street
corner.

KOOCH
Degree, my friend.

Slug does a double take from Kooch to the lake and back. He
shakes his index finger back and forth.

SLUG
Oh, no. I'm not getting sucked into
a philosophical diatribe about
disenfranchised culture.
(cups his hands around
his mouth)
All hands, abandon ship.

Slug reels in his line.

SLUG
I think I got a bite.

KOOCH
A neighbor girl wants to take me to
show and tell.

SLUG
You went outside?

KOOCH
I go outside.

Slug rebaits his hook.

SLUG
Why you?

KOOCH
Last surviving hippie.

SLUG
Could be.

KOOCH
How 'bout I take the Cosmic Hippie
Road Show to the fourth grade.

Kooch smirks at Slug.

They look at each other, flinch and each man's gaze drifts
back to the lake.

Slug jams his fishing pole grip into the sand.

SLUG

Speaking of which, guess what I found
in Jeremy's sock drawer.

KOOCH

What, pray tell, were you doing in
Jeremy's sock drawer?

SLUG

Putting clothes away. That's our
deal. Iris washes. I put away.

Slug extracts a tissue-wrapped package from his tackle box.
He unwraps it. Shows Kooch a nice, tight, marijuana joint.

KOOCH

Oh my.

Kooch leans close and inspects the joint.

KOOCH

Shows definite skill and industry.
That bother you?

SLUG

Nope.

KOOCH

You copped his stash?

SLUG

Not all of it.

Slug fumbles in a pocket. Pulls out a brand new lighter.

SLUG

Shall we?

Kooch looks around the deserted beach.

KOOCH

Should we?

SLUG

Surely.

Slug lights up. Takes a hit. Coughs it out. Passes the joint.

Kooch cups one hand around the smoke. Takes a hit. Holds it
in. Passes the joint.

Slug manages better the second time.

Kooch does a passable Cheech.

KOOCH

That's some good shit, man.

They laugh.

EXT. PARKING LOT, HART LAKE RECREATION AREA - DAY

Carrying beach chairs, tackle boxes, fishing poles and an ice chest between them, Kooch and Slug stagger into the parking lot.

EXT. THE DOCTOR'S BEEMER - DAY

Slug drops his gear behind a white BMW. Searches his pockets for keys. Opens the trunk. Drops in a fishing pole.

Kooch, standing next to the car, suddenly staggers.

KOOCH

Whoa.

Slug looks around. The parking lot is empty.

SLUG

What?

Kooch drops his tackle box.

KOOCH

We're having an earthquake.

SLUG

You're loaded.

KOOCH

So's your mother.

Slug slams the trunk closed.

SLUG

Ha!

Slug looks at his hands. The trunk lid. The ground.

SLUG

Uh-oh.

Kooch peers at the ground.

KOOCH

What?

SLUG

I locked the keys in the trunk.

They look at each other.

KOOCH

Why do you think they call it dope?

(MORE)