

GROWING UP TREE

Pilot by
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EXT. FOREST - MID 1600'S

[PRODUCTION NOTE: The following time lapse will be a locked off shot of a single tree in a forest]

A majestic WILLOW TREE stands in a forest. Rays of sunlight bounce off massive branches that drape around its trunk.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
Evolution says this great willow tree belongs to the *Salicaceae* family, genus *Salix*. But to me, it will always belong to the Gant family. Genus, uh, not sure.

From the left enters a native tribe, led by the great CHIEF LAMOHKA. From the right, a Dutch Postal Expeditionary Force, led by GIDEON VON GANT (50s), a stoic man with a thick beard.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
It was GIDEON VON GANT, Leader of the Dutch Postal Expeditionary Force, who first came across this tree and the great Eagle Claw tribe led by the proud Chief Lamohka.

The Eagle Claws raise their bows. The Dutch their muskets.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
As the Eagle Claw Natives had come to expect nothing but carnage from White men, they drew their bows. The Dutch Postal Expeditionary Force raised their muskets. But before any shot could be fired, Gideon produced a single Dutch rose as a token of peace.

GIDEON VON GANT extends a rose to CHIEF LAMOHKA. The Chief signals to his tribe to lower their bows.

EXT. FOREST -- MID 1700'S

Trees on the far sides of the WILLOW TREE have been replaced with opposing Forts. Shots are fired back and forth.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
After a century of peace, the willow found itself in the middle of a war between the Dutch colony of New Stuyvesant and a British Fur Trapping Attache station.

(MORE)

GIDEON GANT (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Gideon Von Gant the 3rd was charged
 to defend Fort Eagle Claw.

The Fort's doors open as out storms GIDEON VON GANT III
 (identical in appearance to his ancestor) on horseback.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
 The Great General Gant attacked the
 British Fur Trappers on horseback.
 It was an extraordinary flurry of
 bravery. And stupidity, as he was
 swiftly killed.

Bullets pummel General Gant. Both forts raise their gates as
 out walk both armies. The British raise a white flag.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
 Ever the fans of suicidal pomp and
 circumstance, the British Fur
 Trapping Attache surrendered and
 agreed to leave. General Von Gant
 was the only casualty of the war.
 Even his horse survived.

The horse trots around the two armies and dead General Gant.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY - MID 1800S

Grey buildings now sandwich the TREE. Smoke stacks billow in
 the distance as industrialization takes hold.

Below the tree sits LYDIA VON GANT (17) playing a violin. She
 pauses every so often to write down a few notes.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
 During the second industrial
 revolution, Lydia von Gant penned
 her famous "Willow" symphony under
 these watchful branches....

Two OFFICERS approach and arrests LYDIA VON GANT.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
 The same day she was arrested for
 stealing a priceless Hampf viola.

As Lydia is escorted away by the police, ARTHUR SWITZERLAND
 (22), a young aristocrat, comes upon the sheet music.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
The sheet music was then discovered
by a young Arthur Switzerland who
later settled Little Switzerland in
the Micro West Indies. To this day,
"Willow" remains the country's
national anthem.

EXT. NEW YORK CITY PARK - MID 1940S

Just a few trees remain beside the WILLOW as war blimps fly
and air raid sirens ring. Tangled in the tree are a large
number of German Parachuters. GIDEON GANT SR. (15) stands
guard with a gun, awaiting the police.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
(revving up)
It was here where Gideon Gant Sr. -
he dropped the Von - single
handedly captured the only
Luffewaffe Fallschirmjager brigade
to land on American soil.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE YARD - LATE 1990S

Only the WILLOW TREE remains. Standing in the shadows of a
beautiful New York townhouse. The city bustles. Guests watch
GIDEON GANT (30s) and VIVIAN GANT (30s) marry under the tree.

GIDEON GANT (V.O.)
And it was at the feet of this very
willow, 16 years ago, that I
married my beautiful wife, Vivian.

EXT. TOWNHOUSE YARD - PRESENT DAY - MORNING

GIDEON GANT is chained to the trunk of the tree as reporters
and a large crowd listen. KARL VOZZ (40s) and DUNCAN
WITHERSBY (60s) of the CITY GROUNDS DEPARTMENT stand by an
Industrial Excavator and OPERATOR (30s) who awaits orders.

GIDEON GANT
This tree. This willow. It is
history's witness. Not just--

KARL VOZZ
Enough.

GIDEON GANT
Not just for the Gant family. But
for all!

KARL VOZZ
Stop talking. No one cares!

EXCAVATOR OPERATOR
I thought it was a good story.

KARL VOZZ
I don't pay you to listen. I pay
you to demolish.

EXCAVATOR OPERATOR
(sotto)
I can do both.

KARL VOZZ
As of seven o'clock this morning,
Vozz Developments owns this land.
Thusly. You, Gant, are trespassing
and should be arrested immediately.

GIDEON GANT
You can't own history!

KARL VOZZ
Tell that to my Canopic jars.

No one laughs.

DUNCAN WITHERSBY
Hate to say it Mr. Gant, but Mr.
Vozz is right on this. You got the
neighborhood in a frenzy. Why don't
you stop all this?

GIDEON GANT
You know I can't do that Duncan.

DUNCAN WITHERSBY
<sigh> I know.

Duncan turns to Karl Vozz and shrugs and walks away.

KARL VOZZ
(sotto)
Incompetent twit.
(then to Gideon)
Why, Mr. Gant? Why must you
continue this nonsense.

GIDEON GANT
Because I love this goddamn tree.

INT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - GID'S ROOM.

A young GIDS GANT (12) stares out his bedroom window at the commotion around the tree.

GIDS
I hate this goddamn tree.

TITLES: GROWING UP TREE

INT. GANT KITCHEN - MORNING

GIDS opens the fridge and grabs orange juice. He chugs from the bottle then shuts the door. On the fridge is a calendar. Today's date is circled with a post-it that reads: **"BRING YOUR FATHER TO SCHOOL DAY."**

INT. GANT HOME OFFICE - MORNING

VIVIAN GANT (40s) sits in the office adapting a movie into a book. (The movie is basically *Chocolat* but about bread.)

MAN IN THE MOVIE
*Everyday I watch the dough rise to
glory and yet I myself cannot. Am I
destined for nothing?*

WOMAN IN THE MOVIE
Am I nothing?

VIVIAN presses pause and begins typing.

VIVIAN GANT
(typing)
There he was, crying amongst the
bags of yeast. He was a baker. He
was the love of my life. I didn't
care that he wasn't rich. I cared
that he had passion. He mumbled,
"Everyday I watch the dough rise to
glory and yet I myself cannot. Am I
destined for nothing?" His words
hurt him. His blindness hurt me.
"Am I nothing?"

Gids enters. Vivian pauses and looks at her son sweetly.

VIVIAN GANT (CONT'D)
Good morning sweetheart! How did
you sleep? No. First. Tell me, what
do you think of this title...
(MORE)

VIVIAN GANT (CONT'D)
(beat, dramatic delivery)
"The Yeast of My Affection."

GIDS
What's the name of the movie?

VIVIAN GANT
'The Baker.' A little on the nose
if you ask me.

GIDS
I like 'The Baker' more.

VIVIAN GANT
Shame. Me too. I really believe
this one is going to write itself.

VIVIAN presses play on the movie. Gids just stands there.

MAN IN THE MOVIE
You would love a baker?

WOMAN IN THE MOVIE
*I would love a man who happens to
be a baker.*

GIDS
Why is Dad chained to a tree?

VIVIAN pauses the movie.

VIVIAN GANT
Because some fellow named Voxx
wants to demolish it.

VIVIAN resumes the movie.

MAN IN THE MOVIE
Am I that man?

GIDS
How long is he going to be chained
to the tree?

VIVIAN pauses the movie.

VIVIAN GANT
I didn't ask.

GIDS
Why?

VIVIAN GANT
 (quickly/antsy to work)
 Because I trust and love your
 father and know that if he made a
 decision to do this then he must
 have felt it a necessary choice.
 And even if I can't understand it,
 I will support him and do the one
 thing humans have been doing for
 thousands of years.

GIDS
 What's that?

VIVIAN GANT
 (theater panache)
 Adapt!

VIVIAN resumes the movie and continues typing.

WOMAN IN THE MOVIE
*You are that baker. And you
 are that man. And I love
 both!*

GIDS
 (shouting over movie)
 He's supposed to be at
 school. He's supposed to talk
 to my class. Like all the
 other dads.

VIVIAN has moved on to her work.

MAN IN THE MOVIE
Come to me!

GIDS
 He said he'd be there.

WOMAN IN THE MOVIE
What about the bread?

GIDS
 Mom?

MAN IN THE MOVIE
Nevermind the bread.

GIDS
 Mom!?

VIVIAN GANT
 (without looking up)
 Adapt!

EXT. STRET - DAY

LUKE (13, sweet and doughy) waits at the bus stop, throwing pebbles at a statue of Chief Lamohka. GIDS approaches and joins in the pebble tossing.

LUKE

I heard your dad's chained to a tree.

GIDS

Yea.

LUKE

Is he still coming to school?

GIDS

I don't think so.

LUKE

My dad is.

GIDS

Every dad is.

LUKE

What are you gonna do?

GIDS

I think I'm gonna leave.

LUKE

Hooky?

GIDS

No. Leave for good. Runaway. But this time I won't come back if I get hungry.

LUKE

Where you gonna go?

GIDS

Still figuring that out.

LUKE

Oh! My mom was on the phone last night with my rich aunt. I think I heard my mom say "I hear it's beautiful there this time of year." I can ask my mom where she was talking about.

GIDS
Yea, maybe.

A school bus pulls up.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - DAY

LUKE and GIDS sit on the bus. LESLIE (11) turns around from the seat in front. LESLIE is very small and seems to be wearing a uniform but the school doesn't have one.

LESLIE
Morning gentlemen.

GIDS
Leslie.

LESLIE
Did you guys hear?

GIDS tenses up. This is certainly about his father.

LUKE
That your named after a woman? YEA.
We heard.

LESLIE
I am not named after a woman!

INT. SCIENCE LABRATORY - CUTAWAY

A Five Star General taps a nuclear reactor with a baton.

LESLIE (V.O.)
(proudly patriotic)
I'm named after General Leslie
Graves who was in charge of the
Manhattan Project.

INT. SCHOOL BUS - BACK TO SCENE

LUKE
What's the news Leslie?

LESLIE
There's a new student. And I heard
he's like 70.

LUKE
70? That's impossible!

LESLIE
It's true!

LUKE
Why would a 70 year old wanna go
back to school?

LESLIE looks around and then leans in.

LESLIE
(hushed)
I heard he just came out of a 58
year long coma.

CUT TO KEVIN (11) who chimes in from his seat:

KEVIN
(to camera)
I heard it's a time traveler come
to warn us about the dangers of
neglected fax machines.
(then, clarifying)
My dad's a sci-fi writer.
(then, sadly clarifying)
And my mom left.

CUT TO SOPHIE (12) who chimes in from her seat:

SOPHIE
(to camera)
I heard he's an undercover cop
called in to break up the seventh
grade locker-wine syndicate.

CUTAWAY TO GREG (13) inspecting grapes. He quickly shoves
them into his lunch box.

GREG
(to camera)
I don't know nothing.

CUT TO AMANDA (13) who chimes in from her seat:

AMANDA
(to camera)
I heard he was kidnapped by
pirates as a baby and just escaped
but he can't see his family until
he learns to read at an eighth
grade level.

CUT TO BUS DRIVER LEN (65) who chimes in from his seat.

BUS DRIVER LEN
 (to camera)
 My cousin Kenny heard it's just a
 kid with an old soul. Personally, I
 think that's a nice thought.

There's a <honk> off camera. LEN swerves the bus.

BUS DRIVER LEN (CONT'D)
 LESLIE! SIT YOUR LADY NAME DOWN.

LESLIE slinks down in his chair as GIDS is left to think.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

LUKE and GIDS stuff their knapsacks into their lockers.

LUKE
 I was watching this Japanese game
 show and they trapped a guy in the
 bottom of a boat for what he
 thought was years because there
 weren't any windows and they like
 served him breakfast at weird hours
 so he would think it was morning
 when it was just like an hour
 later. What if it's that guy?

GIDS
 Kate.

LUKE
 Kate? Is that a Japanese name?

REVEAL: KATE (13) standing at a nearby locker. GIDS just
 stares at her. She notices Gids staring.

KATE
 Hi Gids.

Nothing.

KATE (CONT'D)
 Um... You heard about this new
 student?

GIDS
 Yes.

KATE
 Crazy right?

GIDS

Yes.

GREG (13), the school bully, approaches and stands by KATE.

GREG

Hey Gids. Catch!

GREG tosses a pine cone at GIDS which he regretfully catches.

GREG (CONT'D)

It's your dad's girlfriend.

KATE

That's stupid Greg.

LUKE

In defense of Greg, Gids' father is currently tied to the willow tree in their yard.

GIDS punches LUKE in the shoulder.

LUKE (CONT'D)

Ow! Why'd you do that?

GREG

You're defending Greg.

LUKE

I am not! I am explaining his joke to Kate!

KATE

Wait. Your dad's tied to a tree?

Everyone stares at GIDS.

GIDS

Yea. Some guy is trying to knock it down. I think it means a lot to my dad or my family or something.

GREG cracks up.

GREG

How sad is that?!

KATE

I don't know. I think it's cool.

This catches GIDS very off guard. And GREG.

KATE (CONT'D)
You gonna stand with him?

LUKE
No. He hates it so much he's gonna
leave for good.

GIDS punches LUKE in the shoulder again.

LUKE (CONT'D)
OW!

KATE
Where you gonna go?

LUKE
Somewhere nice this time of year.

GIDS punches LUKE in the shoulder again.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Ow!

GIDS
I don't know yet.

GREG
Yea. Well. I'd leave too if I had
your dad.

GIDS clenches his fist.

LUKE
<gasp> LOOK! DADS!

At the end of the hallway is a group of fathers walking in slow-motion. They are dressed in stereotypical jobs. There's a FIREMAN, an ASTRONAUT, A BUSINESS MAN, A DOCTOR etc.

All the kids in the hallway including GREG and LUKE run towards their fathers in slow motion, jumping with glee.

GIDS just stands their staring at the pine cone in his hand.

EXT. WILLOW TREE - DAY

The crowd of reporters and on-lookers have dissipated. A few remain. A tall lanky ASSISTANT approaches GIDEON GANT.

ASSISTANT
Mr. Gant?

GIDEON GANT

Yes?

ASSISTANT

Thank you for waiting. Mr. Vozz
will see you now.

The ASSISTANT motions to the other side of the tree.
Confused, GIDEON shimmies to the other side of the tree.

EXT. OTHER WISE OF THE WILLOW TREE - CONTINUOUS

GIDEON finds KARL VOZZ sitting behind a make shift desk.

KARL VOZZ

Mr. Gant. Sorry to keep you
waiting. Water?

The ASSITANT shoves a bottle of water into GIDEON's hand.

GIDEON GANT

I didn't know we had a meeting?

KARL VOZZ

Yes, well, lucky for you I was able
to squeeze you in.
(getting serious)
Mr. Gant. I'll get right to it. I
admire your loyalty to the past.

GIDEON GANT

Thanks.

KARL VOZZ

You remind me of my cousin, Alfred.
He was a painting restorer who had
no creative vision of his own.

GIDEON GANT

I think that's a compliment.

KARL VOZZ

Cousin Alfred lives in an asylum
now with five cats all named Ben.

GIDEON GANT

TBD on the compliment.

KARL VOZZ

I like Cousin Alfred. His
lobotomy made him adorably
obsequious.

GIDEON GANT
Not a compliment.

KARL VOZZ
The point is, if we cling to the
past we'll drive ourselves mad
trying to prevent the one thing
that keeps our world spinning...

GIDEON GANT
Gravity! ...I think?

KARL VOZZ
No. Change. Mr. Gant, I like to
call myself an agent of change.
Why? Because I break down the walls
of the past so that I may help
build the future with...

GIDEON GANT
Gravity? ...I'm not good at this.

KARL VOZZ
Condominiums.

KARL VOZZ places a model of condo complex on his desk.

KARL VOZZ (CONT'D)
Condominiums are just as much a
sign of progress as vaccinations,
cellular technology and decaf
coffee. You see, the past MUST lose
in order for the world to inherit
the fruits of the future.
(then, pointed.)
And the longer you continue to be
tied to this tree the longer you
deny future generations progress
and condominiums. VERY. EXPENSIVE.
CONDOMINIUMS. WITH CHARMING
BREAKFAST NOOKS!

GIDEON GANT
Mr. Vozz, I appreciate the lecture
but I've made my choice and--

KARL VOZZ stands wild and angry.

KARL VOZZ
OH YOU'LL MOVE OR I'LL DO TO YOU
WHAT I HAD DONE TO COUSIN ALFRED!
SWEET DROOLING COUSIN ALFRED!

GIDEON GANT
WHOA! What did you do to Alfred?!

He resets. Gideon does as well.

KARL VOZZ
No matter how long you cling to
that tree--to the past--you will
lose. The past always loses. That's
why its called the past.

GIDEON GANT
I'm sorry Mr. Vozz. But I'm not
going anywhere.

VIVIAN GANT
You ready to go?

REVEAL: VIVIAN GANT standing there.

GIDEON GANT
Except now. I'm going now. But just
to the bathroom. Then I'll be back.

GIDEON unchains himself as VIVIAN take his place.

VIVIAN GANT
<ooh> I'll take a water.

KARL VOZZ
Morons. All of you.

KARL VOZZ storms off. His ASSISTANT appears and begins to
pack up the desk. He struggles to carry off the desk.

VIVIAN GANT
How'd that go?

GIDEON GANT
Fine. I think he knows I'm not
budging.

VIVIAN GANT
Any idea how long you won't be
budging.

GIDEON GANT
No.
(off Vivian)
You know I have to do this, right?

VIVIAN GANT
I think I do. But I'm not sure your
son does.

GIDEON GANT
 Gids? Oh come on. Of course he gets
 it. He's a Gant!

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

FATHERS of varying professions line the walls of the
 classroom. TIM (13) stands next to his SENATOR FATHER.

SENATOR DAD
 And that's how you circumvent a
 filibuster.

STUDENTS
 YAY!

A SECRET AGENT whispers into the SENATOR's ear.

SENATOR DAD
 Well, that's all I've got time for.
 I'm late for breakfast with Prime
 Ministers.

TIM
 Which ones?

SENATOR DAD
 All of them.

STUDENTS
 YAY!

As the SENATOR leaves, MR. TOTHE (40s), a middle aged Dead-
 Poets-Society-looking professor, takes the floor, applauding.

MR. TOTHE
 Thank you for your time, Senator. I
 think we can all agree that some of
 the best fathers in the world are
 in this classroom today.
 (off clipboard)
 OKAYYYYYYY. Up next is the Gant
 father/son duo. Gants?

Gids slinks in his chair embarrassed.

GIDS
 The Gants pass.

MR. TOTHE
 Pass?

GIDS
(covering.)
My dad couldn't make it today. He's
busy. Working.

GREG
His dad's busy hugging a tree.

STUDENTS laugh as GREG and MOTORCYCLE GANG FATHER high five.

MR. TOTHE
Well don't beat yourself up Gant. A
lot of good men in this world grew
up with absent fathers. My father
was never around. He was too busy
working as a one-time stunt man.

LUKE
What's a one-time stunt man?

MR. TOTHE
It's a stunt man who died doing his
first stunt.

The PRINCIPAL knocks on classroom door and enters.

PRINCIPAL
Sorry to interrupt, I have a new
student who's been assigned to this
homeroom.

All the students perk up. PRINCIPAL moves aside.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
Students. Please meet Lavi Gahn.

In walks LAVI GAHN. LAVI is just as everyone predicted. He is
70 years old and of mysterious descent. He could either be
Middle Eastern or from South America. He is dressed simply.

PRINCIPAL (CONT'D)
Mr. Gahn has waved his introduction
speech so as not to interfere with
the day's lesson. However, since
Mr. Gahn is new to our school, I
think it would be wise to assign
one of the students to be a guide
for him during his first few days.

The PRINCIPAL exits, leaving LAVI with the STUDENTS & DADS.

MR. TOTHE
Welcome Mr. Gahn. Why don't we pair
you with--

GREG
Put him with Gant. He could use a
dad.

The STUDENTS and FATHERS laugh. GIDS sits there embarrassed.

MR. TOTHE
Gregory! I don't like the subtext
of that suggestion but I am
inclined to agree with you.

GREG and MOTORCYCLE GANG FATHER high five again.

MR. TOTHE (CONT'D)
Mr. Gahn. Take a seat next to Mr.
Gant back there. He'll be your
escort around our humble halls.

GIDS
But-

MR. TOTHE
No buts!

ALL the STUDENTS & FATHERS laugh.

MR. TOTHE (CONT'D)
What? Oh. I said 'butt' didn't I?
What a day!

INT. SCHOOL - CAFETERIA - DAY

GIDS and LUKE sit at a table staring at LAVI GAHN.

LUKE
Do you know what a cafeteria is?

GIDS
Luke!

LUKE
What? I'm being polite.

LAVI nods and begins eating a sandwich.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Were you kidnapped?

LAVI shakes his head no.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Are you here about the locker wine
syndicate?

CUTAWAY TO: GREG tastes his locker wine. He makes a slicing throat gesture to LUKE.

BACK TO LAVI: He shakes his head no.

KATE approaches.

KATE
Hey guys.

LAVI, LUKE, and GIDS just stare at Kate.

KATE (CONT'D)
(to LAVI)
So. Do you like the food?

GIDS
It's okay.

KATE
I was asking your new friend, Lavi.

GIDS blushes as LAVI smiles and nods. GREG slides up to KATE.

GREG
Look at this happy foster family.

GREG begins to laugh but then LAVI stands up. His height and stature intimidate GREG. GIDS is happily surprised.

KATE
Come on Greg.

GREG leads KATE off.

LUKE
We got ourselves a body guard! I
feel like a Senator.

GIDS
(to LAVI)
Thanks.

LAVI nods and continues eating.

SFX: SCHOOL BELL RINGS

All the students get up and rush out the door.

GIDS (CONT'D)
What's going on?

LUKE
IT'S ACTIVITY SIGN UP DAY!

INT. SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

The school gymnasium is filled with various activity desks for the students to sign up for. GIDS and LAVI enter.

GIDS

I have to sign up for an activity.
Did they sign you up for one?

LAVI shakes his head no.

INT. SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - CONTINUOUS

LAVI and GIDS make their way past various activity desks.

STUDENT 1

The Alliance for Chivalry in
Testing is dedicated to ridding our
school system of cheating and
subpar bibliographies.

STUDENT 2

Do you have tiny fingers and good
ears? Then the Stenographers of
Tomorrow could be for you.

STUDENT 3

The Urban Planning Group for Better
Playgrounds is a group of like-
minded rascals who help design play
zones that optimize risk/reward
ratios.

They pass Luke staring at a home made Volcano.

STUDENT 4

Join the Daily Volcano Society and
we'll make a volcano erupt. Daily.

STUDENT 5

Sub-Railfans are looking for
members to explore our subway
tunnels for abandoned trains this
semester. All you need is a head-
lamp and a permission slip.

GIDS is unimpressed. Just then a door to the gymnasium opens
and an EXPLORER (60s, dressed like a Rough Rider) peaks out.

EXPLORER

You're late.

The EXPLORER drags GIDS into the room. LAVI follows.

INT. SCHOOL - GYMNAISUM FILM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

The EXPLORER stands in front of the projector. All around him are EXPENDABLES (25-40) from around the world. GIDS takes a seat next to an ex-NAVY SEAL with tattoos and scars.

EXPLORER

Thank you for coming to the
Explorer's Club meet and greet.
There a lot of great clubs and
activities out there so I want to
thank you for your interest.

The EXPLORER clicks a slide show.

EXPLORER (CONT'D)

I'll get right to it. A few months
ago, a small fishing vessel was
attacked for sport off the coast of
Little Switzerland in the Micro
West Indies. This video was found.

CUTAWAY TO: Grainy footage of a PIRATE beheading a helpless fisherman for sport.

GIDS cowers in horror. No one else does. GIDS stops covering his eyes, trying to match their toughness.

EXPLORER (CONT'D)

What interests me most isn't the
decapitated head. It's this.

The EXPLORER clicks to another slide and enhances the image, past a severed head and onto an image in the water.

EXPLORER (CONT'D)

Upon closer look, I noticed a piece
of wood in the shallow waters with
two intersecting branded circles.
Also known as the emblem of the
first merchant bank of London
founded by Rothschild and Baring in
the 18th century. That bank sent
vast sums of British notes to the
South Pacific. But foul weather
often resulted in ship wreck.

NEXT SLIDE: a chart showing appreciation of banking notes.

EXPLORER (CONT'D)

I believe this wreckage contains
hundreds of 18th century banking
notes worth ten times that today.

There are murmurs of excitement. GIDS tries to murmur.

EXPLORER (CONT'D)

I'm putting together a team to go
and find these papers. Though
riches are certain, so are the
risks.

NEXT SLIDE: More photos of angry pirates.

EX-NAVY SEAL

Keep talking about the riches then.

All the EXPENDABLES start laughing. GIDS forces laughter.

EXPLORER

Try-outs are tomorrow. Be prepared
to exhibit skills and prowess with
various weapons, languages, as well
as the ability to hold your breath
for long periods of time. Those who
pass will leave immediately.

On this, GIDS perks up, suddenly very interested.

INT. SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - DAY

GIDS & LAVI exit the FILM ROOM. GIDS could not be more
excited. LUKE runs up with an exploding volcano in hand.

LUKE

It won't stop exploding!

EXT. STREET - DAY

A school bus drives off. Lavi, Gids and Luke stand there.

GIDS

I gotta go!

GIDS quickly walks away.

LUKE

Where you going? Don't you wanna
come over?

GIDS

(yelling)
Sorry. I gotta study.

LUKE
(yelling)
For what? We take the same classes.

No response. GIDS is long gone. LUKE turns to LAVI.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Do we have a test tomorrow?

LAVI just shrugs.

LUKE (CONT'D)
We're having firecracker chicken
tonight. You wanna come over?

LAVI shrugs and follows LUKE.

EXT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - DAY

GIDS runs past the willow tree and GIDEON GANT.

GIDEON GANT
(yelling after GIDS)
Hey bud, how was school today?

GIDS doesn't acknowledge his father and just runs inside.

INT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

GIDS runs past VIVIAN who's now sitting there sipping tea.
Her finger is to her temple. She's lost in thought.

GIDS
(quick)
Can't talk. Gotta study. Please
leave dinner by my door. Thanks!

VIVIAN suddenly looks up.

VIVIAN GANT
HEY!

GIDS runs back into the door frame.

GIDS
What?

VIVIAN looks at GIDS expectantly. Gids runs into the office,
gives his mother a kiss on the cheek and runs out.

INT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - GIDS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

GIDS studies like mad for his Explorer's Club try out:

- He pours over maps of the South Pacific
- Books of various languages lay scattered around the bed. GIDS paces, pronouncing words in various languages.

GIDS
 (in Malaysian)
Does this seatbelt work?
 (in Filipino)
Does this seatbelt work?
 (in Vietnamese)
Does this seatbelt work?

- GIDS holds a knife very steadily. He aims at a target hanging on his wall. GIDS throws the knife. He misses.

QUICK CUTS of GIDS throwing the knife. He keeps missing.

Finally he hits the bullseye.

GIDS (CONT'D)
 YES!

GIDS walks over and grabs the target. He pulls it off revealing dozens of knife marks in the wall paper behind it.

There's a knock on the door.

VIVIAN GANT (O.S.)
 Dinner is served. Can I come in?

There's clothing and books and knives every where.

GIDS
 (covering)
 NO! YOU CAN'T! I'm-I'm studying.

VIVIAN GANT (O.S.)
 So?

The door knob begins to turn.

GIDS
 Naked. I'm studying naked.

VIVIAN GANT (O.S.)
 Ok. I'll just leave it out here.

GIDS
 Thanks.

VIVIAN GANT (O.S.)
You say good night to your father?

GIDS looks out the window.

GIDS
(lying)
Yes.

VIVIAN GANT
Good. Sleep tight.

GIDS goes to the door and listens for his mother's footsteps. As soon as their inaudible he opens the door slightly and sweeps in the tray of food.

INT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - GIDS' BEDROOM - NIGHT

GIDS eats by the window, watching his father tied to the tree. GIDEON GANT fidgets, trying to fend off something.

GIDEON GANT (OUTSIDE)
Ow! Ow! Stop biting me!

Gideon takes one last bite of his sandwich and turns the lights off and crawls into bed. He nestles into his pillow.

GIDEON GANT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
OWWWW!

GIDS
I gotta get outta here.

GIDS closes his eyes.

INT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - BATHROOM - MORNING

GIDS opens his eyes. His entire face submerged in the sink. He's holding his breath but struggling. He tries to fight but it's no use. GIDS pulls his head out. Next to the sink is a timer that reads "50 Seconds."

INT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - GIDS' BEDROOM - DAY

GIDS dries his face off with a towel and tosses the timer into a small suitcase filled with clothing and various tchotchkes. GIDS places a family photo in his suitcase and closes it. He grabs the suitcase and his backpack and leaves.

INT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - OFFICE - DAY

VIVIAN GANT is hard at work watching the same movie and adapting it into a book on her laptop.

MAN IN THE MOVIE

I told you your family would hate me. Because of who I am! Because I am a baker!

WOMAN IN THE MOVIE

We'll just have to find a way to break bread with them.

GIDS enters. VIVIAN barely notices.

GIDS

I'm leaving.

VIVIAN GANT

Have a great day!

GIDS

I'm going for awhile.

VIVIAN GANT

Yes.

GIDS

I said I'm leaving.

VIVIAN GANT

So far so good. But you know how these things go.

GIDS turns to the door and heads out.

VIVIAN GANT (CONT'D)

Gids!

GIDS turns around excited.

VIVIAN GANT (CONT'D)

There's breakfast pastries in the kitchen. Bring one to your father.

Off GIDS frustrated face, we cut to...

EXT. TOWNHOUSE YARD - DAY

The crowd of reporters and onlookers is still there. KARL VOZZ is being measured for a suit. GIDS approaches his father with a pastry in hand and offers it to him.

GIDEON GANT
For me? Thanks.

GIDEON GANT eats the pastry but then notices the suitcase.

GIDEON GANT (CONT'D)
What's with the suitcase? You
running away again?

GIDS
(covering.)
No. It's for activity period.

GIDEON GANT
Got it.
(then, concerned)
You ran right by me last night.

GIDS
I had a lot to do and I was tired.

GIDEON GANT
It's alright. You sleep well?

GIDS
Fine. You?

GIDEON GANT
Not so great. A squirrel got pretty
handsy with me in the middle of the
night--

GIDS
You were supposed to be at school
yesterday.

GIDEON GANT
I was?

GIDS
Yes.

GIDEON GANT
I'm sorry. I promise I'll make it
up to you when this is all over.

GIDS
When's that?

GIDEON GANT
I don't know.

GIDS picks up his suitcase and walks away.

INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY - DAY

LUKE and GIDS walk towards their lockers.

LUKE
So you're leaving today?

GIDS
Yea.

LUKE
And your parents are cool with that?

GIDS
They don't care.

LUKE
I do.

GIDS opens his locker and a pile of leaves tumble out. All the other students and GREG point and laugh.

GREG
Look. A family reunion.

EVERYONE except GREG suddenly stops laughing.

GREG (CONT'D)
What? It's funny!

REVEAL: LAVI behind GREG. GREG slowly turns and sees him. He backs away slowly and then turns and scurries off.

GIDS
Thanks.

SFX: SCHOOL BELL RINGS.

LUKE
VOLCANO TIME! BYE!

INT. SCHOOL - GYMNAISUM FILM ROOM - DAY

The EXPENDABLES are all gathered. In walks GIDS & LAVI. The EXPLORER stands in front of them all, smoking a cigarette. Every EXPENDABLE has a suitcase.

EXPLORER
Candidates, welcome back. Before we begin the try outs I would like to add my appreciation and thanks. Let's begin!

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

GIDS & EXPENDABLES throw knives at targets hanging around the classrooms. GIDS performs admirably.

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

GIDS & EXPENDABLES are quizzed on Polynesian geography. The EXPLORER points to a map as everyone raises their hand trying to answer. The EXPLORER calls on GIDS. The other EXPENDABLES lower their hands disappointed as GIDS smiles.

INT. SCHOOL - VARIOUS - DAY

GIDS & EXPENDABLES race around the school using only a compass. GIDS and the EX-NAVY SEAL turn a corner, clearly in the lead. They head to a locker and throw it open. Inside the locker sits the EXPLORER holding a stop watch. He smiles. GIDS and EX-NAVY SEAL size each other up.

INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY

GIDS & EXPENDABLES demonstrate fluency in foreign languages. A shrimp is drawn on a chalkboard. GIDS and EX-NAVY SEAL race to write the word "shrimp" in as many languages as possible.

INT. SCHOOL - POOL - DAY

The EXPLORER is standing next to the pool. In the water float the EX-NAVY SEAL & GIDS -- the only remaining candidates.

EXPLORER

Pirates off the coast of Little
Switzerland can hold their breaths
for up to three minutes. Can you?

GIDS stares at the EX-NAVY SEAL.

GIDS

(sotto)

I gotta get outta here.

EXPLORER

Ready?

GIDS

(sotto, determined)

I gotta get outta here.

EXPLORER
Deep breath. And. DEE-SEND!

INT. SCHOOL - POOL, UNDERWATER - CONTINUOUS

GIDS and EX-NAVY SEAL take deep breaths and sink to the bottom of the pool. The NAVY SEAL sits there sharpening his knife and chewing a cigar. GIDS looks up. We can see other students swimming with paddle boards. We see KATE standing at the side of the pool with LAVI and LUKE.

Seconds pass as GIDS struggles to hold his breath. Suddenly, leaves start to float all around GIDS, almost magically. GIDS looks down and sees he's chained! He struggles. He's scared. He's stuck. And not just in the water.

GIDS
(through water)
AHHHHHHHHHHHHH!

GIDS breaks loose from the chains and kicks to the surface. The EX NAVY SEAL laughs and continues sharpening his knife.

INT. SCHOOL - POOL - CONTINUOUS

GIDS breaks the surface, coughing. LAVI pulls him out of the water and wraps him in a towel.

EXPLORER
You're out kid.

EXT. STREET - DAY

GIDS, LAVI & LUKE are walking along the sidewalk. GIDS still has his suitcase in hand.

LUKE
So when you leaving? I have to walk my dog but then I can come by and see you off.

GIDS
I'm not leaving. I'm stuck.

LUKE
Okay! See you tomorrow.

LUKE runs O.S. GIDS and LAVI turn and head home.

EXT. GANT TOWNHOUSE - DAY

GIDS and LAVI approach the WILLOW. No crowd. Just GIDEON GANT, an idle excavator and its OPERATOR and a few camera crews. GIDS approaches his father.

GIDEON GANT
Hi Gids.

GIDS
Hi dad.

GIDEON GANT
(a beat, then)
I'm sorry about all of this.

GIDS
You have to do it. Right?

GIDEON GANT
Yes.

GIDS
Why?

GIDEON GANT
Because past a certain point, it gets too hard to change your present. And I'm too far past that point to let everything before mean nothing. Does that make sense?

GIDS
No.

GIDEON GANT
I'll have to work on it.

GIDS looks around and finally back to his dad.

GIDS
Do you need to go to the bathroom?
I can watch the tree.

GIDEON GANT
Really? I'm dying here actually.
You gonna be okay alone?

GIDS
I won't be alone. I've got Lavi.

GIDS waves LAVI GAHN to come over.

GIDS (CONT'D)
This is Lavi. He's the new student
in my class.

GIDEON GANT is taken aback by LAVI's age but decides there is
enough confusion in his life to ask any questions.

GIDEON GANT
Nice to meet you Lavi. Would you
mind watching this tree with my
son?

LAVI shrugs his shoulders okay.

GIDEON GANT turns to the small crowd.

GIDEON GANT (CONT'D)
(to EXCAVATOR)
My son and his friend are gonna
watch the tree for a bit while I
use the rest-room again. I should
be back shortly.

GIDEON GANT removes the massive lock chaining him to the tree
and steps out. GIDS and LAVI take his place as GIDEON GANT
chains them to the tree.

GIDEON GANT (CONT'D)
Thank you.

GIDEON GANT runs to the house. GIDS and LAVI sit under the
tree, mesmerized by its unavoidable beauty.

Suddenly, LAVI shimmies to the other side of the tree.

GIDS
Hey! Where are you going?

KATE (O.S.)
So you're staying.

REVEAL: KATE is standing next to the tree.

GIDS
For now.

KATE sits next to GIDS. She takes in the tree.

KATE
So. What's the deal with this tree
anyway?

GIDS

I think it was my great great great
great grandfather or something who
first discovered this tree. He was
a sea captain. Definitely Dutch...

GIDS trails off as the camera rises higher and higher, until
the tree, the Gant residence and the city are indefinable.

We pause there. Briefly. Taking in the city. But then a
glowing red spec east of the tree catches the camera's focus.

The camera zooms in on the spec, faster and faster. It's no
longer just a spec it's a glowing fire.

EXT. CAFE - DAY

A scooter is on fire on the sidewalk. GREG's MOTORCYCLE GANG
FATHER watches it, laughing heartily and taking long swigs
from a bottle in a brown bag.

A very well dressed SAD ITALIAN MAN sits on the sidewalk
crying out for his scooter.

SAD ITALIAN MAN

(in Italian)

*Why? Why? Why have you destroyed my
poor scooter!*

KARL VOZZ emerges from the shadows and approaches GREG's
MOTORCYCLE GANG FATHER.

KARL VOZZ

So. You like watching things burn?

END OF EPISODE