

DO UNTO OTHERS

an original screenplay by

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EXT. GRIFFITH PARK - MINERAL WELLS PICNIC AREA - DAY

Nestled deep in the backhills of Griffith Park, a handful of parkgoers dot the sprawling lawn of Mineral Wells Picnic Area, each engaged in the simple, carefree moments of a lazy summer afternoon.

A young mother lifts her son to a water fountain. A father spins his daughter by her arms. A few skateboarders practice their tricks in a concrete culvert. Young lovers curl in each other's arms beneath majestic oaks. And in the center of the lawn, a group of preteens are engaged in a battle of Ultimate Frisbee.

Parked on the hill above the picnic area, SCOTT McCORY (40ish, white collar) sits quietly in his black Kia Optima. He picks absently at a fast food burger, but his attention is elsewhere. With the parkgoers, watching, waiting.

Down on the field, the Ultimate players line up for 'kickoff'. The kicker flings the frisbee into the air. It sails upward, banking against the blue sky, then begins a gentle downward descent as. . .

FLASHBACK - GRIFFITH PARK - DAY

A faded memory of a football dropping from the sky into the hands of a young boy, CALEB age 6. The boy charges across the field as Scott moves to tackle him.

In cheerful desperation, Caleb pitches the ball to his mother, LEAH (30s, attractive). She fumbles the ball momentarily, but makes the catch.

She makes for the endzone, but Scott is too quick. He has her in his grasp and playfully pulls her to the ground in a tangle of arms and legs.

Caleb clambors atop his laughing parents.

BACK TO SCENE

Scott tosses his half-eaten lunch into a bag on the passenger seat.

Down below, an older man with a hiking stick, a grandfather perhaps, leads a young boy toward the rest rooms.

Scott stiffens, leaning slightly out of the car window.

The man leans his hiking stick against the exterior wall of the rest room and ushers the young boy inside. He glances up at Scott with a nod and a smile and follows the boy inside.

Scott is suddenly pale and sick, swallowing hard. He starts the car and jams his foot on the accelerator. The car peels away in a spray of gravel and burnt rubber.

INT. MCCORY HOUSE - KITCHEN - DAY

Leah, looking haggard and unkempt, pours a glass of wine. Chardonnay. She stares through the back window at a wooden swing set. She opens a bottle of prescription meds and swallows a pill with a sip of wine.

EXT. MCCORY HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Leah exits the house, stumbling slightly on the back steps, wine in hand. She makes her way to the swing set, a series of slides, monkey bars and swings extending from a high tower fort perfect for camp outs.

FLASHBACK - MCCORY BACKYARD - DAY

Leah swings gently as Caleb, now age 8, leans out from the swing set tower, decked out in pirate garb and wielding a plastic sword. He grabs onto a pole and slides to the ground. Scott follows clumsily, landing in a heap on the ground.

He leaps to his feet and father and son clack plastic sabers in mock pirate battle, much to Leah's delight.

Scott leaves himself open. Caleb runs him through. Scott staggers dramatically toward Leah. He leans in close to his wife. She rebuffs him mischievously. Undaunted, he tries again. She relents.

Their lips are nearly touching as. . .

BACK TO SCENE

Leah sobs. She chugs the remainder of her wine, drowning the memory from her consciousness.

INT. QUALGEN HEADQUARTERS - SCOTT'S OFFICE - DAY

Scott sits at his desk, staring at a blank email screen. His fingers are poised above the keyboard, but he is incapable of typing.

He turns to a framed photo on his desk, a family portrait featuring himself, Leah and Caleb, age 10. He reaches for the photo.

INT. MCCORY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Leah picks up the same family photo from an end table. She draws her fingers across Caleb's face. She looks around the room.

Pictures of Caleb are everywhere. On the walls. The shelves. At the hospital the day he was born. Taking his first steps. Riding his first bike. First day at school. Little League uniform.

Leah's chin begins to tremble. She walks around the room collecting the photos of her son.

EXT. MCCORY HOUSE - EVENING

A group of boys play touch football in the street.

Scott's car pulls into his driveway. He watches the boys play.

JOHNNY

Blue 42! Red 36! Omaha, Omaha.  
Hut, hut, hut.

The center hikes the ball. The players scramble about.

BOY 1

Over here. Over here.

JOHNNY

Go deep, man.

BOY 2

I'm open! Johnny!

JOHNNY

Go, go!

Johnny evades a would-be tackler and lets go with a Hail Mary pass. One of the boys reaches for it, but the ball sails over his head, bounces off the hood of Scott's car and lands at his feet.

The boys freeze, wide-eyed with fear.

JOHNNY (CONT'D)

Jesus! Sorry, Mr. McCory.

SCOTT

It's all good, Johnny. No harm, no foul.

He picks up the ball and motions Johnny to go deep. Johnny grins and runs backwards. Scott raises the ball behind his head, ready to throw, but he doesn't. He can't. Johnny slows, stops, waiting expectantly.

JOHNNY

Mr. McCory?

Scott tosses the ball underhanded to one of the nearby boys.

SCOTT

Sorry.

INT. MCCORY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - EVENING

Scott enters. Everything is quiet. Too quiet.

SCOTT

Leah?

He sets his briefcase by the end table. He notices Caleb's picture is gone. A glance around the room. All the photos are missing.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Leah!

Scott moves quickly through the house.

SCOTT (CONT'D)

Leah? LEAH!

At the end of a hallway, a closed door. Scott hesitates, afraid of what he may find beyond the door. He pushes the door open.

INT. MCCORY HOUSE - CALEB'S ROOM - CONTINUOUS

A typical 10-year-old boy's room. Bunk bed. Sports posters. School art. Leah sits on the lower bunk. She presses Caleb's baseball mitt to her breast.

SCOTT

Leah?

What are you doing in here?

(pause)

Where are his pictures? What did you do with them? Leah!

No response. Scott shakes his head and walks away.

INT. MCCORY HOUSE - DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Scott and Leah sit at opposite sides of a table. Scott picks at his dinner, a charred cinder of what was once a steak. Leah drains a glass of wine and pours another. Merlot this time.

SCOTT

You gonna polish off the entire bottle?

Leah glares.

Scott picks a little at his meal, but it is too dry and tough to make the effort worthwhile. He pushes his plate away.

LEAH  
Not to your liking?

SCOTT  
You forgot to stop cooking it.

LEAH  
So order take out.

She drinks.

SCOTT  
Is this how it's going to be? Because we can't--I can't continue like this.

LEAH  
Did you go see Detective Kwan?

SCOTT  
Are you listening to me?

LEAH  
(violent)  
Did you see Detective Kwan?

A beat.

SCOTT  
No.

LEAH  
You were supposed to ask about the blue van.

SCOTT  
I was at work. I have to go to work.

LEAH  
Always an excuse.

SCOTT  
Someone has to pay the bills, Leah. Someone has to keep a roof over our heads. And your liquor bar stocked.

LEAH  
Don't you blame me.

SCOTT  
I am not blam--

LEAH  
You're a quitter, Scott. That's  
what you are. A quitter hiding behind  
his--

SCOTT  
STOP IT! For the love of God, just  
stop. Please.

LEAH  
It's been six months.

SCOTT  
I know how long it's been.

LEAH  
Then why haven't they found the van?

SCOTT  
I don't know.

LEAH  
A blue van. How hard can it be?

SCOTT  
I don't know. I'm not a cop.

LEAH  
Then be his father, for God's sake.

SCOTT  
And what would you have me do?  
Please, tell me.

LEAH  
What wouldn't you do? To find your  
son? You're only child.

Scott angrily sweeps his dinner dishes from the table.

SCOTT  
FUCK YOU! You act like I don't want  
him to come home.

Leah sips her wine, barely containing a smile at the pain  
she has inflicted.

LEAH  
Do you? It's so hard to tell. You  
can't even make time to talk to the  
police.

INT. MCCORY HOUSE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Leah is in bed. Scott exits the bathroom. Leah immediately rolls away from him and switches off the bedside lamp. She curls up on the edge of the bed as far from Scott as possible.

INT. MCCORY HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Scott tosses a pillow on the couch and settles in for a long sleepless night.

INT. LAPD NORTHEAST DIVISION HOUSE - DAY

Detective JIMMY KWAN (late 30s, casual Fridays type) pours himself a cup of station brew. His partner, STEVE BRANTLEY (40s, cheap suit), already on his third cup of joe, joins him for a refill.

BRANTLEY

Jimmy.

KWAN

Steven.

BRANTLEY

So good of you to join us this morning.

KWAN

There was traffic on the 5.

BRANTLEY

There's always traffic on the 5. Perhaps you should consider an earlier departure.

KWAN

Between the wife, the kids, a dog and two hamsters, you're lucky I'm here at all.

Brantley spies Scott wandering lost through the squad room.

BRANTLEY

I think our luck just ran out.

KWAN

Shit.

BRANTLEY

Want me to handle it?

KWAN

No, I got this. Mr. McCory!



Scott sees the detectives. Kwan waves him over.

SCOTT  
Detectives. I'm sorry, I should  
have called first or. . .

KWAN  
The door is always open, Mr. McCory.  
What can we do for you?

SCOTT  
We--My wife and I--we were wondering,  
you know, where things stood.  
Currently.

Brantley fiddles with his coffee. It's not a conversation  
he wants to be a part of.

KWAN  
The case remains open, of course,  
but to be frank, I wish we had better  
news--

SCOTT  
What about the van?

KWAN  
The van?

SCOTT  
The blue van. Have you found it?

KWAN  
Do you know how many registered  
vehicles there are in the state of  
California?

SCOTT  
No, not really.

BRANTLEY  
32 million.

SCOTT  
Okay, but how many are blue vans?  
In Los Angeles?

KWAN  
It takes time, Mr. McCory.

SCOTT  
You've had six months.

BRANTLEY

We don't have a make, a model, a license plate.

KWAN

Just a vague description of a blue van and only one credible witness who places it at the scene, the uh, the birthday boy, um--

SCOTT

Johnny.

KWAN

Yes, Johnny Wheeler.

SCOTT

Welling. Johnny Welling.

KWAN

Right.

SCOTT

And you're forgetting my wife. She also saw the van.

BRANTLEY

Your wife only recalled seeing the van after she heard Johnny's description.

SCOTT

You're saying she's lying.

KWAN

No. But we can't--

SCOTT

Johnny saw a man get out of that van and go into the rest room at the same time my son was in there.

KWAN

But he didn't see your son with that man or get into his van. No one did. Not even you. And there were over 100 people using the picnic area that day and easily another hundred parking in the area to go hiking or jog or sunbathe. Any one of them could be responsible for your son's disappearance.

SCOTT

So that's it? We just fucking give up!

KWAN

No, sir. We will continue our efforts to locate the van and its driver, and we will follow all leads as information becomes available to us. We will find Caleb, I promise you. We will bring him home. You have my word on that.

Scott stares at Kwan for a long beat.

SCOTT

I go to the park everyday: before work, at lunch, again after work. I keep thinking he'll just show up, you know, wander out of the woods. "Hey Dad, where you been? Why'd you leave me?" I drive up and down that road 20 times a day while my wife sits at home drinking herself blind. But you can't even tell me how many blue vans are in Los Angeles. But hey, at least you remembered his name. Caleb. Caleb McCory.

Scott turns and abruptly and stalks away.

BRANTLEY

You shouldn't make promises you can't keep.

KWAN

So exactly how many blue vans are there in Los Angeles?

INT. QUALGEN HEADQUARTERS - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY

Scott, DARREN, MATT and SHARON sit around a conference table cluttered with files and laptops and calculators. Matt and Sharon are busy inputting information. Scott watches the clock. 2:38.

DARREN

I have forwarded Scott's cost analysis regarding the acquisition of AgriBio. We're still calling it preliminary, but we feel confident these numbers will hold. Right, Scott?

Scott nods absently.