

# The Wave Todd Strasser

## Adapted by Paul Stebbings and Phil Smith

A middle class, comfortable suburban community. The characters are well dressed and affluent white middle class, except for Eric who is well dressed, affluent middle class and African-American.

SET – made up of units that look and can be used as school desks, or pushed together to form a dinner table or placed one on top of another to make lockers in a football changing room.

1/

(Opening – in dim shadowy lighting. A green cloth draped over the units to make a grassy knoll with a picket fence at the back.

In this opening we move from the American nightmare into the American dream. A mash up of sounds and images.

'All Along The Watchtower' (Bob Dylan version) "There must be some kinda way out of here, say the Joker to the Thief, there's too much confusion, I can't get no relief"... A shadowy figure seen behind the picket fence – three shots. Screams. Walter Cronkite announcing "The president died at..." Sounds of helicopters and snatch of Ride of the Valkyries. Silhouette of a Viet Cong suspect executed with a gun to the head by a Vietnamese general. Country Joe and the Fish: "One, two, three, what are we fighting for? Don't ask me I don't give a damn, Next stop is Vietnam... Gimme an "F".." <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xuUBCF3KKxc> Chanting and silhouette of a picket line marching in a circle with placards: "Hey, hey, LBJ, how many kids did you kill today!" Rifle fire. Announcement of the students' deaths at Ken State, then assassinations of Martin Luther King and Bobby Kennedy. Spider-Man swings onto stage, super-hero style, and is confronted by a student: "Look, Whitey...how much do you have ta know?...Then go on...cut out! You're too chicken to get involved!" Spider-Man slopes off. <http://thegothamrogue.wordpress.com/2013/01/02/retroactive-detective-comics-1945-amazing-spider-man-1969/asm68/> Weird electronic soundtrack from 'Night of the Living Dead' (released 1969): "Welcome to a night of total terror – Night of the Living Dead. The dead who live on living flesh... the dead whose haunted souls hunt the living... ungodly creatures..." Screams. <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5gUKvmOEGCU> Back to Hendix/Dylan: "There are many here among us, Who feel that life is but a joke..."

This segways into California Dreamin' (Mamas and Papas) and then California Girls (The Beach Boys).

Bright sunlight rises to reveal the green grassy knoll, bright white picket fence and an idyllic scene of high school kids hanging out in the sunshine and having a good time. Eric and the Frisbee Player played by the Ben Ross actor are playing Frisbee – at their feet are football helmets. The Frisbee Player holds a transistor radio in his non-throwing hand. Eric and the Frisbee Player can also throw the Frisbee out into the audience and play it with them. Laurie runs on with glasses of fresh orange juice and

the Frisbee Player and Eric break off from Frisbee to down the glasses in one and hand the empty glass back to Laurie; all smiles and laughs. Laurie turns away and David, partly in football kit (holding a football helmet) enters; he catches Laurie and they dance together; she is very graceful and spins herself around. Eric and Frisbee Player seeing this, maybe dance with members of the audience. 'Taking advantage' of Laurie holding the glasses in both hands David catches her at the end of her spin and 'steals' a kiss and Laurie responds warmly and affectionately. David breaks off indicating he has to get to football practice – Laurie good-humouredly pushes him on his way. They are at ease with each other. Laurie takes the glasses offstage. David gestures to Eric and the other Frisbee Player to join him for football practice, but they lure him into playing with the Frisbee **perhaps with the audience**. Robert enters, oblivious to everything around him; he is reading a Spider-Man comic and unconsciously acting out the action in the comic. After a couple of throws, David gestures to the others to join him for practice, Eric gestures for him to 'be cool', David insists throwing the Frisbee to the ground, and the Frisbee Player joins him, but Eric refuses and David is frustrated and storms away with the Frisbee Player; they jostle Robert who walks into their path as they exeunt, Robert falls to the grass. Eric laughs. Laurie enters, looking puzzled at Robert who is sprawled on the grass slope; she carries a pile of school magazines – 'The Gordon High Grapevine' - she holds a Bic pen between her teeth. Eric picks up the Frisbee and throws it towards her, but she dodges it and lets it pass her. Eric shakes his head and heads for the picket fence, followed by Laurie. Music fades and Robert picks himself up and exits, not reacting to what has happened.)

2/

Laurie: Isn't it football practice?

Eric: Like it matters?

(Checking he is out of view of any teachers, he takes out a cigarette.)

Eric: How much training do I need to sit on a bench? Coach Schiller never plays me...

Laurie: But you're part of the team.

Eric: Am I, Laurie, am I? We lose every match and it's the same bull... no one cares...

Laurie: David cares.

Eric: Sure. David's a good guy. Cut to the chase, Laurie, I can see from that pen that you're not here to talk football...

Laurie: Eric, you promised me... you said the review would be done for this week.

Eric: O, yeah... er... I know, I said. Hey, what about fashion? Didn't Amy come through, she was gonna write you something?

Laurie: I'm chasing Amy like I'm chasing you – weren't you going to review that ... 'Midnight...?

Eric: Cowboy'. Yeh. There were no cowboys in it! Sorry, Laurie. I better go... (Picking up his football helmet) ...how can you review a film that's just plain grim? The review would be as dull as the movie... right?

Laurie: Something, Eric, please!

Eric: (He takes the pen from Laurie's mouth.) Sure. Quit worrying, Laurie – you're getting like your mother. (He puts the pen back in her mouth.) Next week. I promise. (He throws down his cigarette, stamps on it and – after looking around – he runs off. Laurie shakes her head. He's gone.)

Laurie: (Shouting, but knowing that she is not heard.) I am NOT like my mother! (She dances off.)

3/

(Laurie exits as the sheet covering the units is pulled away and the picket fence removed to reveal what appears to be a set of desks, slightly higgledy-piggledy, facing the audience and at the back in the middle a raised podium on which sits a movie projector. Ben Ross, a teacher, dressed in neat slacks and white open-collared shirt, enters carrying a leather bag and a spool of film which is spilling film.)

Ben: Damn! (As he tries to catch the film he drops the spool and it escapes him across the stage, Ben chasing after it.) Ah!! Machines, machines! I hate them! They know in their little metal hearts that I'm scared of them! (He picks up the spool and tries to wind the film on, but, juggling his bag as well, it escapes him again and rolls across the ground.) Darn it!

(David enters, carrying his helmet, school books, and now in school clothes. He traps the spool with his foot.)

David: Hey, Mister Ross, are you having trouble with that projector again? Here. Let me do it.

(David puts his things down on his desk and threads the film into the projector.)

Ben: Thanks, David. Ridiculous, I know. Machines drive me crazy. They've put in a self-service pump at the gas station – I can't work it! My wife says I can't be trusted with changing a light bulb! (David looks up at Ben.) Hey! I've changed many light bulbs in my life... busted a couple along the way, sure...

David: Don't worry, Mister Ross, I love this stuff. What are we watching?

Ben: Germany in the Second World War.

David: O. OK. Sounds heavy. But you know how to make the dull stuff interesting, Mister Ross. Like when we did the Monkey Trial...

Ben: The Scopes Trial, yes....

David: Yeh, the Monkey Trial! How you got us to be the jury and the prosecutor and everyone – that was a great class, Mister Ross. There. That's fixed – you just need to turn it on. You don't need me to...?

Ben: No. No! (laughing) I think I can handle it from here, David. Thank you. You may take your seat. Appreciate that.

David: I won't tell.

Ben: (Laughs.) Good man.

(Ben fusses with his bag, retrieving some assignment papers. Eric and Laurie enter and take their seats. David turns to see Laurie and they exchange warm looks. Eric raises his eyes. Ben registers the new arrival.)

Ben: Ah. Good afternoon, class. Good to see you all again. We're a little late (he checks his watch) so let's get right down to business. Though... Before we do, I have a few homework papers to return – Laurie, that's an A – good work. (Passes her the paper.) David – (he changes the mark) - you scraped a B, not bad, some real effort, you're asking questions, keep it up. Eric, a C? I ought to give you an F for lack of

effort, but I think you'd like that... there's no shame in success, Eric; if you ever completed one of these assignments properly, you'd beat everybody.

Eric: It's been a busy week, Mister Ross... movies and football...

Ben: Read my notes, would you? (Hands Eric who looks at the remarks, and shakes his head.) Homework is not optional, you guys! You can't put your social life first! Get your work done and then enjoy yourselves... if you committed to your homework you'd enjoy it – am I right? (David looks unsure, but Eric nods.) You see, but you never grab the chance! OK, one left... Robert?

(Everyone turns to an empty desk.)

David: That boy is a waste of...

Ben: Alright, Mister Collins, let me...

(Robert enters, his shirttails hanging, hair uncombed.)

Ben: Ahah, Mister Robert Billings!! Good of you to join us. (The other kids snigger.) That's a D for you, Robert, I'm afraid. I don't know what to say that I haven't said before.

David: His social life is getting in the way of his work, Mister Ross.

(Laurie and Eric laugh. Robert doesn't react.)

Ben: OK, OK.

(Robert sees the projector.)

Robert: We gonna see a movie?

Eric: No, Mr Ross just set it up for laughs.

Ben: That's enough, Eric. (Exchanges a guilty glance with David.) Generally speaking, your papers were good, but sloppy. Nice ideas, but a mess. A good essay has to be planned... some of these are just plain messy! Who doodles on a homework paper and then submits it?

David: Who did that? (Looking round.)

Ben: None of your business, Mister Collins. Is it, Eric? (Eric is a little crestfallen, and shocked at being exposed.) Now, come on, guys, I'm going to have to start lowering grades for sloppy papers – if you need to corrections, then write it out again.

Anybody listening? (Laurie and Eric nod, but David is staring out Robert. Ben claps his hands.) Right – new subject, Laurie, can you get the lights, please?

Laurie: Yes, Mister Ross. (David mouths "Yes, Mister Ross" to Laurie as she stands and goes to the light switch, joshing Laurie for her enthusiasm.)

Ben: Thank you, Laurie. OK, thank you for all your work on The Depression. Our new subject is the Second World War and Germany in particular. To get us started we're going to have a look at a short film, as Mister Billings has perceptively noted. (He nods to Laurie. Laurie turns off the lights. Eric and David ironically cheer as if it were the lights going down in a cinema. Laurie returns to her seat. Ben turns on the projector and a flickering blueish light is projected above the heads of the audience. Laurie, David and Eric watch the imaginary screen above the audience's head, but Robert is already distracted – first looking for something in his pockets, then scratching at his desk and eventually laying his head on his desk and falling asleep. There are no images visible from the projector.)

Ben: These are just the opening credits... what you are about to watch took place in Germany between 1934 and 1945. It was the work of a man named Adolf Hitler. Originally this man – Hitler - was a menial labourer, a corporal in the army - a small time ordinary guy who got turned on to politics after fighting in World War One. He was on the losing side and he was angry about that. After the defeat Germany was a mess: its people were demoralised and disappointed, its leaders were discredited, there was terrible inflation – people were going to the mall – well, to the shops, as

they were then - and they had to take their banknotes in wheelbarrows, that's how bad the inflation was – they printed a banknote in the morning and in the afternoon they had to add a few zeros to it! Thousands of ordinary people were made homeless, some starved, plenty of folk lost their jobs. But to Adolf Hitler, that suffering was an opportunity – he climbed the political ranks of the party he joined, the Nazi party. He preached a theory that the Jews were to blame for Germany's problems, that the Jews were destroyers of civilisation and that the Germans were a superior race. Now, today, of course, everybody knows that Hitler was a psychopath, literally a madman. In 1923 he had been thrown into jail for his violent politics, but he was soon released and by 1934 he and his party were in power. Ah. Yes. What you are going to see... (pauses for the picture to change, Laurie gasps) ... now... are some of the consequences of that control.

(Eric shakes his head and looks away and then looks back through his fingers. David stares blankly at the screen. Robert is asleep.)

Eric: Good God...

Laurie: Are those.... are those... people?

Ben: Yes. Yes, they are, Laurie. Hard to believe? People reduced to walking skeletons – and there... there... they are being forced to pile up the corpses of their fellow prisoners ... these here are gas chambers used to kill many of them, others died from overwork and starvation. (Ben shakes his head.) Then they were burned in industrial ovens. Just be glad you only have to see, you don't have to smell the film...

David: Eee. Smell-o-vision... (The others don't react to David's sick joke.)

(Laurie wipes away a tear. David realises his mistake and returns to looking at the screen; mores seriously now.)

Ben: These are the walls of the camp, the guard towers... and these are some of allied troops who liberated the camps.... And... that's it. Lights, please, Laurie.

(Laurie is lost in her thoughts.)

Ben: Laurie?

Laurie: Uh, what...

Ben: Lights, please.

Laurie: O, sure, Mister Ross.

(Laurie turns on the lights.)

Ben: I am sorry if that has upset one or two of you. Not that that's anything to be ashamed of if you are. But I didn't show you the film to upset you. I want to see if it can make you think. So, have a think right now about you saw and what I told you ... and see if that suggests any questions that you should be asking about this place and time in history?

(Laurie raises her hand immediately.)

Ben: Laurie?

Laurie: Were they all Nazis? The Germans, I mean.

Ben: (Shaking his head.) No, no, not at all. I doubt if one in ten of the population were members of the Nazi party. The vast majority were not Nazis.

Eric: So how come no one stopped them?

Ben: Well. I'm not sure I can exactly answer that... I guess many people were scared. The Nazis were violent killers after all. The majority of the population had just been through a terrible economic depression, they probably weren't ready for another fight – maybe some of them hoped that the Nazis would look after them. After the second world war, most Germans said they had no idea that the atrocities you saw were going on.

Eric: That's crazy. Totally. How could you slaughter... how many...

Ben: Approximately ten million...

Eric: Ten *million*!!! And nobody noticed? Get out of here!

David: Yeh. That can't be true.

(Laurie puts up her hand.)

Ben: Yes, Laurie?

Laurie: Eric's right. The Germans just sat back and let the Nazis slaughter ten million people! How could they do that? To other human beings!

Ben: (Shrugs.) All I can tell you are the facts; the Nazis were organised and feared. The behaviour of the rest of the population is.... well, it's a mystery to most people. Frankly, I'm not going to pretend to you that I know. Why didn't they try to stop all this? (He shrugs.) How could they say or even think that they didn't know? (He shrugs again.) We just don't have proper answers to these questions...

Eric: (Putting his hand up. Ben nods for him to speak.) I would *never* ... you know, bottom line, I would never let anything like that happen to people... you can't let a minority of maniacs rule the majority.

David: Yeh. You gotta stop those kinda people. I wouldn't let a couple of Nazis scare me into pretending I didn't see something I did.

(Laurie and Eric raise their hands. The bell rings loudly for end of class.)

Laurie: (Disappointed.) O! (But Eric and David are already up on their feet grabbing their school books and kit.)

David: Nice one, Mister Ross. Great lesson. (To Laurie.) Come on, baby. You know how quick that cafeteria queue grows!

Laurie: I'll catch you in a minute...

David: It's your funeral. Cold post roast... yew! (He exits. He hits the sleeping Robert Billings on the top of the head as he exits. Robert stirs.)

Robert: Uh.

Laurie: Gee, Mister Ross, I can't believe that even the Nazi ones could have been that cruel! No one can be, can they? Not decent people?

Ben: Well, after the war many tried to excuse themselves, of course: they said that they were having to follow orders. That they were scared of ending up in those death camps themselves.

Laurie: That's just excuses. Why couldn't they have run away if they didn't agree with things? Could they think for themselves? No one just 'follows' an order - you have to be able to understand it to obey it, don't you?

Ben: Yes. Yes. Good point, Laurie. That's... you see, Laurie... er... look; I'm sorry, I don't have any easy answers. I'm telling you what people did. I don't know why they did it...

Laurie: A bunch of sickos. Totally sickos.

(Ben nods and grimaces.)

Laurie: (Picking up her school things.) Sorry, Mister Ross... it makes me mad.

(Laurie exits. Robert meanwhile is trying to sneak out unnoticed.)

Ben: (With his back to Robert, without turning.) Robert. (Robert freezes.) Wait a minute, would you?

(Robert waits, looks at the floor. Ben takes the spool from the projector and begins to pack it away, then looks over to Robert.)

Ben: Are you getting enough sleep?

(Robert nods without looking up.)

Ben: (Sighs.) If you don't start participating you're going to make me fail you, Robert. At this rate you'll never graduate. You don't want that? Don't you have anything to say?

Robert: (Shrugs.) I don't care. Is that what you want to hear?

Ben: No, it is not. What do you mean – "don't care"? Of course you care...

(Robert tries to inch towards the door.)

Ben: Robert? Is this about your big brother? Nobody expects you to be the baseball star who gets straight As! Students like your brother come along once in a generation. Even I... even I used to ... well, feel a little... 'acidic' about guys like your brother... when I was at my high school, obviously. No one is expecting you to be another Jeff Billings, but at least try to be a decent version of Robert Billings? Eh? Please? For your own sake?

Robert: Can I go now?

Ben: Get out of here.

(Robert exiting.)

Ben: (shouting after Robert) I don't care about your brother! (Pauses. Then, throws his hands up in frustration at himself. Ironically:) That went well.

4/

(The units are arranged into two canteen tables. David enters carrying a tray piled with food. He begins to tuck in. A few moments later Laurie enters with her tray – just a couple of items.)

Laurie: You didn't need to rush off like that.

David: I said I liked the class.

Laurie: Yes, but... o, anyway. (She puts down her tray and looks at the food, loses interest.)

David: What's up with you?

Laurie: That film.

David: Uhuh.

Laurie: Doesn't it bother you?

(The Frisbee Player has entered and sits at the next table, putting down his tray and starting to eat.)

David. Yeh. Sure. It bothers me. As something horrible that happened once. It bothers me like that. But it's not something that's going to stop me getting lunch. It was a long time ago, Laurie. History. We can't change that anymore.

Laurie: You don't have to forget it quite so quickly!

(Laurie tries to bite into her food, but gives up and puts it down.)

David: Well, you can't go around bummed out about it for the rest of your life.

(Robert enters with tray. David and Laurie watch him.)

David: Here comes the Great Stillings; Gordon High's own private Untouchable.

(Robert sits down at the same table as the Frisbee Player and takes out his Spider-Man comic, its cover: 'Campus In Crisis' from 1969. The Frisbee Player looks up and sees Robert, looks around for a space at another table, sees one, picks up his tray and heads for it, exiting from the stage. Robert pretends not to notice, but he has. He looks up sheepishly and then looks quickly down to his comic.)

Laurie: Do you think there's something really wrong with him?

David: It's pretty weird that he's related to his brother.

Laurie: My mom knows his mom...

David: Yeh? She ever talk about him?

Laurie: My mom? No. Except she said that they tested him once – and he got a really normal mark for his IQ.

David: They should have tested him for weirdness – he'd get a straight A for that. Are you not eating that? (David helps himself to Laurie's food.)

Laurie: No. (Sarcastically.) Help yourself. O. You already did.

(David ignores Laurie's barbed comment and chews away. Eric enters with tray and joins David and Laurie.)

Eric: Hi, guys.

(David shakes his head and Laurie looks down at her tray. Eric exchanges looks with David.)

Eric: Wow, did another Kennedy die?

Laurie: Don't...

David: She's upset.

Eric: About that movie?

Laurie: (looking around) Why don't you get the Principal to announce it over the tannoy?

Eric: I know someone who isn't upset? (He looks round at Robert, David and Laurie turn and look.)

Eric: Did you see him sleep the whole way through Ben Ross's film?

Laurie: That is sick. Almost as sick as Mr Football Captain here... (to Eric) weren't you... affected?

Eric: Sure. Like, I knew about that stuff... but it's different when you see it, yeh?

David: Hey, you two, I didn't say I wasn't bothered. I just said I was hungry. Look, all I said was: it's finished. It's done. It happened once and the world moved on. Learned its lesson. Nothing to see here, move along. It won't happen again.

Laurie: I hope not. Come on, Eric.

(Eric rising from his seat.)

David: Where you going?

Laurie: To work on the newsletter. With Eric.

David: O, don't let me hold you two intellectuals back. Not much coverage of the football team in The Grapevine recently.

Laurie: Try winning. Just once. That *would* be a story.

David: (Pointing at her.) *You* take things too seriously.

Laurie: (Pointing back.) Yeh, and you don't take them seriously enough.

(David rises and exits, hitting Robert on the back as he exits so that Robert spills his coke on his Spider-man comic. He does not react.)

Eric: Wow. You two were having a fight. I never saw that before.

Laurie: He's such a jock sometimes.

Eric: Yeh, but he's a smart jock. Did you ever see the computer he built from a kit?

Laurie: (Sarcastically.) No, I completely missed that. It was only about the same size as a Cadillac!

Eric: Sorry, girl. David's a nice guy. He's better than regular. He doesn't even look at other girls.

Laurie: He better not.

Eric: No, I mean he doesn't even *look*. Hey, when was the last time the Grapevine did anything on true love romance? You could write it.

Laurie: Yeh, I suppose .. do you s... hey! Stop changing the subject.

Eric: What subject?

Laurie: Your movie review. Where is it?

Eric: Yeh, um... I gotta run, Coach Schiller says he's gonna throw anyone off the team who doesn't make practice. (Looks around the canteen.) He ain't gonna have a team for Saturday! This place is a dump... why don't you write about that.



(Laurie shakes her head, looking hard at Eric. Eric is walking off backwards as he speaks to Laurie, as he turns Robert is crossing his path and Eric dodges neatly around him. He doesn't touch or push him, but scowls.)

Eric: Hey, man!

(Eric exits, Robert exits.)

Laurie: Boys! (She slams her hands on the canteen table.) Aaagh!

5/

(The units are moved around to make a kitchen table, with books scattered across it. Ben enters – he is holding a book, skimming through the index.)

Ben: "Hierarchy." "Ideology." "Parades." "Party." "Terror." Come on, where are you? "Uniform." "War." (Puts it down.) There's got to be something on.... what will be under? "Personal Responsibility"? (He looks again. Reads.) "Parades. Party. Patriotism. Penalties. Prisons ..." – nothing. (Picks up another book and flicks through the index.) Not a one of them. (Has an idea.) "Obedience"! (Flicks through index.) "O, O... yes... Oath. Odessa. Orchestra..."... it's hopeless... (Picks up another, flicks through.) No. (Addresses the books.) Can't just one of you tell me something about *why* they didn't speak out? Guys? Please, do your jobs... What's the mystery? Why did they obey? Did you have to be there?

(Christy Ross has entered. She is dressed in tennis whites and carries a tennis racket. As she enters she is repeating winning strokes and victory celebrations from her match. She stops and takes in the sight of her husband quizzing the books.)

Christy: Is history behaving badly again, darling?

Ben: In a way...

Christy: Give it a detention.

Ben: I can't. I need it in the classroom. Christy... why did the Germans go along with Nazism?

Christy: Don't ask me. (Taps her chest.) Music. Second graders don't get to do much Wagner. (She wipes some crumbs from the top of a book.) Good to see you didn't forget to eat this time. Did you try the new meat loaf. (Opens one of the books.) O my. (Puts it down quickly.) Wanna hear about some other kind of history?

Ben: (Not listening, he has picked up another book. Mouthing: "Obedience.") Uh... other...

Christy: I made some history today, Ben...

Ben: (To himself.) Obedience...

Christy: I beat Betty Lewis.... how many times has that happened?

Ben: (Utterly absorbed in a book.) O, I, er...

Christy: I said: I beat Betty Lewis...

Ben: (Looks up at Christy.) What? Sorry.

Christy: O, you're impossible when you're like this! Is this going to be like your enthusiasm for Native American Indians? Please, tell me you're not going to be bringing Nazis home to dinner are you? Like you did with those guys from the reservation?

Ben: They were fine.

Christy: They *were* fine, yes. It was you that was the embarrassment. Wearing moccasins? (She shudders.) Thank god it never got to war paint.

Ben: I was studying their culture.

Christy: No you weren't, Ben. You were taking over their culture and diving head first into it. You can never just study something, can you? You have to get right into it. You don't have normal barriers.

(Ben, takes her by the waist.)

Ben: That's why you love me.

Christy: Well, as a matter of fact it is, but don't try to drag me in this time. (She removes his hands.) No Nazis for dinner, OK? What class are you teaching them, anyway? Advanced dictatorship?

Ben: You wouldn't be kidding if you saw the film we watched this afternoon.

Christy: (She sees his seriousness.) No. Maybe not. You OK, mister?

Ben: One of my students asked me a question I couldn't answer?

Christy: "What are you doing here?" (He doesn't respond.) "Why bother?" (Nothing.)

OK, OK.... you've convinced me, you've convinced me, Ben; I give in! You're not going to be joked out of this... we're stuck with it, yeh? So why don't you tell me right now what this is really all about?

Ben: That's the problem, Christy, I can't tell you – because the answer to the question isn't written down anywhere. I think maybe it's something you would only know if you experienced it.

Christy: O. Great. How are you going to experience... (she picks up a book from the table) ... the Third Reich?

Ben: That's what I'm trying to work out...

Christy: OK. (She starts to exits, then stops.) Well try not to wake me when... *if* you come to bed. I can see it's going to be one of those nights. Just you remember you've got classes in the morning...

Ben: Yeh, yeh...

(Christy exits, rehearsing and savouring a tennis shot. Ben turns back to the books, opens one and begins to pace up and down.)

Ben: (to himself.) Orders, obedience, obligation, motivation...

6/ (As Ben continues to work through the books and paces up and down and around the table, almost breaking into a march in his excitement and concentration, a banner begins to rise above the back of the stage. It reads: STRENGTH THROUGH DISCIPLINE – it is very homemade; clearly put together by Ben overnight.

The units are transformed into the classroom shape, the desks still slightly out of line. Ben, still in his kitchen, begins to pack his leather bag/case with the teaching books.

Robert enters the classroom; he takes a piece of exhausted chewing gum from his mouth and looks around for somewhere to stick it. Robert bends to stick the gum under a desk, just as Eric and David enter, spotting Robert and heading for him David pats him on the back.)

David: Keep it up, Robert – pride in the school, man, pride in the school.

(Robert looks puzzled. Eric takes a glimpse at Robert's back and almost collapses in hysterical laughter.)

Robert: What is it? (He turns to Eric revealing to the audience that David has stuck a sign on his back that reads "TOUCH MY ASS". David who can now see the sign is equally stricken with hysterics. Laurie enters.)

Laurie: What's happening? (Sees the sign on Robert's back.) O, you guys! You'll go too far! (She goes to take the sign of Robert's back, but decides against it and backs off when Robert turns towards her. She sees the banner. Stops.)

Laurie: Hey!

(The others turn and look.)

David: What's that supposed to mean?

(Ben commands the class, as though he is just entering the classroom.)

Ben: Ah, you've seen our new class banner?

David: What's it about, Mister Ross?

Ben: I'll tell you just as soon as you're seated.

(They scramble to their desks. Eric pushes a dawdling Robert.)

Eric: (to Robert) Come on, man, don't you wanna know?

(They sit. Pause.)

Ben: Thank you. Good morning. (They mumble "good morning" in response.) Today I am going to teach you about discipline.

(A collective groan of disappointment.)

Ben: Hold it, hold it, hold it... you guys *all* find discipline exciting. You do! You just don't call it discipline!

Eric: Exciting?

Ben: Sure. We're talking about power here. (He makes a fist.)

(Eric makes a black power salute, head down, like the black Olympic sprinters. He laughs.)

Ben: Yes. See. I'm talking about people who use discipline to get success. To make a mark, to make a difference. You know anyone who doesn't want to make a difference?

Eric: Er, Robert?

Ben: OK, OK, smart guy. Even Robert. David, come on, you play football...

Eric: You call it that... (David points a mock warning finger at Eric, but there is some threat there.)

Ben: You need discipline to win, right?

Laurie: Which is probably why they haven't ... for..

David: Hey, we know how long we haven't won for. How long since the last Grapevine?

Ben: You still taking ballet classes, Laurie?

Laurie: Sure, Mister Ross.

(Ben gestures and Laurie makes a few dance steps and then return to her seat.

David and Eric applaud and Laurie stands and bows gracefully.)

Ben: Doesn't it take ballet dancers long hours of hard work to learn their art?

Laurie: Sure thing!

Ben: Same with every art. Painting, writing, music – years of hard work and a discipline to be mastered. All of them. Hard work, discipline, control.

Eric: Where's this going? I mean... (shrugs).. so what? We're kids, we're not geniuses... Laurie's great but she isn't going to work at the Bolshoi, David's never going to play in the Super Bowl...

David: Hey!

Ben: "So what?" Listen to yourself. "Not" this, "not" that... what about something positive? What about you serving in Congress, Eric? Suppose I could show you how to create power and success from discipline? Not tell you. Show you. Right here in this classroom. I could give – you – power. What would you say to that?

Eric: Wow. (He's interested.) I mean "if".

(Ben looks round the class waiting for a wisecrack, but it doesn't come. Even Robert is now engaged.)

Ben: OK! Laurie. Come up here a minute. Power begins with posture. (He draws one of the units into the middle of the stage.)

David: Teacher's pet.

(Eric waves his hand to David to be quiet. David taken aback by this.)

Ben: Sit. (Laurie sits on the unit.) Now place your hands flat across the small of your back and force your spine straight up. There! Now, can't you breathe more easily?

Laurie: (slightly surprised.) Yes! That's... yes, that's OK....

(Eric copies the action and David, trying not to be noticed does too. Robert straightens a little.)

Ben: Come on, David, give it a try!

David: (surprised) I was. (He doubles his effort, Eric copies. Robert straightens fully now.) Hey! Is this history, or did I come to gym by mistake!

Ben: Concentrate. We know you can be a wise guy, can you do this? (Ben walks up and down between the desks, manipulating Eric and Laurie's posture slightly.) Good. Good. Just bend a little more... that's it. Good. Robert, excellent!

(The other turn in surprise to look at Robert who is sitting fully straight and staring ahead, not making eye contact. Robert smiles briefly and then returns to a his blank face, but his posture remains straight.)

Ben: (claps his hands) All right. Relax. Now, on my command, I want you all to get up and walk around the room. Then, when I say so, you will return to your seats as quickly as is safely possible and resume the correct sitting posture. Everyone... go! (Loud scraping of chairs. Eric, Laurie and Robert immediately jump up and begin walking around. David pauses for a moment, but then joins in. Once four of them are up they bump into each other, Eric tries to dodge bumping into Laurie and trips. They all laugh. David points at Eric)

Ben: Take your seats!!

(They return to their seats. Scraping of chairs. David forgets his posture.)

Ben: David?

David: O. (He looks around and sits straight.)

Ben: That was the most disorganized mess I've ever had the misfortune to witness. This isn't 'duck, duck, goose' (tag) in kindergarten! This is an experiment in movement and posture! Now, come on! One more time, when I say. No chatter this time. The more controlled you are, the faster you will reach your seat. Now, everyone – go!

(It is still chaos.)

Ben: OK, OK, - freeze!!! OK! Stay right where you are. Now I want you to TRY to be as chaotic as you can be. Think of the hippiest, crazy, Haight-Ashbury, most drop-out kid you could be, yeh, and ... go! (They mess around, stumbling into each, laughing, making peace signs and so on.) And freeze! Right and on my command, again and this time look out for each other and respect yourself, stay controlled and keep your backs straight. And... again!!! (This time there is more control.) Keep going, this is much better! Much better!

(Movement sequence in which Ben gives silent commands and the kids perform various walking exercises around the desks, eventually in patterns and almost marching. This to music that starts off as Californian rock and ends with something closer to marching band music like a John Philip Sousa march or 'National Emblem' or 'Anchors Aweigh'. On Ben's silent command they return to their desks, all sitting up straight, and again to ben's orders they are up and marching about and then back to their seats.)

Ben: Well done! Well done! OK, let's throw in a twist. On my order, leave the classroom and when I give the command return to your seats. (Holds up a stopwatch.) I'll only stop the watch when the last person is seated and straight. Do it! (They exeunt.)

Ben: Return!!!

(They return chaotically, getting stuck in the door.)

Ben: Stop! Stop! Out again – and this time with *discipline!*

(They shuffle out quickly.)

Ben: Again!!!

(They are more orderly this time, but Eric and David still trip over each other.)

Ben: Freeze! (They freeze.) And out again!! Waiting my order...

(They shuffle out.)

Robert: (Stops the others.) Hey, why don't we line up like in Elementary School? The person in the furthest desk at the front of the queue – that way we don't trip?

Laurie: Yes, that will work!

(They shuffle into line. Robert is at the front.)

David: (Points at Robert, to Laurie) The new head of the class!

Ben: Go!!!

(They file in quickly and assume their seats. Ben clocks the stopwatch.)

Ben: Eight point seven seconds. That is outstanding, class, give yourself a whole crate of cheers for that one!!!

(The kids stand in their seats and clap and cheer.)

Ben: All right. All right. (He swiftly moves to the classroom door and closes it.) Quiet down. (There is instant silence and the students sit down in straight postures. Ben holds the moment, walking between the desks, the kids first look at him out of the corner of their eyes, but then stare forward. Long pause.) There are three more rules. You obey these rules. One: everyone must have pencils and notepaper for making notes. Two: when asking or answering a question, you must stand straight by the side of your desk. And three: when asking or answering a question, your first words are "Mr Ross". Understood?

(The kids all nod.)

Ben: (quickly) David, who was the British Prime Minister before Winston Churchill?

David: Er, it was... er... yeh, I know this..

Ben: Wrong! Wrong. You already forgot the rules, David. (He looks round the class, and sees Robert, eager. Throughout this lesson the kids are not cold, expressionless robots performing these actions and giving the answers; they are nice middle class kids who have discovered a way for the lessons to be fun. So, not behaving immediately like the Gestapo, but like boy scouts and girl guides, with plenty of smiles.) Robert? Can you show David the correct procedure?

(Robert gets smartly to his feet, stands by his desk at attention.)

Robert: Mr Ross!

Ben: Thank you, Robert. Absolutely correct.

David: Aw, com' on, we have to do that every time?

Eric: Just because you messed up...

Ben: David? Who was the British Prime Minister before Winston Churchill?

(David stands by his desk.)

David: Mr Ross. It was... uh...

Ben: Too slow. Everyone, make your answers short and sweet. Spit them out. David, try again.

David: (who has been easing back into his desk, jumps up and stands by his desk.)  
Mr Ross. Chamberlain.

Ben: You see. Everyone? That's the way to answer a question. (David is pleased.)  
Disciplined. And it *helped you* get it right, David. Confidence, ladies and gentlemen,  
is the first step to knowledge. Be seated, thank you. (David sits – slouches then  
corrects himself, Ben sees and smiles at David who smiles back.) Laurie, what  
country did Hitler invade in the September of 1939?

Laurie: (stands) Mr Ross. I don't know. (She sits.)

Ben: That's still a good response! Eric?

Eric: (Standing) Mr Ross. Poland.

Ben: Excellent. Robert, what was the name of Hitler's political party?

Robert: (standing) Mr Ross, the Nazis.

Ben: Excellent, Robert. Quick and accurate. Anyone give me the *official* name of the  
party?

(Laurie jumps up.)

Laurie: (Brightly, pleased with herself.) The National Sociali..

Ben: No!!!! (Bangs his ruler down on Laurie's desk. Speaks very quietly, but not  
unkindly.) Now. Do it again. (Laurie sits slowly, confused.)

David: (whispers to Laurie) "Mr Ross"...

Laurie: (nods, thanking David, stands.) Mr Ross. The National Socialist German  
Workers' Party.

Ben: Correct. Excellent. (She sits.)

Ben: David, who proposed the Lend-Lease act?

David: Mr Ross, Roosevelt.

Ben: Eric, who died in the death camps?

Eric: Mr Ross. The Jews.

Ben: Anyone else, Laurie?

Laurie: Mr Ross, gypsies, homosexuals and insane people.

Ben: Good, Laurie, good. (She sits.) And *why* were they murdered, Robert?

Robert: Mr Ross, they weren't part of the superior race.

Ben: Correct. David, who ran the death camps?

David: Mr Ross, the SS!

Ben: Excellent! Excellent, excellent, all round! Now, see how things *can* be in a  
classroom! Eh?

(The bell rings. No one moves. Ben looks at the kids and sees they have not moved.  
He turns his back on the class and smiles to himself. Then gathers himself and turns  
to them. )

Ben: Tonight, you will complete your reading of chapters seven and eight of 'Hitler's  
Youth'. Class... (Holds the moment.) ...dismissed!

(Ben picks up his case and almost marches out of the room. The kids slowly rise  
from their seats.)

David: Wow, that was weird, man! What a rush!

Eric: (Going to David) Man, I've never felt anything like *that* before!

Laurie: Sure beats taking notes!

Eric: Yeh! (Laughs.)

David: Don't knock this, Laurie. Don't knock it, babe. That was really, really different.  
That was like – when we all acted together? We were more than just a class of kids  
for once. We were a single unit. Remember what the man said about power? Didn't  
you feel it?

Laurie: It was a little bit spooky...

Eric: Come on, you two! You're taking it too seriously...

Laurie: I'm not. I'm just saying...

David: Let's take it seriously if we want to... O? We just felt something in here that I can't explain.

Eric: What's to explain? We stood by our desks. We did what we were told.

David: I don't know, Eric, friend... I think it was bigger than that. Suppose if the football team had that feeling? Yeh? Suppose Ben Ross coached us like that instead of Coach Schiller? (Mimics a dumb accent.) "You godda take em' down, you godda take 'em down..." (He turns to exit.)

Eric: Where you going?

David: The john. (Exiting.)

Eric: David. (David stops and turns.) When you're in there. Remember. Sit up straight.

(Laurie and Eric laugh. David doesn't respond to the joke. Turns and exits. Eric and Laurie exchange a look.)

Eric: Come on, it's chemistry.

Laurie: Uh.

(They turn to exit, bumping into David, re-entering, at the door.)

David: Forgot my kit. I'll catch you up.

(Eric and Laurie exit, David picks up his kit, then notices Robert who all this time has been standing by his desk staring ahead. David watches as Robert – unaware he is being watched - straightens his hair. Then snaps to attention, his lips moving as if still answering questions. He sits and then stands straight, sits and then stands straight, sits and then stands straight. Marching music. Robert picks up his school books and exits almost at a march, oblivious to David. David walks slowly out, glancing back at the classroom.)

7/

(Units switched to the layout of the Ross kitchen. Christy enters, dressing into her tennis whites. Ben pursues her, excited by his teaching. Christy is buttoning a blouse over her tennis skirt. She ties her shoe laces as they talk. This scene could be played with a certain denied sexual energy – Ben excited by his teaching, wanting to share the energy sexually with Christy, but Christy going out to play tennis, putting on her clothes, not taking them off.)

Christy: They thought it was sport! Kids don't take anything seriously at that age! They were competing with each other not to be the dumb-looking one...

Ben: No, no... (Christy reacts) Well, I'm sure that was part of it, but they took to it like they'd been waiting for something like this for the whole of their lives! It was weird.

Christy: You're being weird. It happens all the time. To them, it's a game.

Ben: Even in a game you can choose to play or not. They chose to play. Big time they chose. And the longer we went on and the harder I got with them, the more they chose. They *desired* to be disciplined! When the bell rang... listen to this - they didn't move.

(Christy stops short.)

Ben: Yes. More than a game, Christy, more – than – a – game.

(He runs his hand through her hair.)

Christy: Hey, you're messing me up for my match. (She pushes him away and brushes her hair.) You're making me late as it is. (Ben has turned away. Christy suddenly worried.) Do you think you'll go on with it tomorrow?

Ben: I'm not sure... we've got to get onto Japan.  
Christy: (relieved.) I'll be back about nine. No kiss?  
Ben: (Not listening.) Uh?  
(Christy shakes her head, but fondly.)  
Christy: Did you mean they... they stayed *after* the bell had rung?  
Ben: Hmm... yeh, yeh, after the bell.  
Christy: Ben, my sweet. (He turns to her.) You've created a monster! (She laughs.)  
Ben: No! Hardly...  
(Christie exits.)

8/

(Scraping of desks as now the desk units are arranged in strict rows. Eric, David and Robert take their places, standing at attention beside the desks. Ben enters. Stops when he sees the line up. Laurie enters and takes her place. She glances at Ben uncertainly, then looks ahead. Eric smirks, but controls it.)

Ben: What's going on here? Robert?

Robert: Mr Ross. Discipline.

Ben: I see. OK... I was... er.. going move on to Japan, this morning... (He takes out his Japan notes, he senses a frisson of disappointment as the kids sit down) ... but, er... is it really just discipline? Is that all? (Before they can answer.) I was thinking about this last night.

(He takes the Japan notes and turns them over, writing across the blank backs of three of them in big letters: COMMUNITY. Then he pins the sheets of paper to the makeshift banner. Then turns to the class.)

Ben: Community is the bond between people who work and struggle together for a common goal. It's like building a barn with your neighbours. It's the feeling you get when you're part of something more important than you. You're a movement, a team, a cause! You're committed... (he waits for the joke, but it doesn't come) ... to something good. But just like discipline, community has to be experienced; you have to participate in it to 'get it'. From now on our two mottos will be: Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community. Everyone, repeat the mottos.

(All the kids stand and recite the mottos. First Eric and Robert straight to their feet, David, a little uncertain but joins after a moment, feeling he needs to be part of the team spirit. Laurie is worried. She is the last to join in, but finally stands and shouts the mottos.)

All: Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community! Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community! Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community!

(Ben signals for them to stop and they sit down.)

Ben: What we need now is a symbol of our new community. Thirty seconds in your notebooks. First idea you get, draw!

(They all hunch over their notebooks. David can't think of anything.)

Ben: 15 seconds left. (Pause.) Five, four, three, two, one! OK, hold them up!

(They hold up the images. David's is a simple X, Eric has drawn something complicated, Robert's is like a Rorschach test, Laurie is a simple single wave in a circle.)

Ben: Laurie! Wonderful! Here's our symbol! A wave – a symbol of change. A symbol that has movement, direction and impact. A wave can smash into a cliff or caress a



small boat. From now on... well done, Laurie... from now on our movement will be called The Wave.

(The kids all stand by their desks and shout.)

All: The Wave! The Wave!

(Ben waves for them all to sit down and takes a larger piece of paper, draws the symbol on it and pins it up.) OK. What about a salute?

(David stands.)

David: Mr Ross. (He makes a fist.)

Ben: Eric? (He holds up two hands.)

David: That looks... (He stands.) Mr Ross. That looks like surrender...

(Eric and David sit. Robert stands.)

Robert: Mr Ross. (Robert makes a rather graceful salute – cupping his right hand in the shape of a wave, tapping it on his left shoulder and then holding it upright.)

Ben: Class! Give the salute!

(All rise and give the salute – almost getting right. Robert is beaming with pride.)

Ben: Again! And again! And again!

(Now they all get it right.)

Ben: All right. Sit down, please. That is our salute and ours only. Whenever you see a Wave member you will salute. (He salutes.) Robert, please; salute and give our mottos.

Robert: (standing and saluting ) Mr Ross. Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community!

Ben: Very good. Eric, David, Laurie! Join Robert.

(The three stand and salute and all four shout the mottos.)

All: Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community!

Ben: And again! All together!!

(The sounds of the four are supported with recorded chanting. The recorded chanting continues as the desks are broken up into units that become the lockers of the football changing rooms.)

9/

(Eric and David are changing into their football kit.)

Eric: It's a game in a history class, man – that Ben Ross is some clever guy, but in the end it's just a teacher's trick to keep us interested...

David: That doesn't mean it wouldn't work for the team? No! It's gotta be more than a trick...

Eric: You gotta convince Coach Schiller then! I'm not telling him!

David: What are you scared of? You think Mister Ross is going to punish me if I tell a couple of the guys?

Eric: No, man, it's the guys who'll punish you! They'll laugh at you!

(Deutsch enters in full football gear with helmet, played by the Robert actor. He's already been training. There is mud on his kit. He limps in.)

David: Hey, Deutsch! You heard about The Wave yet?

Deutsch: That crazy thing you've got going in Ross's class? Sure.

Eric: David thinks we should spread it to the team. What do you think, Deutsch?

(Deutsch groans, and stretches his shoulder as if might be injured.)

Deutsch: Well, if you think it can stop that two hundred twenty pound linebacker we're lined up against next Saturday then I'll join your Wave, I'll eat my Wheaties, I'll do my prep, anything to stop that beast, man!

Eric: I hear what you're saying, man; you're afraid of that team. I'll take your place, man, you just say the word.

Deutsch: The day they let you in the game we've got no chance. I know you smoke, you degenerate. The drop out who drops the ball.

Eric: The only reason you're quarterback ahead of me is that you're... (he almost says "white").

Deutsch: What? Say it.

Eric: ...dating the Coach's tramp daughter...

Deutsch: Why, you dirty ... (he lunges at Eric)

David: Hey!

(David gets up between the two to stop them fighting.)

Eric: Guys like me don't ever get to quarterback no matter how strong their arms are!

(Shaking his fist in Deutsch's face. The scuffle has attracted two other football players – played by Laurie and Ben actors, they wear their hair in scarves or helmets. Their kits are muddy from training. They follow the argument.)

David: Hey, hey, hey!! This is just what I'm talking about! You guys should be supporting each other, but you think this is just about yourselves!! How are we going to win if we're not a team?

Deutsch: What are you talking about, man? (Tugs at his shirt.) We wear the shirt...

David: I'm not talking about a shirt, I'm talking about what should be in the shirt – unity, discipline. And a heart that says "the team, the team, nothing but the team", and that means if Eric has to be left out, or if Deutsch has to be left out, it doesn't matter as long as the team is better for it. Your job – the two of you – is not to steal each other's position! Your job is to do whatever – whatever! – it takes to help this team win!

Eric: I could help this team win if I got to play...

David: You don't get it, Eric! We don't need any more self-serving individuals on the field! We've got 25 one-man teams out there already! You wanna be first string quarterback in a team that never wins? Either of you? Go ahead. Carry on. Or do you want to be part of a winning team?

Football player 1: We're tired of losin'...

(Murmurs of agreement.)

David: Well, Deutsch?

Football player 1: You can have my position – I'd be the waterboy if it meant we won!

(David goes over to Football player 1. Punches him in the chest; a comradely gesture.)

David: Team player! With people like you we could win. I'm not pretending we could storm the league, but we could win once!

Deutsch: Ok. You're so clever. What's your plan?

(David looks around him.)

Eric: Tell 'em about The Wave.

(Into a heightened stylised sequence in which Eric and David drill the players in the salute, then, putting on 'paint' under their eyes – an echo of the 'Indians' enthusiasm of Ben's – and getting into full football gear, they give The Wave salute in unison, mixed with training exercises in full gear, gathering for a group circle-hug, while all the time the sound of a chorus of "Strength Through Discipline, Strength Through Community!" grows from a few voices to the sound of a huge football crowd chanting it. The makeshift banner and symbol are lifted out and large smart versions are lifted in over the back of the stage.)

Lights change. The units are rearranged into a dining table. )

10/

(This scene comes in two versions – one with both Mr and Mrs Saunders in black, the second in blue with only Mr Saunders, so that Mrs Saunders never appears as an onstage character.)

First version.

(The Saunders's dining room.

Mr Saunders enters carrying and waving a golf putter.)

Mr S: Honey, honey! What a triumph! This beats everything! Honey! Honey? Honey, I'm home!

(Mrs Saunders enters carrying, under one arm, placards that read "California Women Vote For..." On her other arm is draped a light green tablecloth and in her hand an apple.)

Mrs S: Yes, so now the whole neighbourhood knows you are! I can't just drop everything to hear one of your golf stories. Here, make yourself useful, lay the table. (Hands him the tablecloth.)

Mr S: Is dinner ready?

Mrs S: Patience is a virtue. (Hands him an apple.) Some of us are in the middle of a campaign... (She exits. Mr S. looks disapprovingly at the apple. Mrs. S shouts from offstage.)

Mr S: Pot roast! Ready in two minutes. Lay those places, Bernie!

(Laurie enters, carrying her schoolbooks, just back from school.)

Mr S: Laurie! If only *you* could have been there today, my sweet child. Your father was the talk of the clubhouse. It was the best... I'll show you, I'll show you! Help me out. Here's the green... (He throws out the tablecloth over the dining table units and Laurie helps him to straighten it. He shouts off to Mrs Saunders.) We're laying the table, dear! (To Laurie, he holds his finger to his lips conspiratorially. He then carefully places the apple on the table cloth and climbs on a chair so he can strike the apple with his putter.) Everyone said what a terrible lie it was... right on the edge of the green, bunkers on two sides, the hole at the top of a slope with that damned water at the bottom. Everything and anything can go wrong.

(Mrs Saunders enters, carrying food, she stands and watches, unimpressed. She has seen this performance, or something similar, many times before. Laurie too; her mind is on other things.)

Mr S: Laurie, hold the fruit bowl ready. (Laurie picks up the fruit bowl and absent-mindedly holds it at one end of the table, at the far end from her father, as if it were the hole in the green.) I addressed the ball. I checked the green again. I'm on the last green and this is for the match. (Bends and looks down the surface of the table.)

Vicious slope. Take a deep breath. (Stands. Takes a deep breath.) Settle the putter in the palms. Gentle, but firm. By now the entire clubhouse has emptied and is standing around the green. I can hear the ice in their bourbons rattling. Then they settle. I visualise the ball's trajectory in my head; the whole thing is nothing more than an engineering problem... Laurie, ready with the bowl! Laurie? Laurie!

(Laurie has become preoccupied with her own thoughts.)

Laurie: Uh? Dad?

Mrs S: Is something worrying you, Laurie?

Laurie: O nothing, sorry, Mom. I was just thinking...

Mrs S: Laurie, my dear, I can see something is eating you.

Laurie: Mom! There's nothing wrong – you just worry all the time. You think everything is as tortured as the League of Women Voters!

Mrs S: (Putting food on the table.) Very well. (To Mr S.) Knives and forks. (Mr S gestures with his putter in mock frustration. Mrs S exits.)

Mr S.: (Resuming his story.) I settle over the ball. Bowl, Laurie, bowl. There's an unnatural hush over the whole course...

Laurie: Mom, there is something!

(Mrs S re-enters, she carries knives and forks.)

Mrs S: I knew it. You can't fool me. Now come and sit down – and you, Bernie – and you, young lady, can tell us what all the trouble is.

(Mr drops his putter, climbs down from the chair and straightens the table cloth, starting to eat the apple. Laurie and Mrs S, who places the cutlery around the table, and, finally, Mr S sit down around the table. Lighting change. Laurie is talking, but we do not hear her words. Instead we hear the sound of high school kids chanting the Wave mottos. We see Laurie demonstrate the Wave salute. Her mother is watching her like a hawk, her father is mostly lost in his food. The lights change and the sound fades away.)

Mrs S: I don't think I like it, Laurie. It sounds too militaristic to me.

Laurie: O, Mom, you've taken it the wrong way! It's not militaristic at all. There's a lot of positive energy around it.

Mr S: (surprising the other two) Gee, Midge, I'm for anything that gets these kids' attention!

Laurie: And that's what it's doing, Mom. Even the bad kids are into it. You know Robert Billings, the class creep? Even he's part of the group. And he doesn't get pushed around now. We've got community.

Mrs S: It's not history, though, is it? It's not Mr Ross's job to teach you how to be part of a group.

Mr S: This country was built by groups, Midge. The Pilgrims, the Founding Fathers. We could do with a bit more group thinking down at the plant...

Mrs S: Yes, but people in a group still have to think for themselves.

Mr S: (To himself.) Not in a factory...

Mrs S: The Pilgrims came here to escape those who wouldn't let them be individuals...

Laurie: Mom, we're still doing our history. Mr Ross has just found a way for *everybody* to understand it rather than just the top kids.

Mrs S: Isn't that rather uniform? We raised you to be an individual, Laurie.

Laurie: Mum, that's snobbery.

Mr S: Hey, you two! Come on, Midge, give the kids a break. A little bit of community spirit!

Laurie: (To Mrs S.) It was you that said I shouldn't get too independent, Mom. You just worry whichever way I am.

Mrs S: The popular thing is not necessarily the right thing.

Laurie: (getting up and taking her plate to the kitchen.) O, Mom! Either you're being stubborn or you just don't understand at all! (Exits)

Mrs S: (Shouts after her.) It was you raised it!

Mr S: Let the teachers do their job, Midge. What would you say if that Ben Ross came here and starting telling you how to run your Women Voters?

Mrs S: It's manipulation.

Laurie: (re-entering, fetching more plates to take out.) Mister Ross is not manipulating us.

Mr S: hey! Where's David tonight, dear? Isn't he coming over?

Mrs S. (getting up) You and David! You just want him here so you can lure him into the Den and show him your latest engineering magazine! Poor Laurie! Anyone would think David was dating you, not our daughter! (Turns to Laurie; but talking of Mrs S and David.) They're a match made in heaven!

(Mrs S and Laurie exiting to the kitchen.)

Mrs S: So, where is he?

Laurie: David's home studying – it's a history assignment for tomorrow.

Mr S: (Clearing the tablecloth. As if to himself, but loud enough to be overheard.)

David? Studying? Now you've got *me* worried!

(Laurie and Mrs S laugh. They all exeunt.)

## Scene 10 - second version

(The Saunders's dining room.

Mr Saunders enters carrying and waving a golf putter.)

Mr S: Honey, honey! What a triumph! This beats everything! Honey! Honey? Honey, I'm home!! Honey?

(Laurie enters.)

Mr S: Hi, Laurie, where's your Mom?

Laurie: O she's out at another of her League of Women Voters things – she told you this morning, Dad!

Mr S: Did she? I wasn't listening. Did she say anything about dinner?

Laurie: It's there for you in the kitchen – it's meat loaf.

Mr S: Again?

Laurie: Dad!

Mr S: (Holding his hands up in surrender.) I'm kidding!

Laurie: Yes, but Mom doesn't always know that.

Mr S: O Laurie, if only you could have been there today, my sweet child! Hold that.

(Hands Laurie his putter.) Don't drop it. Your father was the talk of the clubhouse!

(He exits to get his dinner. He shouts to Laurie from offstage. Laurie shakes her head, but she's amused rather than angry.) It was the finest game ever played on that course ... wait there, wait there!!!! I'll show you, I'll show you! (Then he makes

strange noises. He re-enters with a green check tablecloth over one arm, dinner plate and food in one hand, cutlery and condiments, perhaps ketchup, in the other

and an apple in his mouth, through which he is trying to speak. Laurie takes the apple.) Help me out, here, Laurie! Let's make this the 18<sup>th</sup> green and I'll show you...

(He throws the tablecloth over the dining table units and Laurie helps him to straighten it. He takes the apple from Laurie and carefully places it on the table cloth

and climbs on a chair so he can strike the apple with his putter.) Now, *everyone* said what a terrible lie I had... right on the edge of the green, bunkers on two sides, the

hole at the top of a slope with that darned water at the bottom. Everything and anything can go wrong – how was Bernie Saunders going to get out of this one, eh?

Hold the fruit bowl ready, dear. (Laurie picks up the fruit bowl and absent-mindedly holds it at one end of the table, at the far end from her father, as if it were the hole in

the green.) I addressed the ball. I checked the green again. It's the final hole. This for the match. (Bends and looks down the surface of the table.) Vicious slope. Deep

breath. (Stands. Takes a deep breath.) Settle the putter in the palms. Gentle, but firm. By now the entire clubhouse has emptied and is standing around the green. I

can hear the ice in their bourbons rattling. They settle. I visualise the ball's trajectory in my head; the whole thing is nothing more than an engineering problem... Laurie, ready with the bowl! Laurie? Laurie!

(Laurie has become preoccupied with her own thoughts.)

Laurie: What? O. Sorry.

Mr S: (Dropping his play acting.) Laurie?

Laurie: Dad?

Mr S: (getting down from the chair) Hey, what's up, special daughter?

Laurie: O nothing, sorry, Dad, I was just thinking.

Mr S: O that's more than thinking, I can see when something's eating folk.

Laurie: Dad! It's nothing...

Mrs S: Can I remind you, special daughter, that your old Pop is Employee Relations Manager at a plant with a workforce of 4,786 men and women – if I don't know the difference between something and nothing, nobody does!

Dad: There's nothing wrong – you're worse than Mom with your worrying!

(Mr S. holds Laurie's gaze.)

Laurie: OK, OK... there is something!

Mr S: I knew it. Tell me while I'm eating. Go on. Pop's all ears!

(Mr S sits down around the table. Lighting change. Laurie is talking, but we do not hear her words. Instead we hear the sound of high school kids chanting the Wave mottos. We see Laurie demonstrate the Wave salute. Her Dad is eating, but all the time he is watching Laurie carefully. The lights change and the sounds fade away.)

Mr S: I don't think I like it, Laurie. It sounds too militaristic to me. I don't think your Mom would like it much either.

Laurie: O, Dad, you've taken it the wrong way! That's why I didn't want to tell you! You never listen properly. There's a lot of positive energy around The Wave. Even the bad kids are into it. You know Robert Billings, the class creep? Even he's part of the group. And he doesn't get pushed around now. Because we've got community. Tell me that isn't positive?

Mr S: OK, I can't tell you that it's bad specifically...

Laurie: What wrong with belonging to a group?

Mr S: Nothing. Not in itself. This country was built by groups. We could do with a bit more group thinking down at the plant.... But the individuals in the group still have to think for themselves, Laurie.

Laurie: We *are* thinking for ourselves. Nobody's forcing us.

Mrs S: OK. Well, just as long, eh? Some of those teachers can be very persuasive. The Pilgrims Fathers came to this country because they weren't afraid to think for themselves. But that didn't stop other people trying to shut them up...

Laurie: Dad! I know! We're still doing our history; we haven't had our brains emptied!

Mr Ross has just found a way of getting *everybody* to understand rather than just the top kids.

Mr S: Well... as long he's not rounding you down to the lowest denominator. We raised you to be an individual, Laurie. What suits everybody else isn't necessarily what's right - you understand that, right?

Laurie: Dad! Either you're being stubborn or you are just not listening! (Exits)

Mrs S: (Shouts after her.) It was you raised it!

Laurie: (Off.) O, you twister!

Mr S: Hey? Where's David tonight? Isn't he coming over?

Laurie: (Putting her head back in the room) You and my David! You just want him here so you can bore him with the engineering magazines you keep in the Den! Folks will think David is dating you, not me!

Mr S: (Not thrown by this.) Well, where is he?

Laurie: He's home studying – it's a history assignment for tomorrow.

Mr S: (His meal finished he picks up his dish and clears the tablecloth.) David? Studying? Now you *have* got me worried!

Laurie: O, Dad!

(Laurie exits.)

Mr S: Hey, I haven't finished my putting story!!!

(He exits, carrying his dinner things.)

11/

(Lights up on the big Wave symbol. The units arranged into classroom formation. David and Laurie enter. Laurie is writing in a notebook.)

David: (As if answering a question from Laurie.) Hit 'em hard and hit 'em low. Get to their quarterback before he gets to work the pocket. Listen to the coach. Work as one machine. It's as simple as that, Laurie... hey? What is this for?

Laurie: I've decided there's going to be a new issue of The Grapevine.

David: Good for you. Things are happening. (Gestures to the Wave symbol.) This is just what our team needs.

Laurie: And a quarterback who can pass...

David: Don't you dare write that. The Grapevine has gotta be part of the team.

Laurie: Sure...

David: I'm serious.

Laurie: David... Mom says we're being brainwashed...

David: See! Right there! You've gotta use the Grapevine to stop people saying things like that.

(Ben Ross enters. He is dressed in a blue suit and his usual white shirt is buttoned to the neck and he wears a blue tie. Eric and Robert follow him in and go straight to their seats. Laurie and David quickly get to their seats. Ben takes out some yellow cards and hands them out, checking each card as he does.)

David: (To Laurie) It's not the week for report cards?

Laurie: (studying the card) It's a membership card...

Ben: No talking. You all have your own membership cards now. In your own name. If you turn them over you will see that some of you have a red X. That means you are a monitor. Monitors will report to me the name of any member of The Wave who does not obey the rules.

(Robert turns his card over and smiles. Laurie, Eric and David turn their cards over – Laurie and David grimace. Eric does not react. Laurie raises her hand.)

Ben: Yes, Laurie?

Laurie: What's the point of this, sir? We know we're members?

Ben: (Long pause.) Aren't you forgetting something?

Laurie: O, shoot... (Stands.) Mister Ross. What's the point of the cards?

Ben: And, Robert. Weren't you forgetting something?

(Robert looks around, lost for a moment. Then it dawns on him and he stands, snapping to attention.)

Robert: Mister Ross. Laurie did not use the correct procedure.

Ben: Thank you. You may both sit down.

(They sit.)

Ben: I think that answers the question. (Laurie is shocked.) Today's word is ... (he holds up a placard that reads ACTION.) You may know about discipline and community, but they are ultimately worthless without action. Discipline gives you the right to act, but only action will realise your goals. You must act! Class, do you believe in the Wave?

(A moment of hesitation, not from doubt, but not quite understanding. Then Eric, Robert and David stand.)

Eric, Robert, David: Mister Ross, yes!

(Laurie is just behind them.)

Laurie: Mister Ross, yes!

Ben: Then, take action! Never be afraid to act on what you believe. Listen to your hearts. Always. Look to the most precious thing inside you. Don't deny it. Put it to work for The Wave. The Wave can only work if you make that precious thing part of the machine. Support one another and that precious thing will grow in the movement of The Wave. But only if you work together and obey the rules. There are no prizes for being the best Wave member – instead make The Wave best! Only then will you see the success of (pointing in turn at pupils) "you", and "you" and "you" in a new "us"!

(Eric, Robert and David seem to be buying this, but Laurie looks troubled, though she continues to stand straight by her desk.)

Ben: Be seated. We are beginning a new phase. Your next action is to recruit. The Wave requires more members.

(David makes a thumbs up sign to Eric.)

Ben: So, what are you waiting for? Class dismissed.

Robert: (quickly, standing) Mister Ross?

Ben: (Turning back, everyone else sliding back into their seats.) Yes, Robert?

Robert: (hesitantly) Mister Ross. For the first time in my life, I feel like I'm part of something. Something actually worth fighting for...

(All stare at him, he begins to slide back into his seat, but Eric stands.)

Eric: Mister Ross. I reckon I feel the same. I think the Wave gives you a sense of self worth. Is that right?

(He sits down. David leans over and slaps him on the back.)

David: Mister R... O... (Stands.) Mister Ross. I'm proud to be part of The Wave.

(They all look at Laurie. She stands, uneasily.)

Laurie: Mister Ross. Yes.... Me too... (She sits quickly, unhappily.)

Ben: Our salute!

(All stand and salute.)

All: Strength through Discipline! Strength through Community! Strength through Action!

Ben: The game is over. (A moment of shock and disappointment, the kids look at each other.) The struggle has begun. Get out there and recruit!

(Ben marches out of the classroom. Eric, Robert and David burst into applause and follow him out. Laurie is left alone. Silence. She stands, distraught, trying to work through her thoughts. Eric returns.)

Eric: Laurie? You OK?

Laurie: Sure, sure... I just feel a little weird, you know?

Eric: Tell me about it.

Laurie: You feel it too?



Eric: Sure. (He goes to the door and glances out.) It's like there's no in-crowd anymore. Man, those cliques! It feels like it's a school, not a popularity contest? We're all equals; all part of the same thing?

Laurie: Does everyone think that, Eric?

Eric: Do you know anyone who doesn't?

Laurie: Yes. Yes, I do.

(David and Robert appear in the door. David has his hand on Robert's shoulder. Eric sees them.)

Eric: Guys. Laurie says she knows someone who's.... unsure about The Wave.

(seriously) Who, Laurie?

Laurie: (Takes a deep breath.) Look. It's me. *I'm* not sure about all this...

Eric: (Blankly.) Tut tut, Laurie! (Eric takes out his membership card.) You know what Ben Ross said. (He turns the card and shows the red X. A moment of shock and seriousness, and then Eric laughs.) Got yah! (Robert and David laugh.)

David: He really got you, Laurie!!!

Robert: Good one, Eric.

(Laurie is upset.)

David: Hey, babe! Eric is not going to report you!

Robert: Only if you were *really* against The Wave.

David: That's right, babe! You're not against The Wave!

Robert: How can anybody be? It's just about us all being a part of the same thing. Supporting each other. Agreeing to agree.

David: Yeh. I'm glad I finally got to know you, man! That's The Wave!

(David pats him on the back.)

Robert: (to Eric; a hint of worry) Did he stick anything on my back?

Eric: Man, you are paranoid! (Eric pats Robert on the back, reassuringly.) Now, did I stick anything *in* your back?

(The boys laugh.)

David: Come on, Laurie!

(Laurie exits quickly through the boys, who exeunt after her, still laughing.)

12/ [There are two version of this scene.](#) The first in black has Principal Owens acted live. [The second, in blue, as a disembodied voice on the tannoy.](#)

First version.

(A tannoy announcement.)

Tannoy: Mister Ben Ross. Mister Ben Ross. Please report to Principle Owens's office in ten minutes. Mister Ben Ross to Principal Owens's office in ten minutes.

(A brief pause and then Ben enters the classroom at speed. He immediately hides behind the door and then waits a moment and then jumps out in the corridor, still in view to the audience.)

Ben: Caught you! O. (He looks up and down the corridor. No one is there. Ben re-enters.)

Ben: I could have sworn I was being ... calm down, Ross, calm down. You're the leader.

(Ben starts taking down the banners in haste. Checks his watch. He mumbles to himself. Robert appears at the door, he steps quietly inside the door and stands to attention.)

Ben: (To himself.) Come on. Come on. (As if reporting to Principal Owens.) "There's been a marked improvement in class work assignments, sir, even Coach Schiller

says football practice has never been so ... active..." No... er... "so committed... and for their classes they now prepare correc..." ah!!!

(Ben has caught sight of Robert unexpectedly and it has made him jump.)

Ben: What the...! Robert? What are you doing here?

Robert: I have to be here, Mr Ross. I'm your bodyguard.

Ben: My what?

Robert: You're the leader, Mr Ross. I can't let anything happen to you.

Ben: What could possibly happen?

Robert: I can do it. Nobody makes jokes about me now.

Ben: I'm sure they don't... and... quite right... but,... (checks watch) ... OK, OK, but not here, right now. OK?

Robert: Sure, Mister Ross.

(Robert is delighted. Give a big smile, which he immediately suppresses, gives a huge Wave salute, which Ben returns casually – a little too like Hitler's casual flicked salute. Exiting, Robert nearly collides with Christy who appears at the door; in teaching clothes, but with a tennis jumper over her shoulder and a racket in its case with her music teaching books.)

Christy: Hey, can I come in?

Ben: Sure...

Christy: I heard the announcement. Is this about The Wave?

Ben: I don't know...

Christy: Your monsters are turning on you, Doctor Frankenstein! I warned you, darling.

Ben: No, no... the monsters are turning into adult human beings. Surely the Principal can't complain about their work? I happen to know they are all keeping up on their reading... some of them are reading ahead.

Christy: (joking) Now that *is* disturbing! I'm not sure they told us how to teach human beings who work...

Ben: (shrugs) They like doing what they're told!

Christy: Of course they do. Less brain work for them! Ben, are you sure you haven't got too caught up in this?

Ben: I'm sure I have! Christy, this thing is... contagious!

Christy: I've noticed. Even in music they are ... better. (She laughs at herself.) Well, you just be careful you don't become the guinea pig in your own experiment...

Ben: Sure. The mouse in the maze.

Christy: No, darling, those are rats. Now, take care, Frankenstein.

(She kisses him. Principal Owens appears in the doorway. Coughs.)

Christy: O... er... excuse me, Principal, I have to get to my next class...

Principal: Of course you do, Mrs Ross. Lovely concert from the third grade last night!

Christy: (exiting.) O, thank you, Principal Owens.

(Christy exits.)

Principal: (gives a look, then:) Should I be worried, Ben?

Ben: What about, sir?

Principal: Nice suit, Ross. I think you know what I mean.

Ben: The Wave?

Principal: (Taking a banner from Ben's hand.) You have the school in a tizzy.

(From outside this classroom, from a distant classroom – presumably Christy's - we hear a class singing; first a few exercises to warm up their voices and then they begin to sing a chorus of 'Goodbye My Coney Island Baby' in barbershop harmonies.)

Ben: A good tizzy, I hope, sir.

Principal: (Rubbing his chin.) Well... from what I've been told... yes, it is. A very, very good tizzy. Have you heard differently?

Ben: No, no, sir...

Principal: And you are sure that the students are not falling behind with their... conventional work?

Ben: They're ahead with it.

Principal: And it doesn't worry you that you've involved students from outside your class?

Ben: Christy was just... saying... in fact, that her music students are much more...focussed. On their music.

Principal: And the banners? The salutes? Should I be concerned about them?

Ben: They're all part of the game. And, also, today Coach Schiller...

(The music has now switched to a full-throated barbershop rendering of 'The Star Spangled Banner' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vdy9pQHdZm8> or similar patriotic song. )

Principal: Yes, yes. I have had Norm Schiller in my office all this morning – he seems to think he's finally got a football team and it's all thanks to you.

Ben: Wow.

Principal: But that's not my priority, Mr Ross. My priority is the students. I don't want a parade... (Ben reacts) ...of parents to my office telling me we have an indoctrination programme at this school run by you.

Ben: I can promise you...

Principal: 'Wave'? It sounds ... open-ended. Where's it going, Ben?

Ben: Sir, you have to understand this. (He's fighting for his project.) This experiment cannot go any further than I let it go. The Wave is the idea of a group willing to follow their leader. As long as I'm involved in this, it cannot get out of hand. You have my assurance.

Principal: OK. Just remember who this movement of yours is made up of. Yes? Kids. Young, impressionable minds. With a tendency to go from apathy to frenzy in one gear change. Have you got me?

Ben: Got you, sir.

Principal: Good. Keep it that way. Now you can put the banners back.

Ben: Thank you, sir.

(Principal walking out, stops at the door.)

Principal: Mister Ross.

(Ben turns back to him.)

Principal: In future make love to your wife in your own time, okay? Good morning.

(As the patriotic barbershop chorus swells Principal Owens makes the Wave salute, only half-ironically and turns on his heel and exits.)

### Second version.

(A tannoy announcement.)

Tannoy: (Female voice.) Mister Ben Ross. Mister Ben Ross. Please return to your classroom for an internal call from Principle Owens's office in ten minutes. Mister Ben Ross to return to your classroom immediately.

(A brief pause and then Ben enters the classroom at speed. He immediately hides behind the door and then waits a moment and then jumps out in the corridor, still in view to the audience.)

Ben: Caught you! O. (He looks up and down the corridor. No one is there. Ben re-enters.)

Ben: I could have sworn I was being ... calm down, Ross, calm down. You're the leader.

(Ben starts taking down the banners in haste. Checks his watch. He mumbles to himself. Robert appears at the door, he steps quietly inside the door and stands to attention.)

Ben: (To himself.) Come on. Come on. (As if reporting to Principal Owens.) "There's been a marked improvement in class work assignments, sir, even Coach Schiller says football practice has never been so ... active..." No... er... "so committed... and for their classes they now prepare correc..." ah!!!

(Ben has caught sight of Robert unexpectedly and it has made him jump.)

Ben: What the...! Robert? What are you doing here?

Robert: I have to be here, Mr Ross. I'm your bodyguard.

Ben: My what?

Robert: You're the leader, Mr Ross. I can't let anything happen to you.

Ben: What could possibly happen?

Robert: I can do it. Nobody makes jokes about me now.

Ben: I'm sure they don't... and... quite right... but.... (checks watch) ... OK, OK, but not here, right now. OK?

(Ben starts to open one of the units. Inside is a loudspeaker, with an old-fashioned rectangular microphone that Ben places on the unit.)

Robert: Sure, Mister Ross.

(Robert is delighted. He gives a big smile, which he immediately suppresses, gives a huge Wave salute, which Ben, in his rush to get things ready, returns casually – a little too like Hitler's casual flicked salute. Exiting, Robert nearly collides with Christy who appears at the door; in teaching clothes, but with a tennis jumper over her shoulder and a racket in its case with her music teaching books.)

Christy: Hey, can I come in?

Ben: Sure... you better be quick... (He continues to set up the speaker and microphone.)

Christy: I heard the announcement. Is this about The Wave?

Ben: I'm not sure...

Christy: Your monsters are turning on you, Doctor Frankenstein! I warned you, darling.

Ben: No, no... the monsters are turning into adult human beings. How can the Principal complain about their work? I happen to know they are all keeping up on their reading... some of them are reading ahead.

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Christy: Yes. Even in music they are ... better. (She laughs at herself.) Well, you just be careful you don't become the guinea pig in your own experiment...

Ben: Sure. The mouse in the maze.

Christy: No, darling, those are rats. Now, take care, Frankenstein.

(She kisses him.)

Principal Owens: (On tannoy.) Are you there , Ben? Are you alone? (Ben and Christy spring apart.) We must be able to speak in confidence...

Christy: O... er... excuse me, Principal. Mrs Ross here. I have to get to my next class...

Principal: Of course you do, Mrs Ross. Lovely concert from the third grade last night! Very uplifting.

Christy: (exiting.) O, thank you, Principal Owens. Goodbye.

(Christy exits, mouthing "sorry" to Ben, and shutting the classroom door.)

Principal: Are we alone now?

Ben: Yes, Principal. No one can hear us.

Principal: Excuse me for not seeing you in my office, but I'm expecting a visit from the School Board. Should I be worried by anything they might ask me, Ben?

Ben: What about, sir?

Principal: I think you know what I mean.

Ben: The Wave.

Principal: You have the school in a tizzy.

(From outside this classroom, from a distant classroom – presumably Christy's - we hear a class singing; first a few exercises to warm up their voices and then they begin to sing a chorus of 'Goodbye My Coney Island Baby' in barbershop harmonies.)

Ben: A good tizzy, I hope, sir.

(Although the Principal cannot see him, Ben moves the folded banner so that is hidden behind a unit.)

Principal: A very, very good tizzy from what I have heard. Have you heard differently?

Ben: No, no, sir...

Principal: And you are sure that the students are not falling behind with their... conventional work?

Ben: They're ahead with it.

Principal: And it doesn't worry you that you've involved students from outside your class?

Ben: Christy was just... saying... in fact, sir, that her music students are much more... focussed. On their music.

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Ben: They're all part of the game. Also, today Coach Schiller...

(The music has now switched to a full-throated barbershop rendering of 'The Star Spangled Banner' <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vdy9pQHdZm8> or similar patriotic song. )

Principal: Yes, yes. I have had Norm Schiller in my office all this morning – he seems to think he's finally got a football team and it's all thanks to you.

Ben: Wow.

Principal: But that's not my priority, Mr Ross. My priority is the students. I don't want a parade... (Ben reacts) ...of parents to my office telling me we have an indoctrination programme at this school run by you.

Ben: I can promise you...

Principal: 'Wave'? It sounds ... open-ended. Where's it going, Ben?

Ben: Sir, you have to understand this. (He's fighting for his project.) This experiment cannot go any further than I let it go. The Wave is the idea of a group willing to follow a leader. As long as I'm involved in this, it cannot get out of hand. You have my assurance.

Principal: Very well. But just remember who this movement of yours consists of? Young, impressionable kids. With a tendency to go from apathy to frenzy in one gear change. Get me?

Ben: Got you, sir.

Principal: Good. Now you can put the banners back.

Ben: Thank you, s... (Stops.)

Principal: Good morning. O, and, Ben?

Ben: Sir?

Principal: In future make love to your wife in your own time? End of message.

(As the patriotic barbershop chorus swells Ben shakes his head, then gives the Wave salute, only half-ironically, to the speaker and then packs it and the microphone away and starts to put the banner up again.)

13/

There are two versions of this scene. The first in black with Mrs Saunders. The second in blue with Mr Saunders.

First version.

(The scene changes to the lawn outside the Saunders' house and the abutting sidewalk. Eric and Laurie are walking back from school together; they carry their school books. Eric has a kit bag.

Underneath this scene, the barbershop harmonies slowly harden to something more like the distant chants of a pep rally.)

Eric: ... o, I got lots... lots... like, someone told me Mister Gabondi is going on sabbatical next year!

Laurie: Maybe he won't come back! Yay! (Looks at Eric.) And? (Eric looks down.) Is that it?

Eric: No!

Laurie: Well?

Eric: A kid put his hand through a window...

Laurie: How come?

Eric: See if he could do it without cutting himself.

Laurie: Could he?

Eric: Twelve stitches.

Laurie: I'm not going to write about that!

Eric: It's funny! (She stares him out.) Then that leaves The Wave. It's the only story in town.

Laurie: I don't know how to write it! Without being disloyal.

Eric: To The Wave?

Laurie: To The Grapevine. It ought to be objective.

Eric: Since when is The Grapevine objective about the football team? The Grapevine never says it wants Clarkstown or any of those other bums to beat Gordon High?

Laurie: That's a game.

Eric: So is The Wave.

Laurie: Not what Ben Ross said.

Eric: O, he's just saying that for effect. This is a good story for the Grapevine, Laurie – people might actually read it. The kids want to know what the Wave really is.

They're gonna read The Grapevine if they think it will tell them. Just describe it. Objectively.

Laurie: OK, but I just feel we have to be careful...

(Mrs Saunders appears as if from her house.)

Mrs S: Eric! Hello!

Eric: O good lord... Hi, Mrs Saunders! (to Laurie) Got to go. (Starting to exit off up the street.)

Laurie: What about your movie review?

Eric: O, the movie was too good!

Laurie: Too good?

Eric: What the fun in reviewing something you can't tear to pieces? Be seeing yah! (Exits.)

Mrs S: (Joining Laurie.) Nice boy – Eric.

Laurie: Yeh...

Mrs S: He isn't in the Wave, is he?

Laurie: We all are.

Mrs S: Laurie... I spoke to Elaine Billings at the mall today. She said something strange: she said her Robert is "a completely new person"...

Laurie: Was she worried?

Mrs S: No. She was completely delighted. I was worried.

Laurie: Mom, you're always worried.

Mrs S: They've had problems with Robert until now...

Laurie: So, isn't it good?

Mrs S: Laurie, if you study the types of people who join cults... they're always people who are unhappy in their lives.

Laurie: But Robert isn't unhappy now...

Mrs S: Yes, but what happens when the Wave ends? What happens to Robert then?

Laurie: It'll all be over soon. Like flower power! (She laughs.) I'm not as crazy about it as I was a couple of days ago...

Mrs S: You're sensible. But what about the rest? Mrs Billings told me they're having a Wave rally!

Laurie: It's the rally for the football game, they always have it – they've just called it a Wave rally this time

Mrs S: At which 200 new members just happen to be initiated? And you're not disturbed by that?

Laurie: The only thing that disturbs me is how kids our age could get so into it. I mean I guess I understand David being into it, because of the team, but Eric... he makes jokes about it, but he's ... serious underneath... he even gave up smoking....

Mrs S: So you **are** worried?

Laurie: No! Why is worrying the only way we're allowed to be! God, Mom!

Mrs S: Okay. Well, as long as I know you're not involved. And please don't stay out too long, dear. It's getting cold... I think there's a storm coming.

(Mrs S returns to the house. Sound of wind rising as distant chanting grows. Laurie stands for a moment in thought, then, almost unconsciously, as the chanting rises and the stage darkens, she takes out a Bic pen and begins to chew on it.)

Second version.

(The scene changes to the lawn outside the Saunders' house and the abutting sidewalk. Eric and Laurie are walking back from school together; they carry their school books. Eric has a kit bag.  
Underneath this scene, the barbershop harmonies slowly harden to something more like the distant chants of a pep rally.)  
Eric: ... o, I got lots... lots... like, someone told me Mister Gabondi is going on sabbatical next year!  
Laurie: Maybe he won't come back! Yay! (Looks at Eric.) And? (Eric looks down.) Is that it?  
Eric: No!  
Laurie: Well?  
Eric: A kid put his hand through a window...  
Laurie: How come?  
Eric: See if he could do it without cutting himself.  
Laurie: Could he?  
Eric: Twelve stitches.  
Laurie: I'm not going to write about that!  
Eric: It's funny! (She stares him out.) Then that leaves The Wave. It's the only story in town.  
Laurie: I don't know how to write it! Without being disloyal.  
Eric: To The Wave?  
Laurie: To The Grapevine. It ought to be objective.  
Eric: Since when is The Grapevine objective about the football team? The Grapevine never says it wants Clarkstown or any of those other bums to beat Gordon High?  
Laurie: That's a game.  
Eric: So is The Wave.  
Laurie: Not what Ben Ross said.  
Eric: O, he's just saying that for effect. This is a good story for the Grapevine, Laurie – people might actually read it. The kids want to know what the Wave really is. They're gonna read The Grapevine if they think it will tell them. Just describe it. Objectively.  
Laurie: OK, but I just feel we have to be careful...  
(Mr Saunders appears as if from her house.)  
Mr S: Eric! Hello!  
Eric: O good lord... he's going to challenge me to golf again! Hi, Mr Saunders! (to Laurie) Got to go. (Starting to exit off up the street.)  
Laurie: What about your movie review?  
Eric: O, the movie was too good!  
Laurie: Too good?  
Eric: What the fun in reviewing something you can't tear to pieces? Be seeing yah!  
(Exits.)  
Mr S: (Joining Laurie.) Nice fellow – Eric.  
Laurie: Sure...  
Mr S: Is he one of your Wave people?  
Laurie: We're all Wave people.  
Mr S: Laurie... your Mom spoke to Elaine Billings at the mall today. She says something strange has happened to Robert. That he's "a completely new person" ...  
Laurie: Was Mrs Billings worried?  
Mr S: No. She was completely delighted. It was your Mom that was worried.  
Laurie: Mom's always worried.



Mr S: Yes, I know, but there's always a lot to be worried about. Your Mom knows what makes them tick. She says the Billings have had a lot of problems with Robert... up until now...

Laurie: So, isn't that good?

Mr S: It's not the change, Laurie, it's the speed of it... where's this thing going?

Laurie: O, not much further. It'll fizzle out soon - like flower power! (She laughs.) I'm not as crazy about it as I was a couple of days ago...

Mr S: Yes, but you're one of the sensible ones. What about the rest? Mrs Billings told Mom that they're having a Wave rally! Rallies, Laurie?

Laurie: It's the rally for the football game, Dad! They always have one – they're just calling it the Wave rally this time

Mr S: At which 200 new members just happen to be initiated? And you're not disturbed by that?

Laurie: I'm just disturbed that everyone is taking this so seriously! I mean I guess I understand David being into it, because of the team, but Eric... he's so serious about it... he even gave up smoking....

Mr S: So you **are** worried?

Laurie: No! Why is worrying the only way we're allowed to be! God, you're as bad as Mom!

Mr S: Okay. Well, just so long you're not involved in any rallies. And come on inside... (Shivers.)

Laurie: I'll be in right away.

Mr S: I think there's a storm coming.

(Mr S returns to the house. Sound of wind rising as distant chanting grows. Laurie stands for a moment in thought, then, almost unconsciously, as the chanting rises and the stage darkens, she takes out a Bic pen and begins to chew on it.)

14/

(Into stylised sequence of the pep rally; lights moving about, almost like searchlights or big outdoor illuminations. Everyone at first is in the team colours, waving banners in the teams colour, but with the Wave symbol pasted into the centre of some of them.

At first the waving and saluting and so on is co-ordinated, but then there is a disturbance and from the group one of the kids runs out – we have not seen him before. He looks slightly hippyish; long hair. The chants continue, but there are also howls of anger. From the group two of the kids in the team colours break away, they now pull black stockings over their heads. They chase the hippyish kid, who nearly evades them, but slips and the masked kids trap him. He breaks away again, but they run off in close pursuit. The other two members of the crowd chase after them, cheering them on. Recorded sounds of the crowd at the rally groaning in disappointment when the hippyish kid evades the pursuers and roaring with excitement when the pursuers close in.

Change of lights and now Deutsch comes flying onto the stage as if he's just been hit – he staggers backwards and falls. Feels his nose – there's blood on his hand. Eric enters, menacingly, crouched and with fists raised. Laurie runs on.)

Laurie: Stop it, Eric!!! Stop it!!!

(Frisbee Player enters, shouting.)

Fisbee player: Fight! Fight! Fight!

Laurie: (To Frisbee Player.) What's the matter with you?  
Frisbee Player: (Ignoring Laurie) Fight, fight!  
(The chant of "Fight! Fight!" is taken up all around and David runs on.)  
David: What is it with you, Deutsch!  
(Deutsch throws himself at Eric and the two of them grapple each other to the ground.)  
David: Guys! Guys! What have I been telling you!  
Laurie: Eric, why are you doing this?  
(The Frisbee Player stops shouting – the chanting is continuing all around – he moves up behind Laurie. Eric breaks free from Deutsch and scrambles to his feet. Deutsch rises and they square up to each other again. Laurie tries to move between them.)  
Laurie: Please, stop...  
(David gently pulls her back.)  
David: Laurie, don't – you'll get hurt. Let me deal with this....  
(Unseen by anyone, the Frisbee Player places an envelope in Laurie's shoulder bag. Looking around to make sure he has not been seen, he takes a couple of steps away and then runs off. Eric and Deutsch begin to swing punches at each other, missing.)  
David: Hey, hey, guys....  
Laurie: Stop them, David.  
David: Just let me handle this, Laurie. Guys, what have I been saying...  
(Eric flies at Deutsch and they wrestle to the floor. Ben enters quickly.)  
Ben: Hey! Hey! Stop that right now! How dare you behave like this on school property!  
Eric: Mister Ross! Let me explain!  
Ben: You can explain to Principal Owens...  
(Ben grabs Eric and Deutsch by the arm and begins to march them off.)  
Eric: (turning to David, Laurie and the unseen crowd.) Strength through discipline! Strength through community! Strength through action!  
(Ben stops, shocked by Eric's show.)  
Deutsch: Aw, you can shove your Wave where the sun don't shine!  
(Eric goes for Deutsch and Ben struggles to keep the two of them apart.)  
Ben: Come on! (To the crowd.) The rest of you, get back to your lessons!  
(Ben drags them both out. The chanting has died away.)  
Laurie: (to David) What's happening to us?  
David: Yeh, that was bad - I hope Eric doesn't get banned from the Wave Rally by Mister Ross.  
Laurie: Was that what they were fighting about?  
David: Nah. That kid Eric was fighting – he's been keeping Eric out of the quarterback position for a year now. That's the 'great' Deutsch! This has been brewing for weeks. I just wish Eric had really taught him a lesson.  
Laurie: But why was Eric shouting about the Wave?  
David: O he's really into it, that's all. All the team is.  
Laurie: So why are you fighting each other.  
David: Aw, well, Deutsch doesn't wanna join, does he? He's gotta be difficult. That's what the guy is like, Laurie! He's driving the rest of the team crazy! If he was in The Wave he'd see that it would be best for the team to give his place up to the better player. That guy's a real detriment to us. Coach Schiller should throw him out.  
Laurie: Because he isn't in The Wave?

David: Yeah. Partly. Why not? If he really wanted the best for the team he'd join the rest of us. He's a one-man team, Laurie. You know who he's dating? Gabi Schiller! The coach's daughter! Come on! That's favouritism, that's not community! Let's go now, we don't want to miss the rally.

Laurie: You go ahead. I'm...

David: What?

Laurie: I'm going to give it a miss, OK?

David: What! You can't. Why?

Laurie: I don't want to. It's not against the law, is it?

David: Look... Laurie... a lot of the kids... they look up to you. What will they think if you're not there?

Laurie: Well, they'll have to make up their own minds won't they?

David: I don't understand you.

Laurie: The Wave is taking over everything! I don't like it!

David: But, it's great! The Wave actually works: everyone on the same team. Everybody equal.

Laurie: O terrific – do we all get to play quarterback?

(David steps back looking at Laurie as if she were a strange animal. Points at her.)

David: Y'know, you're just against this thing because you're not special anymore. Now everyone's equal, you're not the best and most popular girl anymore...

Laurie: What are you *talking* about?

David: Yeh. I've finally got your number, Laurie Saunders! Well, now you know how the rest of us feel when we have to listen to you give all the right answers. And you don't like it either. Well, this is how it's going to stay. So get used to feeling equal.

Laurie: (losing it.) You are totally stupid!!

David: OK. Fine. Why not get yourself a smart Bolshy boyfriend?

(David marches off.)

Laurie: (shouts after him.) You *are* smart! Show yourself some respect! (Sniffs.) This isn't helping anyone... how did that happen? (Sobs. She reaches in her bag for a paper tissue and feels the envelope put there by the Frisbee Player. In the distance the chants of the Wave Rally are building. Laurie takes out the envelope – she's puzzled. Reads the front – it is addressed to her. She opens the envelope, takes out a letter and begins to read, skimming the letter quickly, her lips moving, then she begins to read a passage aloud. As she reads, we see the Frisbee Player chased in slow motion across the back of the stage by the other three members of the cast who are dressed in football team supporters' colours.)

Laurie: "They keep asking me why I don't join and when I say I don't feel like it, they get mad. They say pretty soon people in The Wave won't be friends with people who aren't in The Wave... Today three of my friends joined. They told me that if I didn't join soon it might be too late. All I want to know is: too late for what?" (To herself.) OK. The Grapevine has to speak out.

15/

(To the Beatles' 'All Together Now', the actor playing the Frisbee Player runs in slow motion across the stage – this time in the opposite direction from before – and now he is dressed in Gordon High's football kit, including helmet, and carrying the ball. The light is the silvery-blue of floodlights. His pursuers enter, dressed in the football kit of Gordon High's opposition. They try to bring him down, but he hands them off one after another and crosses for a touchdown, he holds up the ball as a roar of cheers drowns out the music. A quick change and the rest of the actors in Gordon

High colours – either as players or fans – mob the Frisbee Player, then encourage the audience to chant – [and maybe wave their programmes if these are in Gordon High colours] – at first chanting “Gordon High, Gordon High!” and then “Wave the banner high! Wave, Wave, Wave, Wave!!!” This chant then on amplified sound drowns out everyone live, then fades.)

16/

(Crowd noises from the game. The units are arranged as the backs of the bleachers. Laurie entering; she carries an armful of copies of the Grapevine.)

Eric: (offstage) Hey! You! Stop there!

(Laurie stops. Eric enters.)

Laurie: Eric!

Eric: O, hi, Laurie – sorry, I didn’t see it was you. The floodlights out there blind you once get out of them.

(Eric gives The Wave salute. Laurie does not return it.)

Laurie: Whatever.

Eric: Come on, Laurie. Just give me the salute and you can go in.

Laurie: What are you talking about?

Eric: Just give the salute.

Laurie: Eh? You don’t really mean that I can’t go and see the game unless I salute?

Eric: (Looks down.) That’s what they decided.

Laurie: Who’s they?

Eric: The Wave.

Laurie: I thought we were The Wave?

Eric: (shrugs) Please, Laurie. Don’t give me hassle! Just give me the salute.

Laurie: Everyone else in the stadium gave the salute?

Eric: This is the Wave stand; they did here.

Laurie: Well, I want to go up into the Wave stand and I don’t want to give the Wave salute.

Eric: Well you can’t.

Laurie: No one tells me when I can or can’t go in an American football stadium.

Eric: (Looks about, worried.) Just do the stupid salute, can’t you!

Laurie: This is ridiculous. Even you know it is.

Eric: (Looking about.) OK, just go in. No one’s looking.

Laurie: Are you scared, Eric? You weren’t afraid of that tough Deutsch kid; how come you are so jumpy here?

Eric: I’m not scared of anyone and you better shut your mouth, you understand, you don’t talk to me like that...

Laurie: Eric...

Eric: A lot of important people noticed you were not at the rally. (Laurie gives him a hard stare.) I’m just saying.

Laurie: I don’t care, Eric. (Shakes her head.) What’s the score?

Eric: 26 to 32 – they lead.

Laurie: Wow, but that’s close!

Eric: Yeh. We need another touchdown from this drive... we still have a chance. A few seconds on the clock.

Laurie: And still they don’t play you... you could throw that touchdown.

Eric: It’s not about my place – it’s about sacrificing for the team.

Laurie: Is that what they're calling it now? Here. The new issue of Grapevine. You might find it... educational.

(Eric takes the copy.)

Laurie: Go on in. It's probably the last play...

(Laurie exits into the stadium. Eric opens the magazine, following Laurie, reading as he goes.)

17/

(Music: 'Communication Breakdown' by Led Zeppelin. Stylised action sequence as one by one four of the cast line up in Gordon High football kit, all in helmets. Centre, Guard, Quarterback (Deutsch), Running Back; first into a huddle and then turning facing the audience as if they are the opposition. They crouch. Crowd noise rising to a crescendo of cheering. In slow motion the ball is flipped up to the Quarterback who runs back into 'the pocket' and raises his arm to throw to the Running Back but the Running Back trips and the Quarterback has to retain the ball. He looks upfield for an open Wide Receiver. But the opposition Middle Linebacker has broken through from the side, entering, and the Centre and Guard for Gordon High try to get between him and the Quarterback, but they collide and, in horror as the Linebacker approaches him with his arms wide, the Quarterback drops the ball – the Linebacker picks up the ball and runs through for a touchdown. There is a storm of boos. Two of the Gordon High players get up, and exit, their heads bowed. The last two up are David and Deutsch. They take off their helmets. They look about in shock.)

David: What happened there...

Deutsch: (suddenly explodes.) What a crock your Wave turned out to be! O, sure, you psyched everybody up, made 'em *think* they could win. And sure – a couple of wide receivers finally got themselves into positions!!! But where was the Wave when the pressure was on? Ho come nobody executed the play? Godammit! I've got Running Backs on their ass, I've got Tackles tripping over each other... man! If you're gonna brainwash kids then next time brainwash some plays into 'em. Yeh? Your Mister Ross is a chump! (He exits.)

David: (Shouting after Deutsch) You dropped the football!

(Laurie enters.)

Laurie: I'm so sorry, David! I really hoped it would work out for the team.

David: What do you mean? It is working out. I never said it would all change straight away.

Laurie: Sure. These things take time. I'm just sorry for you that we didn't win.

David: (Shrugs.) It's only a game.

Laurie: Really?

David: No. (Shakes his heads. He laughs. Laurie laughs.)

Laurie: Wanna take in a movie, later? Mom says its fine for me to go. It's that new scary horror – I don't mind if you wanna see it.

(Pause.)

David: Yeh. Yeh, why not! I'm sorry about the other day – it was the build up. To nothing as it turns out. But I shouldn't have bawled you out like that. There's no excuse.

Laurie: I forgive you. I'll see you at eight, outside the movie theatre? Take your mind off of losing again. (She kisses him on the cheek.)

David: Yeh. (He looks around.) But we're getting there.

(Eric enters, carrying the copy of Grapevine.)

Eric : Laurie, what have you done?

(Robert enters, with another copy of the Grapevine.)

Robert: These are all lies! (Pointing at Laurie.) She can't be allowed to say these things!

David: Hey!

Eric: David, it says in here that kids have been badly beaten for not joining The Wave...

David: That's not true. Laurie? I never heard that.

Robert: She's made it up. Anybody reading this is going to get the wrong idea... look, there's a letter about how we've been saying no one inside The Wave will be friends with anyone outside... but the letter's anonymous...

David: Laurie? Is that even legal? I've never heard of any of this stuff.

Laurie: You've got to stop. It's become an obsession with you all. You're not thinking for yourselves anymore!

Eric: O come on, you're just upset – you let your fight with David get to you!

Laurie: What! You think this is that trivial?

David: Hey...

Laurie: You are hurting people. And they are going along with it. They're like zombies!!!

Robert: No. They're just not like you anymore, 'princess'.

David: OK, just relax, everybody. There's no law says people have to believe in what we're trying to do.

Eric: David, she's going to ruin it. People were reading this in the stands; just now, after the game. I heard a whole group of parents say they were going straight down to Principal Owens' office in the morning.

David: Really?

(Eric nods. Through this scene Marvin Gaye's 'Heard It Through the Grapevine' can be heard in the background.)

David: (to Laurie) Laurie? Is that what you want? To stop The Wave?

(She nods.)

Robert: She's a threat

Laurie: I'm going now. I'm finding you guys a little too spooky for my taste right at this moment. If you fancy some less mindless company, David, I'll see you at the living dead movie tonight. (She exits.)

(David is distraught.)

David: What's the matter with everyone today?

(Robert comes over to him and pats him on the back. The roles are reversed. David is shocked.)

Robert: She's got to be stopped.

David: Hold on....

Eric: (Intervening.) Don't worry, Robert. David and I can take care of Laurie, right? Come on, David, get a shower and we'll go and sort Laurie out. (Putting his hand on David's shoulder and guiding him towards the changing rooms.) Man, if anyone can get Laurie Saunders to see sense it's gotta be you.

David: (looking back to Robert) I don't like his attitude. Do we have to *wipe out* anyone who resists us? (Robert looks back at David, cold as ice.)

Eric: Hey, calm down. Just get Laurie to give us a chance. Just tell her to cool it, all right? David. She'll listen to you.

David: I don't know...

Eric: We'll catch her after the movie... just talk to her, man.

David: I guess.

(They exeunt. Robert watches them go off – he is worried.)

18/

(Dance sequence in which copies of the Grapevine are danced around the stage and passed from hand to hand to a full volume 'Heard It Through The Grapevine' – this culminates with the raising into view of a vandalised Wave banner with the slogan "Strength through Discipline" changed to "Strength through Dizziness" and the Wave symbol, a circle with a single wave across it, changed by the addition of a nose and two eyes above the wave so it looks like a disgruntled cartoon face.)

19/

(Outside a movie theatre; above the theatre is the neon sign for 'Night of the Living Dead'. From inside the movie theatre comes the sound of the movie, muffled groans and strange electronic soundtrack. David has stood up Laurie and she is sitting on the sidewalk outside the movie theatre. She looks at her watch. Sound of a car pulling up offstage. A car door slams. Mr Saunders enters.)

Laurie: Dad?

(Mr S looks up the sign with the movie title; a little taken aback. Turns to Laurie.)

Mr S: Your mom sent me – she's worried sick about you. Just for the record, I'm not. But (he looks about)... then I thought David would be here. Has he stood you up?

Laurie: Uh yes, it seems so.

Mr S: O, Laurie.

Laurie: I think he's dumped me.

Mr S: O. Goodness. I'm sorry, sweet pea. O dear. He's such a fine boy.

Laurie: Yeh. Yeh, he was. Until all this.

Mr S: Ah. Well, yes, that's kinda why.... Laurie, you probably don't want this right now, but I heard something today on the golf course...

Laurie: O, Dad... please...

Mr S: No, sweet pea, it's not that sort of story – unfortunately. Today, after school, a boy was beaten up.

Laurie: Yeh, I know. .

Mr S: I don't think you do. Hear me out. There was a rally, right?

Laurie: Uhuh.

Mr S: Well, the parents say he'd resisted joining this thing.

Laurie: No, Dad. It was Eric, he had a fight with the quarterback that's all...

(During Mr Saunders' story we see in deep shadows a boy being chased and beaten up – there's no running, the two hoods who beat him move more like zombies, and the boy is too frightened to run, seeing enemies on all sides.)

Mr S: No, Laurie. This is something different from that. Look, sugar plum, I got this story secondhand, so I don't know if it's all accurate. But apparently there was some kind of rally and this boy refused to join it, or join in something anyway, and maybe he said something out of place, it's blurry. Anyway, this boy's parents are neighbours of one of the men I play golf with. And I trust this man. He says his neighbours just moved in, so this is a new boy...

Laurie: Those are the ones who are joining quickest.

Mr S: Maybe But not in this case. Thing is, Laurie, the boy who was beaten up – he’s Jewish. That couldn’t have had anything to do with it, could it?

Laurie: O no. No, no, no... I don’t believe that! Dad, I swear... I don’t like The Wave, but it’s not like *that!*

Mr S: Are you sure?

Laurie: (slowly, shakes her head.) The whole idea was to show us how something *like* Nazi Germany could have happened. Not to make little Nazis... we *know* the history, we’re not stupid...

Mr S: I think it’s gotten out of hand. Me and some of the men are going to the school on Monday to see Principal Owens. I wanted to tell you. Now, Mom would like you to come home with me.

Laurie: No, Dad. I can walk. I need some space to think. I don’t think I can quite handle Mom right now. You understand, don’t you?

Mr S: (Laughs.) O, yeh. OK, but you be careful, young lady. (He looks about the street.)

Laurie: Don’t be silly, Daddy. It’s just a game. (She’s trying to convince herself.)

Mr S: OK. Sometimes I think you’re the only sensible person in this town. You sure? Your Mom will kill me, you know.

(Laurie glances nervously over her shoulder.)

Mr S: You sure you’re going to be...

Laurie: Dad!!! (Laurie is waving him away.)

Mr S: OK, OK, I’m going. (Holding his hands up in surrender.) I know when I’m not wanted.

(He exits glancing up quizzically at the movie title. Laurie looks up and down the street – she’s scared now. We hear the sound of a car door slamming. A street light flickers. A gust of wind. Laurie hears something else – she looks in the direction opposite to her father’s exit. Sounds of the groans of zombies from the cinema. Laurie suddenly very scared.)

Laurie: Dad!! (She runs to join her father, but we hear the sound of his car pulling away and driving off.) Dad! Dad! (She gives up.) O, Dad... (She looks around her quickly. She’s very, very scared. The groans of the zombies rise. She runs off.)

20/

(Three barbershop singers enter one by one, slowly building up the harmony – they are singing ‘Wait Until The Sun Shines, Nellie’. Eventually, they are joined by Christy, who sings the top part and conducts the group. After a verse and a chorus, Ben creeps in, trying to get Christy’s attention; as if he is in the wings at a school concert. The scene is played with Christy moving in and out of the song in order to dialogue with Ben at the edge of the stage; their conversation split up depending on when Christy does and does not need to be in the song.)

Christy: Ben! Have you any idea what you’ve done?

Ben: I know, I know...

Christy: Three teachers stopped me today to ask me what the hell you are up to!

Ben: They don’t understand...

Christy: They know exactly!!

(Christy back into the song, Ben jumping around in frustration. Christy breaks from the song.)

Ben: They say I’m crazy with power!

Christy: Have you considered that they might be right?



Ben: What?

Christy: Can you even remember why you started this?

Ben: I thought you were on my side!

(Christy back to the song, scowling at Ben, then breaking into cheesy smile for the song. Breaks from the song.)

Christy: Principal Owens is going to fire you. That's the word in the faculty.

Ben: Why do they all hate me?

Christy: Does it occur to you that you're putting me in jeopardy too?

(Christy back to the song. Then breaks away.)

Christy: Think of something, tiger! Or else.

Ben: I just don't see how!

Christy: O, great.

Ben: What shall I do?

Christy: You're the great leader!

Ben: OK, OK.

Christy: (threateningly) Go, tiger!

(Christy back into the song; she and the barbershop gently exits, their song fading away.)

Ben: (Thinking, then.) I've got it!

(Ben runs off.)

21/

(Laurie enters at a walk-run. She is trying to keep close to the buildings. She pauses and looks about. In the shadows the shapes of two figures appears. She gasps, then covers her own mouth for fear they will hear her. She sinks down and begins to move along the wall of a building, her back to it. The figures recede into the shadows. Laurie sighs with relief, and begins to edge along the wall in the opposite direction. But two more figures appear in the shadows just ahead of her. Laurie, now thoroughly agitated, leaps up and shouts.)

Laurie: You keep following me, I'll shoot you in the head!! You zombies!!

Eric: (scuttling off) I'm leaving her to you, man! She's crazier than a dog in a hubcap factory!

David: Laurie?

Laurie: David, is that you?

David: Sure, sure. (Emerging from the shadows.) What are you shouting about shooting for?

Laurie: O, I don't know... you people have got me so frightened...

David: Me? (Laurie looks around nervously.) It's OK, there's no one else coming. Eric cleared off. I think you scared him! (He laughs.)

Laurie: It's not funny from where I'm standing. Where are the rest of your troops?

David: Laurie, will you listen to me for one minute?

Laurie: I think we've said everything we need to say to each other, David. Just leave me alone.

David: (Irritated.) Just listen. For once! All right? You've gotta stop writing that stuff against The Wave. You're causing all kinds of troubles!

Laurie: The Wave is causing the troubles.

David: It is not and you know it. Please, we want you with us, not against us, but...,

Laurie: But what?

David: See, there you go! You're so prejudiced! You don't give anyone a chance. Don't you see how good the Wave could be – for the whole? It could be a new system.

Laurie: I don't want to be in any system.

(Taking her by the arms; this mirrors the moment at the start of the play when he steals a kiss; but this is aggressive.)

David: But we need you! Why are you trying to destroy us!

Laurie: Let go of me!

David: You gotta stop!

Laurie: Let go of my arm!

(They are struggling now.)

David: Just shut up a minute! And stop writing those articles! You're ruining everything!

Laurie: I will write, I will write, I will, I will!

David: I want you to stop!

Laurie: I hate you! I hate The Wave! (She is shouting not just at David, but at the whole town.) I hate you all! I hate you all!

David: Be quiet, you crazy bitch!

(David throws her down on the ground. She lies still. David recoils in horror, taking a step or two back, almost as if he is about to run away. But he runs forward instead, throwing himself to his knees beside Laurie.)

David: O, god, o god, what have I become! I'm so sorry, I'm so sorry, Laurie. I love you so much, I love you, I love you. (David cradles Laurie's body, she puts her arms around him. ) What's happened to me, Laurie? How could I become this thing?

What's happened to us? (He holds her so he can see her.) Are you OK?

Laurie: Yeh. (She nods. She feels her shoulder, but she isn't hurt badly.)

David: We've all gone crazy. (He helps Laurie to her feet.)

Laurie: Are **you** OK?

David: I don't think I am. Not yet. I feel like I've been hypnotised and I'm just coming out of it and I can't believe what everybody is telling me that I did. Except that it's me that's telling me. I was just shouting at you back then not to destroy us, and ... look what I did... everything is twisted... are you ever going to forgive me?

Laurie: I don't know yet. But will you do something for me, even if I do never forgive you?

David: Yes, of course. Whatever you decide. It's the least I should do...

Laurie: Do you trust me?

(David nods. Laurie puts her hand on David's shoulder and they walk off, Laurie limping.)

22/

Tannoy: This is a special announcement. This is a special announcement concerning The Wave. At twelve o'clock today there will be a special rally in the auditorium – for Wave members only. Attendance compulsory for all Wave members. That is the end of the announcement.

(The vandalised banner and symbol are replaced by the grandest versions of the banner and placards yet. The units are cleared to the side of the stage. Bursts of militarist marching song: 'Battle Hymn of the Republic'.; beginning quietly and building to a crescendo. Robert and Eric push on TV screens from opposite sides and position them with a gap between them. They exchange salutes.)

(Ben enters, exchanging salutes with Eric and Robert. He stands between the two TVs. He carries a microphone. For a moment he savours swelling chants of the mottos, but he quells them with a wave of the hand.)

Ben: The Wave is not just a classroom experiment! Some of you, I suspect, have already guessed this. Well, let me tell you now, my friends, that it is so much, much more than *any of you* suspect! O, so much more. Unknown to you followers, all across this country, for many days now, teachers, like me, have been recruiting and training brigades of youth just like you; in readiness to show this country just how to achieve a better kind of society. Morale is low across these Dis-United States of America – unemployment, crime, inflation, disrespect for our leaders, riots, protests, an unpopular war, decadent culture – these *diseases* are rampant! Unless someone does something to wipe them out, this country is finished!

(Eric and Robert look shocked. David and Laurie have entered to one side of the stage, listening – they look at each other, not quite able to believe what they are hearing.)

Ben: But together we can stop that rot. See what we have achieved in this school in just a few days! And if we can change it here, we can change it everywhere - in factories, in newspapers, in hospitals, in film studios, in universities – in all institutions...

David: Mister Ross!

Ben: Silence!

David: But, this isn't...

Ben: I said silence! You sit down, young man. Don't you interrupt me.

(David backs off.)

Ben: Now listen carefully. Not just David, but every last one of you. In a few moments the great founder and leader of the National Wave will appear by cable channel on these screens to announce the launch of the National Wave Youth Movement, with six – million – members!

(Cheering.)

David: No, no, no... this isn't good....

Laurie: Can't any of you think for yourselves?

(Their objections are drowned out by chants of the mottos. Ben silences them again with wave.)

Ben: (smiling, he seems almost deranged, and yet in control) The time has come. For the great illumination. Robert. Eric.

Robert and Eric: (Robert just ahead): Mister Ross, yes!

Ben: Turn on the sets.

Robert and Eric: Mister Ross, yes!

(They turn them on and the screens are lit up blue, but otherwise blank. No image. There is a murmur of anticipation around the hall. Ben stands with his hands behind his back, at attention, staring over the heads of the audience. Eric and Robert in turn, bend to check if any image has appeared. They return to stillness, waiting. After a while Eric surreptitiously checks his watch. He is puzzled. Robert bends forward to surreptitiously check the screen. Time passes. Eric shuffles anxiously, Robert looks angrily at him. They both look to Ben, who does not react. Eric checks that the buttons are correctly turned on. Robert gazes towards the screen, joined by Eric.)

Laurie: Mister Ross! There is no leader, is there!

(A gasp around the hall.)

Ben: Restrain her.

(Eric and Robert runs over to Laurie. David steps in front of Laurie.)

David: All right. All right. We won't interrupt.

Ben: Bring them up here.

(Eric steps back, relieved and he and Robert usher Laurie and David up onto the stage. David, Robert, Laurie and Eric are now in a line – they all wear white shirts, so they can make a screen.)

Ben: (pointing to Laurie) It is not true to say that you – you – you – you – have no leader. That is a lie. You do have a leader – you have called that leader forth, you have summoned that leader! But that leader will not appear on these screens.

(Robert and Eric look puzzled.) Get rid of them! Go on, you heard my order, get rid of them! (Eric and Robert rush to push the TV screens to one side and return to the line.)

Eric: Who is it, Mister Ross? Is it Elvis?

Robert: Is it John Wayne, Mister Ross? Is it Spider-Man?

Ben: No! None of them! Your leader is not a pop star, your leader is not a super-hero. Your leader is not even the figurehead of any National Wave Youth Movement. There is no such thing! Here, here is your leader!

(Either Ben pulls at one of the banners and it drops to reveal a picture of Adolf Hitler. Or Ben yells "Projector!!!" and the image of Hitler is projected onto a screen made up of the white shirts of David, Laurie, Eric and Robert.)

Eric: (horrified.) No, no, no!

Laurie: Turn it off, please!

Ben: Why should I turn it off? Why could none of you turn it off? Why did not none of you guess whose lead you were following these past days? None of you are stupid – you knew what we were studying? Why didn't you ask the obvious question? Did you think you were above history? Immune from it? You *know* how this stuff ends!!! And yet still you carried on! Did you tell yourself how much better than everyone else outside the Wave you were? You traded your freedom for a false equality! You accepted the group's will over your own beliefs! And you were starting to think that maybe hurting others because the group said so was just about fine with you. O, some of you were just along for the ride, and some of you had your misgivings. But you didn't walk away, did you? Well, not many of you, anyway.

(Ben walks over to David and shakes his hand, then shakes Laurie's hand. Laurie embraces Ben in relief. Eric looks shattered. Robert has not moved, still at attention by the side of the TV.)

Ben: (turning back to the audience, but first taking in Eric and Robert.) The rest of you would have made good Nazis. You would have put on the uniform, turned your head when the secret police came for your neighbours, betrayed your friends, even your sweethearts. (David looks down in shame.) Fascism isn't something that other people once did; it is a threat right here, right now, whenever and wherever people fail to learn from the past, wherever and whenever people blindly follow a leader, whenever and wherever people forget to protect and value the weakest, the different and the just plain infuriating! Now you listen to me... look at me... because I am more at fault than any one of you. Because I am supposed to be your teacher. And I meant The Wave to be a big lesson for you guys, huh, but I... er... I 'succeeded' just a little too well in my part, eh? I became more of a leader than I ever intended to be. I hope you will believe me when I say that this has been as painful a lesson for me as it is now for you. (He looks down, suddenly overcome. Hardly able to speak:) I hope... this is a lesson... we'll share... for the rest of our lives... I'm sorry...

(David and Laurie cross the stage and hug Ben. Then they each take one of his hands and raise his arms to the audience. There are no chants, but just applause.)

Ben: Thank you, thank you...

(The applause recedes.)

Laurie: Now what, Mister Ross?

Ben: (He looks at them, then:) Post-war Western Europe; reconstruction and reconciliation... ten minutes in my classroom?

David: Yes, Mister Ross.

Ben: (To Laurie.) Yes?

Laurie: Yes, Mister Ross.

Ben: You're good kids. You can hold up your heads.

(Laurie and David walk off, holding hands. Ben sighs deeply and his head drops.

Laurie and David walk past Eric.)

Eric: What can I say, guys? I was a stupid punk! What a freak out!

David: Well, it's all over now, man. Let's try and forget it... well, not forget it.... but let's remember and forget it at the same time.

(He looks at Laurie, unsure.)

Laurie: Yeh.

Eric: Yeh.

(The three exeunt together. Ben and Robert are left alone on the stage. Robert still hasn't changed his stance, but he is weeping. Ben starts to pull himself together, notices and goes over to him, pats him on back.)

Ben: You know, Robert, young man, you look good when you're tidy. I suggest you... consider keeping the look.

Robert: Really? Thanks, Mister Ross.

Ben: You still reading those Spider-Man comics?

Robert: No, I... I gave them up for The Wave...

Ben: I think it might be time to get back to Peter Parker... did you see the 'Campus In Crisis' issue, where he defuses that bomb?

Robert: Yeh... yeh, that was... interesting...

(They are walking off.)

Ben: But don't you think those college longhairs treated Peter a bit harshly?.

Robert: Sure thing, Mister Ross – they were really patronising... thinking they were above him like that.... and him a guy just like anyone, an ordinary guy with a few principles...

(As they walk off, Robert, unseen by Ben, holds his fingers like a gun and raises them to Ben's head. Hendrix's 'All Along The Watchtower' rising in volume. The lights fade and in the shadows figures like zombies begin to walk stiffly across the grassy knoll and then fade from sight.)