

PRINCIPLES

"PILOT"

Written by

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TEASER

INT. SONNY'S CAR - DAY

SONNY COLLINS (40s, Caucasian) sits behind the wheel of a parked car. Worn suit. Fierce eyes. *TAPPING* a handful of envelopes against the wheel, he looks like he's carrying the burden of a hundred souls. We'll come to learn it's way fucking more.

RICK (O.S.)
What're you gonna do?

Sonny pauses and eyes the envelopes, which we now notice have COLLEGE SEALS (Duke, UCLA, etc.) on them and are addressed to *Jordan Collins*. Trades an intense gaze with his passenger, his father RICK, who looks as if he's the same age as Sonny.

SONNY
Let Jordan decide-- make the
decision that's best for him.

EXT. SONNY'S CAR/SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

Approaching the front door of a drab suburban home, Sonny cranes back to Rick in the car and receives a snarky wave.

RICK (V.O.)
Duke in there?

A tiny WOMAN (40s) in a nurse's uniform, just as drab as the home, opens the door and ushers Sonny in with a familiar nod.

WOMAN
Mornin' Sonny.

SUPER: **Monday**

INT. SONNY'S CAR - MOMENTS EARLIER

Sonny shuffles through the envelopes, removing one from Duke.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - DAY

She directs Sonny to a CLOSED DOOR at the end of the hallway.

WOMAN
Won't budge for me.
(beat)
Coffee?

Nodding, he veers toward the closed door.

SONNY
Please. Black.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

The shade too small for the window allows the morning light to creep in; allows us to take notice of the TEENAGER still burrowed into his bed.

Sonny notices too, then pulls open the shade.

RICK (V.O.)
Wouldn't that be something else--
Jordan playing for the school you
were supposed to.
(contempt)
Jealous?

INT. SONNY'S CAR - MOMENTS EARLIER

Sonny's gape is venomous, then morphs to a satisfied smile.

SONNY
Parents are supposed to want their
kids to have the things they never
could-- supposed to give 'em them.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

The Teenager pulls the covers over his head to avoid the light. Sonny takes a seat on the bed next to him. Budges him.

SONNY
Come on. School started an hour
ago. Let's go, Guy.

Hearing Sonny's voice, the Teenager rises with a start. Disoriented, he eyes Sonny and collapses back into his bed.

SONNY (CONT'D)
Decisions and consequences, son.

Pulls the covers back over his head and rolls over. It's a subtle "fuck you."

TEENAGER
Dude, come on-- this is weird.

RICK (V.O.)
 Guess you're just a better father
 than I ever could be.

INT. SONNY'S CAR - MOMENTS EARLIER

Rick mirrors Sonny's smile. He couldn't be more disingenuous.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

Suddenly, Rick is eyeing Sonny from across the bed as he sits on the other side of the Teenager.

SONNY
 Yeah, I agree. But, I get a call
 from a parent telling me one of my
 kids is acting like an asshole--

TEENAGER
 I'm not one of your fucking kids.
 (beat)
 You're my principal, not my father.

Oh, no-- this isn't Sonny's son Jordan. This is one of his students, GUY. Yeah, he calls his students his "kids." He also calls them "assholes." He's good like that. Respected.

GUY (TEENAGER)
 Worry about your own two retarded
 fucking faggots.

Typically.

CUT TO:

INT. HARMONY HIGH SCHOOL - GYMNASIUM - SAME TIME

A tall, athletic dude who looks like he belongs in a grunge band dunks a basketball with force. This is JORDAN (16), Sonny's eldest son and the number one high school basketball junior prospect in the country-- depending on who you ask.

INT. HARMONY HIGH SCHOOL - SPECIAL EDUCATION - SAME TIME

A Down syndrome boy, ear-to-ear smile across his face, mashes action figures together. Meet PAUL (14), Sonny's youngest.

BACK TO:

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Rick studies Sonny studying Guy, who's unabiding.

GUY

How's your wife by the way?

RICK

Disrespectful little shit-- this kid really is a fucking asshole.

Sonny nods in agreement. Rick watches him get up slowly and wander off. Returns his focus to Guy.

INT. SONNY'S CAR - MOMENTS EARLIER

Sonny. The letters. Rick. Not an ounce of fucking love lost.

PRE-LAP: the sound of the *SHOWER* turning on.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - BEDROOM - DAY

With the sound of the shower, Rick begins shaking his head at Guy... as Sonny *STAMPEDES* back into the room, rips the covers off the bed, grabs Guy by the back of the fucking neck and yanks him out bed kicking and screaming.

RICK

Shoulda been more respectful, kid.

We stay with Rick sitting on the now empty bed, watching. Hear the *THUD* of Guy hitting the shower floor a room away.

Sonny returns, sits on the bed again and eyes Rick. *Asshole*.

WOMAN (O.S.)

Sonny. Coffee's ready.

Hopping off the bed, Rick insincerely pats Sonny on the back.

INT. SUBURBAN HOME - SHORTLY LATER

A pair of coffee cups. One for Sonny and the other the Woman's as they sit across from one other at the small table.

SONNY

He doesn't know anything, right?

She's quick to shake her head, "no."

Sitting between the two, Rick nods approvingly.

Sonny shoots daggers through Rick as Guy appears behind him, ready for school... or at least as ready as he's going to be.

INT. SONNY'S CAR - DAY

Pulling the car door closed, Sonny starts the car and eyes his passenger-- Guy. Neither thrilled by their company.

RICK (O.S.)
Well, this was a treat.

Sonny peers into the rear view mirror where Rick appears.

RICK (CONT'D)
Jordan better choose Duke.

SONNY
Fuck off already.

Bemused, Guy leers at Sonny, still eyeing the backseat.

Following Sonny's gaze, Guy cranes into the backseat... which is EMPTY: Rick's not there. Never was.

EXT. COUNTRY FIELD - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

Rick lies in the grass, bloody and badly beaten. DEAD.

INT. SONNY'S CAR - DAY

Cautiously, Guy gives his principal a suspect stare.

GUY
Yo, Mr. C., you straight?

Rick beams in the rear view, which Sonny adjusts... and, suddenly, Rick is gone again. Sonny meets eyes with Guy.

SONNY
Fine.

EXT. SONNY'S CAR/SUBURBAN HOME - CONTINUOUS

Guy his sole passenger, Sonny's car pulls away from the curb.

MUSIC CUE: *"Everyday" by A\$AP Rocky featuring Rod Stewart*

TITLE CARD: **PRINCIPLES**

END OF TEASER