

ME, MYSELF AND I

"Pilot"

Written by

Dan Kopelman

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COLD OPEN

INT. NEUTRAL SPACE - DAY

ALEX RILEY (40), speaks directly to camera.

MID-LIFE ALEX

My name is Alex Riley. And this is
the story of my life.

(then)

Now, in order for you to get the
complete picture, I should probably
start with...

As he talks, Mid-Life Alex's voice and face seamlessly MORPH
into those of a 14-year-old boy. This is YOUNG ALEX.

YOUNG ALEX

... the day that changed everything.

INT. CHICAGO APARTMENT (1991) - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

CHYRON: 1991, AGE 14

The CAMERA FOLLOWS A DOG as it crosses to an empty food bowl.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

As an only child growing up in
Chicago, I had two major obsessions.
One was inventing stuff.

The dog taps a button with his snout, activating a Rube
Goldberg contraption that dispenses a single serving of food.
As the dog happily digs in, the CAMERA CONTINUES into...

INT. CHICAGO APARTMENT (1991) - ALEX'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS

Dressed from head-to-toe in Chicago Bulls gear, Young Alex
watches a basketball game on a small TV.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

The other was Michael Jordan.

ANNOUNCER (ON TV)

Three seconds left, Jordan has the ball.

Jordan makes the fallaway buzzer-beater -- Bulls win! Alex
jumps up and down in celebration.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

But, like I said, all that was about
to change.

Alex's mom, MAGGIE (35), enters. She wears an airline uniform.

MAGGIE

Hey, honey. You know that pilot I've been seeing?

YOUNG ALEX

The one from LA? Yeah, what about him?

MAGGIE

He asked me to marry him.

YOUNG ALEX

(immediately concerned)
And what did you say?

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. HOUSE (1991) - DAY

A station wagon -- with Illinois plates and luggage strapped to the roof -- pulls up to a modest Studio City home.

Maggie's new fiancé, RON (40, a man's man), escorts Alex, Maggie and the dog from the car to the front door.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

Just like that, I was forced to live in a house full of complete strangers. A house that happens to be smack dab in the middle of...

Ron's son, JUSTIN (14), steps out from the house. He's wearing a MAGIC JOHNSON JERSEY.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

... Laker Country.

As Young Alex seethes, he MORPHS back into MID-LIFE ALEX..

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)

Turns out, that wouldn't be the worst day of my life. Not by a long shot.

EXT. SCHOOL (2017) - MORNING

CHYRON: 2017, AGE 40

Mid-Life Alex stands beside a minivan at morning drop-off with ABBY (8). (Note: There's a stick-figure family sticker on the minivan's rear window -- Dad, Mom, Daughter.)

Alex bends down and hugs Abby goodbye.

MID-LIFE ALEX

I love you. Learn a lot today, okay?

ABBY

Dad, where's my lunch?

MID-LIFE ALEX

Crap.

INT. MINIVAN (2017) - MOMENTS LATER

Mid-Life Alex is behind the wheel of the minivan.

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)

Leaving my daughter's lunch on the
kitchen table isn't the bad thing I
was talking about....**EXT. LOS FELIZ HOUSE (2017) - CONTINUOUS**

The minivan pulls up to Alex's Los Feliz home.

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)

This is.

REVEAL that there's an AMBULANCE parked in the driveway.

INT. LOS FELIZ HOUSE (2017) - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

The front door flies open and Alex rushes inside.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Sarah, oh my God! Please tell me
you're ok--Alex stops in his tracks. Strewn about his feet are a
mixture of WOMEN'S UNDERGARMENTS and a PARAMEDIC'S UNIFORM.
When he looks off to the living room, his face drops.

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)

Well, at least when your life hits rock
bottom, things can't get any worse,
right?As Mid-Life Alex begins to process the end of his marriage,
he MORPHS into a 65-year-old man. This is OLDER ALEX.

OLDER ALEX (V.O.)

Wrong.

EXT. NEW YORK STOCK EXCHANGE (2042) - DAYCHYRON: 2042, AGE 65Flanked by applauding businesspeople, Older Alex rings the
closing bell at the New York Stock Exchange. The flatscreen
behind him reads: RILEY INDUSTRIES.

OLDER ALEX (V.O.)

When you're ranking life-changing
days, it's hard to top the one where
you almost die.

Alex's face contorts in pain and he grabs his chest. As the businesspeople continue to applaud, Alex drops OUT OF FRAME.

INT. BEDROOM / EXT. HOUSE / INT. HOSPITAL - SPLIT-SCREEN

In a three-way SPLIT-SCREEN, we see:

1991. Lakers posters cover the walls of Justin's bedroom. Justin snores loudly from the bottom bunk. Young Alex is wide awake and miserable on top.

2017. Mid-Life Alex walks out of the house, stunned. He glares at the ambulance still in his driveway.

2042. A hospital orderly pushes Older Alex in a wheelchair.

OLDER ALEX (V.O.)

But, our life stories aren't defined
by the bad things that happen to us.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

They're defined by how we choose to
deal with them.

INT. BEDROOM (1991) - NIGHT

Young Alex tapes a Michael Jordan trading card to a small, un-Lakered section of wall. He smiles with satisfaction.

INT. HOSPITAL ENTRANCE (2042) - DAY

Older Alex rises from the wheelchair and determinedly walks out of the hospital. He smiles with satisfaction.

EXT. HOUSE (2017) - DAY

Mid-Life Alex still glares at the ambulance in the driveway.

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)

I'll admit, I've dealt with some
things better than others.

Alex takes a cinderblock and smashes it through the ambulance's windshield. As he smiles with satisfaction, we...

CUT TO:

MAIN TITLES

ACT ONE

FADE IN:

INT. BEDROOM (1991) - MORNING

OPEN ON: Justin's blurry face, slowly coming into focus.

JUSTIN

Wake up, little bro. Rise and shine.

WIDEN. Young Alex lies in the top bunk, barely awake. Justin stands on the ladder, his face just inches away.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Don't want to be late for your first day of school, little bro.

YOUNG ALEX

Could you stop calling me that?

JUSTIN

Why? When my dad marries your mom, we're legally gonna be bros.

YOUNG ALEX

Step-bros. But, I'm actually talking about the word "little." We're in the same grade.

JUSTIN

But I'm 39 days older. And that's a responsibility I don't take lightly.
(holds pre-pasted toothbrush)
Now let's go get those teeth brushed, slugger.

INT. KITCHEN (1991) - MORNING

Maggie places some food in front of Ron at the kitchen table.

MAGGIE

Hope it tastes okay. In Chicago, we mostly did take out.

Ron takes a bite and immediately GAGS.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

And by "mostly" I mean every single meal.

RON

It's okay, Maggie. All I need for breakfast is my morning coffee... served with a little sugar.

Ron pats his lap. Maggie happily takes a seat and they kiss. Alex and Justin enter to witness the PDA.

JUSTIN

Ech, I'll take my breakfast to go.

YOUNG ALEX

I just lost my appetite forever.

As Alex grabs his backpack from the kitchen table, he notices it has a severe wobble.

RON

Yeah, this sucker's always been a little wobbly. Just slip that napkin back under the leg, would ya?

YOUNG ALEX

I've actually got something better.

Alex removes a device from his backpack and proudly shows it.

YOUNG ALEX (CONT'D)

The Alex Riley Adjustable Table Wedge, patent pending.

(then, bitterly)

As soon as Mom gives me the money for the patent application.

Alex drops down to the ground and starts to fix the table.

YOUNG ALEX (CONT'D)

It works on the same principle as a car jack. Okay, give her a try.

Justin pushes down on the table. It doesn't wobble.

JUSTIN

Sweet!

MAGGIE

You should bring your wedge to school, honey. It's a great conversation starter.

JUSTIN

(game show noise)

Aaaaahh... wrong. Your school identity's locked in during the first week. And we can't let little bro's identity be "Inventor Nerd." No offense.

YOUNG ALEX

Some taken.

RON

Well, I for one, am happy to have a nerd living under my roof.

YOUNG ALEX

Again, kinda offended.

RON

It's a compliment. Nerds are taking over the world. Who knows, maybe someday you'll become a famous inventor like that dweeb who started Microsoft.

YOUNG ALEX

Bill Gates? When I grow up, I'm going to be a way bigger inventor. I'm gonna come up with an idea that'll change the world.

Off Young Alex's idealistic face, we MORPH TO...

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM (2017) - DAY

Mid-Life Alex is in the middle of a new product pitch.

MID-LIFE ALEX

The following occurs every day in Japanese restaurants across America.

Alex and his CFO, DARRYL (37), are on one side of a conference table. Three JAPANESE INVESTORS are on the other. Alex holds a plate of sushi while fumbling with a set of chopsticks.

MID-LIFE ALEX (CONT'D)

Mmmm, this sushi looks so good... Oh, no! I've dropped another expensive piece of sushi onto the floor!

(then, confident)

But, that's all a thing of the past, thanks to... the Fork-Chop!

Alex reveals his latest invention -- a utensil with chopsticks on one side and a fork on the other. He spears the sushi with the fork and pops it into his mouth.

MID-LIFE ALEX (CONT'D)

Arigato, Fork-Chop.

Alex bows, then gauges the investors' response. They scowl.

JAPANESE INVESTOR

(in Japanese, with subtitles)

He has brought dishonor to everyone in this room.

EXT. DINER (2017) - A LITTLE LATER

Alex and Darryl sit in a booth at a Du-par's-style diner.

MID-LIFE ALEX

So it wasn't the idea that'll change
the world. We'll get 'em next time.

A WAITRESS places two plates of food down. Alex uses the
Fork-Chop to spear some fries off of Darryl's plate.

DARRYL

What the hell's wrong with you?

MID-LIFE ALEX

I want to eat healthy, so I order salad.
But when my food comes, I instantly regret
it and take your fries. It's our thing.

DARRYL

I'm not talking about-- OK, tough love
time. First, I'm gonna put on my CFO hat.
(puts on invisible hat)
In the past year, Riley Industries has
gone from an annual revenue of 2.3
million, to pretty much zero.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Define "pretty much"?

DARRYL

Zero.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Ah.

DARRYL

Now I'm putting on my best friend hat.
(puts on new invisible hat)
Your life's a mess.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Define "mess."

DARRYL

Let's see... Sarah got the house.

MID-LIFE ALEX

But I kept my patents.

DARRYL

You live in my garage.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Rent-free.

DARRYL

So I no longer have a man cave.

MID-LIFE ALEX

For that I am sorry.

DARRYL

And now you only see Abby twice a week.

This one lands with Alex. It's like a punch in the gut.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

Look, I know it's only been six months since the divorce, but you gotta get it together.

MID-LIFE ALEX

I have inventor's block, okay? It's not that easy to get over.

DARRYL

Sure it is, you just gotta get your mind right. Try what I do: Every night before bed, I visualize my future.
(closes eyes)

Jasmine will be grown, so Wendy and I'll move to a secluded island where our only worry is keeping the Caribbean sand out of our piña coladas.

Alex starts to reach his Fork-Chop toward his fries.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Vivid imagery, man. Keep describing it with your eyes firmly closed.

Darryl opens his eyes. Busted, Alex steals a fry anyway.

DARRYL

Seriously, Alex. What's your life gonna look like 25 years from now?

As Mid-Life Alex considers this, he MORPHS INTO OLDER ALEX.

INT. OFFICE BUILDING LOBBY (2042) - DAY

Older Alex stands at an elevator bank with his CFO, JASMINE (35). As they wait, Alex plays an imaginary game of hoops.

OLDER ALEX

Three seconds left, Jordan passes the ball to Riley. Riley throws up an impossible shot and...

The elevator doors open. A PASSENGER inside stares at the awkward tableau of Alex in mid-hook shot.

PASSENGER

Welcome back, Mr Riley.

OLDER ALEX

(dignified, still mid-shot)
Morning.

The passenger quickly exits.

JASMINE

Aren't you gonna finish your shot?

Alex flicks his wrist and completes his hook shot.

OLDER ALEX

Swish. Bulls win.

Jasmine smiles. She and Jasmine step onto the elevator.

INT. ELEVATOR (2042) - CONTINUOUS

The elevator doors close. Jasmine hands Alex an envelope.

JASMINE

Dad couldn't make it for your first day back, so he sent this instead.

Alex pours the envelope contents into his hand. It's sand.

OLDER ALEX

Hope he's enjoying his piña colada.

JASMINE

When he called he already sounded wasted.

OLDER ALEX

Hey, Jasmine, at some point today could you gather the staff? I have a pretty big announcement to make.

JASMINE

Gather the staff? Dang, why didn't I think of doing something like that?

Ding. The doors open.

STAFF (O.S.)

Surprise!

INT. OFFICE (2042) - CONTINUOUS

Alex and Jasmine step off the elevator and are greeted by a large group of OFFICE WORKERS in party hats. Multiple flatscreens on the walls spell out "Welcome Back, Alex."

OLDER ALEX

Wow. Jasmine you really outdid-- Abby?!

ADULT ABBY (33), emerges from the crowd and gives Alex a big hug.

OLDER ALEX (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? I thought the Bulls have a game tonight.

ADULT ABBY

We do. I just flew in for an hour before I head up to Sacramento.

OLDER ALEX

Are you sure that's okay? I don't want you to get in trouble.

ADULT ABBY

I'm the GM, Dad. I can do whatever I want.

(anticipating his response)

Except make you head coach.

OLDER ALEX

Fine. Keep running a stagnant offense, see if I care.

JASMINE

Okay, Alex, your staff's gathered, your daughter's here. What's your big announcement?

Alex composes himself, then announces to the assembled:

OLDER ALEX

I'm retiring. Effective immediately.
Surprise!

Jasmine and Abby stare at him in disbelief. Pleased with himself, Older Alex starts to WHISTLE, as we MORPH TO...

EXT. BUS STOP (1991) - MORNING

Young Alex WHISTLES a little tune as he stands with Justin at the bus stop. He notices Justin writing in a composition book.

YOUNG ALEX

Hey, I have a notebook like that for my invention ideas.

He pulls out a well-worn composition book from his backpack.

YOUNG ALEX (CONT'D)

This is Volume 36.

JUSTIN

(re: his pristine notebook)
I got this in kindergarten.

YOUNG ALEX

So, what are you working on?

JUSTIN

Ideas for your identity-creating moment. It can be anything, so long as it's big and memorable. How comfortable are you with public nudity?

YOUNG ALEX

Justin, I know you want me to be popular, but I'm not really into the whole having-a-ton-of-friends thing.

JUSTIN

Who doesn't want to have a ton of friends?

YOUNG ALEX

Me. As explicitly expressed in my last sentence. Look, I really appreciate all--

ALEX'S POV: As "THERE SHE GOES" by THE LA'S plays, the most beautiful girl in the world walks toward the bus stop in SLO-MO and impossibly BACKLIT. This is NORI STERLING.

BACK ON: Alex, thunderstruck.

YOUNG ALEX (CONT'D)

Did everything just go slo-mo for a second there?

JUSTIN

Nori Sterling. Yeah, she has that effect on guys at first, but you'll get over it.

YOUNG ALEX

And I'm going to see her every morning at this bus stop?

JUSTIN

You'll see her, but that's as far as it'll go. She only dates high school guys. She's never gonna actually speak--

NORI (O.S.)

Hi, Justin.

Nori stands right in front of them, casually applying some lip gloss. Both boys are tongue-tied.

ALEX AND JUSTIN

Uhhhhh....

NORI

You must be Justin's step-brother. My parents told me there's a new kid in the neighborhood.

YOUNG ALEX

Yup, I'm new. Just moved in yesterday. Completely new. Could not be newer.

NORI

Well, welcome to the bus stop.

As she extends her hand, she accidentally drops her lip gloss.

YOUNG ALEX

Here, let me get that for you.
(removes device from pocket)
The Extendo-Grab 5000. Patent pending.

JUSTIN

Aaand... he's the Inventor Nerd.

Alex extends the Extendo-Grab with a flick of his wrist. He uses the claw at the end to pick up the lip gloss, then drops it back into Nori's hand. She's impressed.

NORI

I'm Nori.

YOUNG ALEX

Alex.

As their hands touch in a handshake, Alex looks like he's seen God. "THERE SHE GOES" plays again, as Young Alex MORPHS INTO...

INT. MINIVAN (2017) - NIGHT

Mid-Life Alex is behind the wheel. ABBY is in the passenger seat wearing a Chicago Bulls jersey. "THERE SHE GOES" is now playing on the car stereo.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Whenever I hear this song, it makes me think of a girl.

ABBY

Mommy?

MID-LIFE ALEX

No, I have a different song for Mommy.
(then, to self)
Psycho Killer.

ABBY

Dad, can I ask you something important?

MID-LIFE ALEX

Abby, you can talk to me about anything.

ABBY

Are you 100% positive Michael Jordan was the best player ever?

MID-LIFE ALEX

Absolutely. Why do you even need to ask?

ABBY

Kids at school were saying Kobe was better.

MID-LIFE ALEX

And this is why... say it with me:

ABBY

Lakers fans are stupid.

MID-LIFE ALEX (CONT'D)

Lakers fans are stupid.

They share a smile. Then Alex notices something up ahead.

MID-LIFE ALEX (CONT'D)

Why's there a "for sale" sign in front of the house?

EXT. HOUSE (2017) - CONTINUOUS

The minivan pulls into the driveway of the house we saw in the cold open. (NOTE: On the minivan, the woman from the stick-figure family has been scratched off.)

Alex and Abby get out of the van. As Alex examines the "for sale" sign on the lawn, his ex-wife, SARAH, approaches.

SARAH

Abby, why don't you go inside and play?

ABBY

I don't want to.

MID-LIFE ALEX

What your mother is trying to say is that Mommy and I are about to yell at each other.

ABBY

I'll be inside.

Abby quickly rushes off. Alex points to the "for sale" sign.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Care to explain?

SARAH

You know that chef I've been seeing?

MID-LIFE ALEX

The one with that place on Melrose?
Yeah, what about him?

SARAH

He asked me to marry him.

MID-LIFE ALEX

(instantly concerned)
And what did you say?

She shows him the engagement ring on her finger.

SARAH

He's opening a second location. In San Francisco. We're moving in a week.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Are you crazy? You barely know this guy.

SARAH

I only knew you for three months before we got married.

MID-LIFE ALEX

And look how that turned out. Honestly, Sarah, I can't believe you're willing to leave Abby behind for some random chef.

SARAH

Alex, I'm not leaving her.

(then)

Abby's coming to San Francisco with me.

Off Alex's stunned look, we...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

FADE IN:

EXT. HOUSE (2017) - DAY

Mid-Life Alex and Sarah are as before.

MID-LIFE ALEX

You're crazy if you think I'm letting you move Abby 400 miles away.

SARAH

Believe me, I don't want to pull her out of school and away from her friends, but what's the alternative? Alex, you live in a garage.

MID-LIFE ALEX

You make it sound so pathetic. It happens to be a two-car garage.

SARAH

It's just an hour flight. And we're only going to be gone six months, just until he gets the staff up to speed. Consider it a mental health break.

MID-LIFE ALEX

I don't want a break.

SARAH

Yeah, but maybe you could use one.
(then, seriously)
Abby showed me the Fork-Chop.

MID-LIFE ALEX

It's called inventor's block!

SARAH

Ordinarily, I'd be okay leaving Abby with you, Alex. You're a great dad. But, the way your life is these days? I mean, how are you going to take care of her full-time when you can't even take care of yourself? No offense.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Some taken.
(then)

Look, I admit things haven't been great recently. But, I'm telling you, one sale and everything'll turn around. It's like in--

SARAH

Please tell me you're not going to use
a basketball metaphor.

A beat. Alex considers changing tack, but presses on.

MID-LIFE ALEX

It's like in basketball. When a
player isn't hitting from outside, a
coach'll draw up a play to get him a
layup. Just seeing the ball go
through the hoop gets him his
confidence back and, next thing you
know, his shots start falling again.

SARAH

What's a layup?

MID-LIFE ALEX

See, this is why we didn't work. That
and your complete disregard for the
sanctity of our vows.

SARAH

So, you really think you're close to
turning it around?

MID-LIFE ALEX

So close. Just gotta hit a layup.
It'll be a piece of cake.

Off Mid-Life Alex's feigned confidence, we MORPH TO...

INT. DINER (1991) - NIGHT

Young Alex sits in a booth with Maggie, Ron and Justin at the
same diner we saw Mid-Life Alex and Darryl.

YOUNG ALEX

Can I have a piece of cake for dessert?

MAGGIE

Sure, but you need to order a salad
with your burger instead of fries.

YOUNG ALEX

Oh, come on, Mom.

JUSTIN

(sotto)

You can sneak some of my fries, Li'l B.
It'll be our thing.

YOUNG ALEX

I don't want a thing, I just want--

ALEX'S POV: "THERE SHE GOES" plays as Nori sits in a booth with her parents. Again, she's in SLO-MO and BACKLIT.

YOUNG ALEX (CONT'D)

(thunderstruck)

Nori.

JUSTIN

You're still seeing her in slo-mo?
Dude, I told you, she's never gonna--
Oh man, she's waving to you!

Alex looks over to see Nori waving from across the diner.

YOUNG ALEX

She is waving. What do I do?

MAGGIE

You could try waving back.

Alex very enthusiastically waves back.

MAGGIE (CONT'D)

Dial it back a bit, sweetie.

Alex dials it back into an acceptable wave.

JUSTIN

Do you realize how huge this is?
First a bus stop hello, now a public
wave? That can only mean one thing:
Nori Sterling's into Alex.

RON

I thought she only dated high school boys.

JUSTIN

Lightbulb. I just figured out what
your school identity's gonna be.
There's a school dance on Friday night.
Everyone will be there. It's perfect.

YOUNG ALEX

Perfect for what?

Justin pulls Alex close, speaking with hushed intensity.

JUSTIN

The birth of a legend. Friday night,
in front of the whole school, you're
gonna kiss Nori Sterling.

As YOUNG ALEX'S EYES widen, we MORPH TO...

INT. CAR (2042) - DAY

OLDER ALEX'S EYES are focused on the road as he drives.
Adult Abby looks at him from the passenger seat, confused.

ADULT ABBY

Why are you acting like this is some
vintage car?

OLDER ALEX

Sorry, old habit.

He removes his hands from the wheel. For the rest of the
scene, the car drives itself.

OLDER ALEX (CONT'D)

The self-driving car's one invention
the world could've done without.

(then, hearing himself)

Whoa, I've only been retired a couple
hours and I already got the cranky old
man thing down.

ADULT ABBY

Speaking of retirement, Dad, what the
hell?

OLDER ALEX

You know that old saying: "No one ever
says on their deathbed they wished
they'd spent more time at the office"?

ADULT ABBY

Yeah.

OLDER ALEX

Well, riding in that ambulance after
my heart attack, convinced it was my
last day on earth, know what I was
thinking about?

ADULT ABBY

(touched)
Me?

OLDER ALEX

No, the office.

ADULT ABBY

Damn, that's messed up.

OLDER ALEX

I know, it's way messed up. That's why I need to make a change.

ADULT ABBY

So, what are you planning on doing?

OLDER ALEX

All the stuff I've missed out on over the past 25 years.

ADULT ABBY

Like?

OLDER ALEX

I don't know... Sleeping till noon. Growing a beard. Falling in love.

ADULT ABBY

Noon, beard, love? What?! Dad, you just described the life of a college stoner.

OLDER ALEX

I know, sounds pretty awesome, huh?

ADULT ABBY

It kinda does.

OLDER ALEX

Look, I know this all seems sudden. But one thing I've learned from being an inventor is, if the path you're going down isn't working, you've gotta get off it as fast as possible. Sometimes, the best things in life happen when you take a left turn.

Suddenly, the wheel automatically spins to the left and the car starts to turn.

OLDER ALEX (CONT'D)

Uch, stupid car.

OLDER ALEX SHAKES HIS HEAD, as we MORPH TO...

INT. SCHOOL GYM (1991) - NIGHT

Young Alex SHAKES HIS HEAD, standing with Justin as they look out at all the kids at the dance.

MUSIC: DEEE-LITE'S "GROOVE IS IN THE HEART"

YOUNG ALEX

This is not going to end well.

JUSTIN

Why? It's the perfect plan. When I give the DJ the signal, he'll play a slow song. You ask Nori to dance, she'll say yes. Then, out on that dance floor, with the whole school watching... it's legend time.

YOUNG ALEX

I have issues with every part of that plan.

JUSTIN

I hear you. I'm ignoring what you're saying, but I hear you.

Justin yanks Alex's arm and leads him over to where Nori talks with a couple of GIRLFRIENDS.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)

Ladies. How are you this fine evening?

NORI

(flat)
Hey, Justin.
(then, warmer)
Hey, Alex.

YOUNG ALEX

Hi, Nori. So, are you having a good--

Justin SNEEZES. "GROOVE IS IN THE HEART" abruptly switches to a slow song -- BRYAN ADAMS' "(EVERYTHING I DO) I DO IT FOR YOU".

Panicked, Alex pulls Justin aside.

YOUNG ALEX (CONT'D)

Did you just give the signal?

JUSTIN

Yes and no. The signal is a sneeze, but that was an actual sneeze.

YOUNG ALEX

I can't ask her to slow dance. I've barely even spoken to--

Nori taps Alex on the shoulder.

NORI

Wanna dance?

Nori extends her hand. Tongue-tied, Alex nods and takes it. As he WALKS with Nori onto the dance floor, we MORPH TO...

INT. GARAGE (2017) - NIGHT

Mid-Life Alex PACES around Darryl's man cave/garage. There's a drafting board, two La-Z-Boys, a flat-screen and a single twin bed. Darryl enters.

DARRYL

How's it coming?

MID-LIFE ALEX

Terrible. I thought the threat of losing Abby would be the kick in the ass I needed, but somehow my ideas have gotten even worse.

DARRYL

Come on, dude, I'm sure they're not that bad.

Alex hands Darryl his composition book.

DARRYL (CONT'D)

(re: sketch in book)

Is that a wheel?

MID-LIFE ALEX

I was trying to re-invent it. Turns out you can't.

DARRYL

Okay, I'm taking your book away. And you're not getting it back until we get your mind right once and for all.

MID-LIFE ALEX

And how do you suggest "we" do that?

Darryl smiles confidently.

DARRYL

I got an idea or two.

INT. YOGA STUDIO (2017) - MONTAGE

Mid-Life Alex and Darryl sit in the lotus position, eyes closed. A TEACHER guides them through a visualization.

TEACHER

Your happy place can be anything.
Just pick somewhere nice and peaceful.

ON DARRYL: As the camera slowly PUSHES IN, we hear the sound of STEEL DRUMS and the CARIBBEAN SEA.

ON ALEX: As the camera slowly PUSHES IN, we hear his hysterical INNER VOICE.

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)
I NEED AN IDEA I NEED AN IDEA I NEED
AN IDEA I NEED AN IDEA!!!!

Alex's eyes pop open and he turns to Darryl.

MID-LIFE ALEX
Next.

INT. CONFSSIONAL - MONTAGE

Mid-Life Alex sits in a confessional. The sliding window opens, indicating the priest is ready to hear his confession.

MID-LIFE ALEX
Hey, Father, how's it goin'? Let's see,
it's been, well, forever since my last
confession because I'm not Catholic.
(then)
Anyway, is there some prayer I can say
that'll get Jesus to give me an
awesome idea that I can turn around
and sell for a ton of money?

The sliding window slams shut.

INT. GARAGE (2017) - DAY

Mid-Life Alex and Darryl each sit in a La-Z-Boy.

DARRYL
Meditation didn't work. Religion didn't
work. That leaves one last option. Drugs.

Darryl holds out a plate of pot brownies.

MID-LIFE ALEX
Now you're talking. Okay great ideas,
start flowing.

They clink brownies, then each take a bite.

FLIP TO:

INT. GARAGE (2017) - AN HOUR LATER

Alex and Darryl -- chocolate rings around their mouths --
have their EYES CLOSED, fast asleep. And we MORPH TO...

INT. SCHOOL GYM (1991) - NIGHT

Young Alex has his EYES CLOSED as he and Nori slow dance. After a beat, he accidentally stomps on Nori's foot.

YOUNG ALEX
Sorry, was that your toe again?

NORI
Maybe you should let me lead.

YOUNG ALEX
Wait, I was supposed to be leading?

Nori smiles, then takes Alex's hands from her shoulders and moves them to her hips.

NORI
Better, right?

YOUNG ALEX
(freaking out)
Mmm-hmmm.

Alex looks over to Justin, who makes an imploring kissy face. Alex shakes his head. Frustrated, Justin approaches them.

JUSTIN
'Scuse me, Nori, just need to borrow
my little bro for a sec.

Justin pulls Alex away.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Come on, everyone's watching. It's
now or never.

YOUNG ALEX
In that case, I absolutely choose nev--

JUSTIN
Here, eat these mints. Legends have fresh
breath.

Justin shoves a handful of breath mints into Alex's mouth, then pushes Alex back to Nori.

NORI
Everything okay?

Alex nods and GRUNTS while furiously chewing up the mints. They start to slow dance again.

NORI (CONT'D)

Look, I don't know if you've heard,
but there's a rumor going around that
I date high school boys.

YOUNG ALEX

(feigning ignorance)
Whaaat?

NORI

It isn't true. Just because I don't
date anyone in our school, people make
up mean stories about me.

YOUNG ALEX

How come you don't date anyone in our
school?

NORI

Because, until now, there hasn't been
anyone I liked.

YOUNG ALEX

Until now?

Nori closes her eyes and starts to move her mouth towards his. Alex takes a quick look around -- Justin and the entire school watch with bated breath.

Alex again looks to Nori. Her mouth moves even closer. Oh shit, this is really happening. Alex steels himself and swallows hard. But, immediately after swallowing, his eyes bulge and his face starts to turn red.

A BOY turns to Justin.

BOY

He's choking.

JUSTIN

(bummed)
You're telling me.

BOY

No, he's literally choking.

JUSTIN

Little bro!

Justin rushes over to Alex and assumes the Heimlich position. He gives a couple of thrusts, but nothing. Nori watches with alarm, mouth agape. As Justin gives one final thrust, we go TIGHT ON Alex's face and switch to...

SLO-MO, as a mint flies out of Alex's mouth. It sails through the air in a majestic, saliva-encrusted arc, landing with a wet thud... right in Nori's mouth.

REAL TIME. Nori gags, completely grossed out. Alex turns to see the entire school wince as one.

YOUNG ALEX

Nori, I'm so sorry. I--

GIRL

Just leave her alone, Chokey.

Nori and Alex share a brief, helpless look before Nori's friends protectively surround her and whisk her away.

YOUNG ALEX

Chokey?

(then, realizing)

Uh-oh.

Immediately, the entire gym starts to CHANT.

ENTIRE SCHOOL

Chokey! Chokey! Chokey!

Justin approaches Alex. Alex turns to him, pleading.

YOUNG ALEX

I don't want to be Chokey.

JUSTIN

Sorry, little bro. The mob has spoken.

Justin puts a consoling arm around Alex as the chant continues. Off the two step-brothers standing SIDE-BY-SIDE, we MORPH TO...

INT. DINER (2042) - DAY

Older Alex and Adult Abby sit SIDE-BY-SIDE in a booth at the diner we've seen in the other time periods. A WAITRESS takes their order.

OLDER ALEX

I'll have a cheeseburger, dry bun, and as many fries as you can throw on the plate.

ADULT ABBY

He just had a heart attack, so he'll have a salad instead of fries. Thanks.

The waitress walks away. Abby checks her watch.

ADULT ABBY (CONT'D)

I should really get going if I'm gonna get to Sacramento by tip-off.

(then)

Hey, why don't you come on the road trip with me?

OLDER ALEX

Nah, I have a bunch of transition stuff to go over with Jasmine. Plus, I've got that side salad coming.

Abby takes a hold of her dad's hand.

ADULT ABBY

So, you're really going to be okay?

OLDER ALEX

Have I ever not been?

ADULT ABBY

Well, there was that time you were super-depressed and lived in a garage.

OLDER ALEX

It was a two-car garage!

(then)

Look, Abby, I'd be lying if I said I wasn't a little scared. But, this is something I need to do. I may be entering life's fourth quarter, but--

ADULT ABBY

Seriously, did you come out of the womb speaking in basketball metaphors?

OLDER ALEX

Nope, it's something I picked up as a kid.

Older Alex NODS SLIGHTLY at the memory, as we MORPH TO...

INT. ALEX'S BOYHOOD HOME (1991) - NIGHT

Young Alex, in the same clothes he wore at the dance, SHAKES HIS HEAD SLIGHTLY, then opens the front door. As he starts for the stairs, Ron appears in the hallway.

RON

Hey, I want to show you something.

YOUNG ALEX

I really just want to go to bed.

RON

It'll only take a minute.

(then)

Justin told me what happened at the dance.

YOUNG ALEX

Fine.

Alex sighs a teenage sigh, then joins Ron in the DEN.

RON

Now watch carefully.

Ron presses play on a remote.

ON TV: Grainy, heavily-edited VCR footage of Bulls games. Michael Jordan takes a shot and... misses. Another shot, another miss. And another and another.

YOUNG ALEX

I get it, this is Laker Country. Sorry, but I'm not really in the mood to hear how overrated Michael Jordan is.

RON

Overrated? Last season he scored 33.6 points per game and shot 52% from the field.

YOUNG ALEX

Then why are you showing me this?

RON

That also means he missed 48% of his shots -- almost half. In just one season, the greatest basketball player on the planet missed 1,036 shots.

(then, meaningfully)

We all miss shots, Alex. The great ones keep shooting.

Alex nods; he gets it. He and Ron share their first father-son moment. After a beat, Young Alex turns and heads upstairs.

While still on Ron, we hear a DOOR KNOCK. Ron suddenly MORPHS into the 65-YEAR-OLD VERSION OF HIMSELF (*played by the same actor*).

Ron crosses to the front door and opens it to reveal Mid-Life Alex. He looks absolutely terrible.

MID-LIFE ALEX

I need your help.

INT. KITCHEN (2017) - NIGHT

Mid-Life Alex sits at the kitchen table. Ron places a slice of pie in front of him and takes a seat at the table. Alex eats a bite of pie and immediately spits it out.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Oh my God, that's the worst thing I ever tasted.

RON

Your mom made it. Pretty sure she accidentally substituted salt for sugar.

A beat. Alex looks at Ron with utter seriousness.

MID-LIFE ALEX

I think I'm having a nervous breakdown.

RON

You look like you're having a nervous breakdown.

MID-LIFE ALEX

All my life, I've been able to look into the future and figure out what people need. But, now it's like that well's dried up. I look into the future, and I don't see anything.

RON

Well, when a strategy isn't working, sometimes it helps to do the exact opposite.

MID-LIFE ALEX

The opposite of looking into the future is looking into the past. Not a great strategy for an inventor.

Alex absentmindedly takes a bite of pie, then immediately spits it out.

MID-LIFE ALEX (CONT'D)

Please take this away from me.

He pushes the pie across the table to Ron.

RON

Alex, you're almost there. You just need to get back in touch with that kid I met 25 years ago. That kid was bursting with ideas and optimism. That kid was going to change the world.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Yeah, well that kid doesn't exist anymore. He was killed by adulthood.

A beat. Ron sees Alex's deep sadness. As he reaches for Alex's hand, he accidentally knocks his fork off the table.

RON

Shoot, could you get that? Bending isn't so easy for me these days.

MID-LIFE ALEX

No problem.

LOW ANGLE: Alex gets on his hands and knees. As he reaches for the fork under the table, something catches his eye. It's the WEDGE he placed under the table leg 25 years ago.

MID-LIFE ALEX (CONT'D)

You dropped that fork on purpose.

RON (O.S.)

Yup.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEUTRAL SPACE - DAY

Mid-Life Alex, the WEDGE in his hands, talks to camera.

MID-LIFE ALEX

The Alex Riley Adjustable Table Wedge was my layup. And unlike Michael Jordan 48% of the time, I didn't miss.

INT. OFFICE CONFERENCE ROOM (2017)

With Darryl by his side, Mid-Life Alex watches the Japanese investors examine the Adjustable Wedge. They're impressed.

JAPANESE INVESTOR

(in Japanese, with subtitles)

Never again will I place a folded napkin under a wobbly table leg!

The investors shake Alex's hand. It's a sale.

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)

And while it clearly isn't the world-changing idea I've been searching for, it gave me what I needed: A new beginning.

INT. GARAGE (2017) - THAT NIGHT

Alex writes feverishly in his composition book. It's clear he's re-discovered his passion.

MID-LIFE ALEX (V.O.)

And you know what new beginnings lead to? Happily-ever-afters.

Alex takes a garage door opener and clicks it. The garage door opens to reveal Abby, standing beside a large suitcase. She runs inside and plops her suitcase onto one of the TWO TWIN BEDS that are now in the garage.

Mid-Life Alex beams. After a beat, his SMILE turns into a SCOWL as he MORPHS INTO YOUNG ALEX.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

There was no new beginning for me and Nori.

EXT. BUS STOP (1991) - DAY

Young Alex and Justin stand at the bus stop.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

Know how I said that our lives are defined by how we deal with bad stuff? Well, the way I dealt with Nori after the mint disaster was simple: I totally avoided her.

Nori stands some distance away. She looks over to Alex and smiles, but he quickly averts his eyes, embarrassed.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

And she dealt with it by getting a new boyfriend.

A car pulls to a stop in front of Nori. Nori opens the passenger door and hops in.

YOUNG ALEX (V.O.)

He's in high school.

As Young Alex watches Nori peel out with a teenage boy behind the wheel, he MORPHS INTO OLDER ALEX.

OLDER ALEX (V.O.)

But here's the thing about new beginnings...

As Young Alex watches the car drive off, we MORPH TO...

INT. DINER (2042) - DAY

Older Alex pays his bill at the front of the diner. A 60-something female CASHIER works the cash register.

OLDER ALEX (V.O.)

They don't always start on page one.

The cashier hands Alex his receipt on a plastic tray with a mint.

CASHIER

Here you go.

OLDER ALEX

Thanks, but you can keep the mint.
Believe it or not, one of these things
cost me the love of my life fifty
years ago.

The cashier stares at Alex, stunned.

CASHIER

Alex?

Alex looks at the cashier's name tag. It reads: "ELEANOR."

OLDER ALEX

(confused)
Eleanor?
(then, realizing)
Nori.

ALEX'S POV: Everything goes into SLO-MO. Eleanor is beautifully BACKLIT and "THERE SHE GOES" starts to play. Eleanor's face MORPHS into Nori's.

Off Alex's thunderstruck look, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINER (2042) - A LITTLE LATER

Eleanor sits in a booth with Older Alex. They share a big plate of fries.

OLDER ALEX (V.O.)

Turns out, Nori -- I mean Eleanor --
owns the diner. She bought it two
years ago after her husband died.

ELEANOR

So, the love of your life, huh?

OLDER ALEX

I was exaggerating for dramatic effect.
(then, looks around diner)
Man, it's crazy. This place hasn't
changed in over fifty years.

ELEANOR

That's what I love about it. Outside,
the world's all modernized. But, in
here, it's 1991 and I'm still that 14-
year-old girl.

OLDER ALEX

Like a time machine. Which is one
thing I haven't managed to invent.

ELEANOR

That, and the non-choking mint.

OLDER ALEX

Hey, too soon. That happened to be
one of the worst days of my life.

ELEANOR

It wasn't so great for me, either.

They share a smile. Alex stands up.

OLDER ALEX

Well, I better get going. I've gotta
go home and figure out what to do with
the rest of my life.

ELEANOR

It was so nice seeing you again, Alex.

Eleanor gets up and gives Alex a goodbye hug.

ELEANOR (CONT'D)

(whispers in his ear)
Let me know how if you make any
progress with that time machine.

OLDER ALEX

Will do.

They end their hug. Alex stands there awkwardly for a beat,
then turns to go. The CAMERA FOLLOWS him as he walks through
the diner and out the door.

EXT. DINER (2042) - CONTINUOUS

Alex exits the diner. After a couple steps, he stops cold.

The CAMERA ZOOMS IN INCREDIBLY FAST on his face, as we see...

A KALEIDOSCOPE OF IMAGES from all three phases of Alex's life. Driving up to the Studio City house; his retirement announcement; laughing with 8-year old Abby; shaking Nori's hand for the first time; watching the video of Jordan's missed shots with Ron; the mint flying out of his mouth.

The CAMERA ZOOMS OUT OF HIS HEAD, focusing on his face.

OLDER ALEX

Keep shooting.

Determined, Alex desperately rushes back into...

INT. DINER (2042) - CONTINUOUS

Alex makes a bee-line for Eleanor. He meets her in the middle of the diner, takes her in his arms and, finally after fifty years...

They kiss.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEUTRAL SPACE - DAY

Mid-Life Alex smiles at the camera.

MID-LIFE ALEX

Keep shooting. That's exactly what I intend on doing.

EXT. GARAGE (2017) - DAY

With Abby watching, Mid-Life Alex shoots a basketball at a hoop hanging above Darryl's garage. He misses badly.

ABBY

Dad, that's ten misses in a row. Can I have a turn?

MID-LIFE ALEX

Of course, honey.

Alex passes the ball to Abby. She dribbles a couple of times, takes a mid-range jumper and... SWISH.

FADE TO BLACK.

END OF SHOW