

EXCEPT FOR DANNY

selected scenes from
pilot episode

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1 INT. PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM -- DAY

1

The back of an EASEL. Someone unseen drawing on it.

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)
September 14. My first week in prison
was really tough. Drawing seemed to
help pass the time.

PULL BACK to reveal DANNY GALÁN, 4 years old. He's in deep
concentration drawing with a crayon.

OLDER DANNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
What I wanted more than anything was
to just be a normal kid playing at
home. Instead, I was locked up here,
6 hours a day, with these weirdos.

Danny stops and contemplates PRESCHOOL CHILDREN creating
ABSURDLY AMAZING ARTWORK: a girl painting a Monet replica, a
boy finishing an Eiffel tower from popsicle sticks, a girl
chiseling a lifelike sculpture, three children painting a
mural. His gaze ends on an OLD NUN sitting by a window
watching him. Her stern look makes Danny gulp and quickly
go back to drawing.

MISS BEETON, the prim headmistress walks in the far end of
the classroom with SUSAN GALÁN, wearing a doctor's coat.
SERGIO GALÁN, dressed in a suit, chattering on a headset
cellphone, rushes in.

SUSAN
You're late.

SERGIO
(to Susan)
Mi amor.

Sergio kisses Susan apologetically. He extends a hand to
Miss Beeton.

SERGIO (CONT'D)
Miss Beeter!--

MISS BEETON
Beeton.

SERGIO
--how good to see you! That is an
absolutely fine sweater... So, how
are things at St. Barnabas?
(chuckling)
I do hope I can count on your vote
next week.

MISS BEETON
Mr. & Dr. Galán, this is about Danny.

They look over at Danny, drawing.

(CONTINUED)

1 CONTINUED:

1

SUSAN

I knew it, I knew it! He's just too advanced for this class, isn't he? Just like his brother & sister.

MISS BEETON

Dr. Galán. It has quickly become apparent that Danny is... extremely different.

Miss Beeton, Sergio & Susan approach Danny at his easel. Danny, like a maestro, is furiously putting on his final touches.

SERGIO

Danny-boy?

SUSAN

Danny, sweetie.

Danny smiles at them and proudly holds up his masterpiece for all to see. It's CRUDE CRAYON SCRIBBLE SCRABBLE. Like the other similar "art" pieces behind him. Miss Beeton and a couple of children slowly shake their heads at Danny.

A moment of stunned silence. Susan is mortified.

SERGIO

He's... he's a MODERN artist!

Danny grins wider and we see PIECES OF CRAYON in his mouth. Miss Beeton sighs and looks away.

SUSAN

Miss Beeton, I'm begging you, please: don't expel Danny!

Danny continues looking up expectantly at the adults. He looks back at his drawing, perplexed.

2 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE -- MOMENTS LATER

2

Susan looks devastated as Miss Beeton prepares the termination paperwork.

MISS BEETON

We don't use the term "expel." For children of, well, lower IQ, we prefer the term "encourage alternative solutions".

SERGIO

If I may make a suggestion...

3 INT. PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM -- CONTINUOUS

3

The OLD NUN is towering over Danny. She hands him a RED CRAYON with strange insignias.

(CONTINUED)

3 CONTINUED:

3

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)
 And then the strangest day of my
 life began. It started when I
 received the gift that would change
 everything.

Danny uses the crayon to draw on his canvas, which has his
 stickfigure drawings of his dad, mom, brother and sister.
 He draws a STICKMAN with the new red crayon to complete the
 family. As he finishes, Danny accidentally drops the crayon.
 CAMERA stays on drawing as Danny drops out of frame to pick
 it up. STICKMAN wiggles on the paper and runs off it.
 Reaction on Danny rising back up to see the missing stickman.

OLDER DANNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 Strange Thing #1? I didn't remember
 my previous pictures doing this.

4 INT. SCHOOL OFFICE -- CONTINUOUS

4

All three adults are laughing, even Miss Beeton.

MISS BEETON
 Well. I must say you really are
 quite persuasive, Mr. Galán. Yes,
 as long as Danny causes no trouble I
 think--

Suddenly a TEACHER bursts into the office.

TEACHER
 (out of breath)
 Miss Beeton. You need to come see
 this. Now.

5 INT. PRESCHOOL CLASSROOM -- MOMENTS LATER

5

All the preschoolers are CRYING or WAILING. The artwork,
 paintings, sculptures are SMASHED or DESTROYED. Books and
 chairs are overturned; general chaos reigns.

MISS BEETON
 Good heavens! What happened?

A couple of sobbing children point towards Danny's direction.
 Danny looks confused. Stickman behind him cheering.

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)
 Strange Thing #2: I had no idea what
 had just happened, but I think I was
 about to be released from prison.

6 INT. GALÁN LIVING ROOM -- EVENING

6

Sergio and Susan on the couch arguing about Danny's expulsion.
 Their argument keeps getting interrupted by calls on their
 cell phones. The TV is on.

Danny pulls out his drawing from earlier and looks at it.
 He shows it to his mom and dad, who nod and smile at him.

(CONTINUED)

6 CONTINUED:

6

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)

At that moment I decided I needed a hug. Yes, a hug. It's what a four-year-old wants a few times a day. And then, it was as if HE had just heard me.

The Stickman has begun to glow and quiver, then struggles on the paper and stands up. He does a little dance and flip in the air. Danny is agape and tries to hide the Stickman, worried his parents will see it.

The Stickman knocks over Danny's JUICE GLASS and pulls on the tablecloth, knocking down a candlestick with a CRASH, even as Danny tries to stop him.

SUSAN

Danny!
(looking at her watch)
Dinner in 23.

She picks up the mess and exits.

7 INT. GALÁN KITCHEN

7

Susan sets down the mess from the living room. She opens a cabinet where we see ROWS OF PERFECTLY ALIGNED, ALPHABETICALLY ORGANIZED SPICES AND CANS. She pulls one out and starts to use it. The Stickman behind her scampers up and in a whirlwind fashion messes up her neatly-arranged cabinet.

SAMANTHA GALÁN (15) arrives home, carrying her CELLO and a BOUQUET OF FLOWERS. Setting down bouquets of flowers, she kisses her mother.

SAMANTHA

Hey Mom

FREEZE FRAME ON SAMANTHA

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)

My sister Samantha, one of the youngest performers with the Austin Symphony. She also can't wait to get out and see the world. I'm going to miss her.

Susan smiles at her daughter and hugs her tight.

SUSAN

How was the show today?

The PHONE RINGS. Susan answers. She hands the phone over to Samantha; looks at her quizzically and leaves the kitchen.

SAMANTHA

(on the phone)
Hello?...Oh hey! Yeah, my mom...

Danny walks in, approaches Samantha, hoping for his hug.

(CONTINUED)

7 CONTINUED:

7

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 (to Danny)
 I'm on the phone...

The Stickman unseen is scampering up the phone cord.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 (on phone, giggles)
 Are you serious? Tonight?...

The Stickman unplugs the PHONE JACK.

SAMANTHA (CONT'D)
 ...uh,yeah, I was, like--
 hello?...hello?

8 INT. GALÁN LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

8

Sergio is sitting on the couch watching TELEVISION.

SUSAN
 Samantha just got a call-- from a
 BOY. Do you know someone named
 Gordon?

SERGIO
 No. Probably some guy from school.

SUSAN
 What kind of mother names their son
 Gordon? Besides, there's no one at
 school by that name.

SERGIO
 How do you know there's not... oh.
 You've read the school phonebook.

9 INSERT FLASH CUT OF SUSAN SPEED-READING A SCHOOL DIRECTORY.

9

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)
 Oh, yeah. Something else about my
 mom: she has a photographic memory.

10 INT. GALÁN LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

10

SERGIO
 You worry too much. What's wrong
 with her having a nice special friend?

11 FLASH CUT OF GORDON, A PUNKISH TEENAGER, LOOKING AT THE CAMERA 11

GORDON
 Exactly.

12 INT. GALÁN LIVING ROOM -- CONTINUOUS

12

SUSAN
 (leaving the room)
 Why do I always get to be the "bad"
 parent? The one who has to worry
 about our family?

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED:

12

JONATHAN GALÁN (11) enters, wearing a Linux T-shirt.

JONATHAN
Dad, I need some money.

Sergio keeps his eyes glued to the TV.

SERGIO
Uh-huh. So what is it this time?

JONATHAN
So glad you asked. This is...

FREEZE FRAME ON JONATHAN.

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)
That was my brother Jonathan. At my age, he'd set himself the goal of becoming a millionaire before he was 18 by inventing new products. He was actually making a small fortune on ebay.

Jonathan pulls up what looks like a an AQUARIUM with COMPUTER PARTS and WIRES, with some FISH swimming in it and some DEAD FISH floating at the top.

JONATHAN
...an Aquamputer!

SERGIO
A what?

JONATHAN
An Aquamputer. An integrated water-cooled computer that doubles as an aquarium. Every person who wants a new computer AND loves fish
(pointing at his device
proudly)
is going to want one of these babies for Christmas.

SERGIO
Now what I did teach you about marketing? Do you know if--

JONATHAN
Dad, I had 37 people already order it off my website.

SERGIO
37 orders! That's my boy... what do we call these people?

Sergio and Jonathan grin at each other and in unison:

SERGIO AND JONATHAN
SUCKERS!

Sergio and Jonathan roar in laughter, but Jonathan keeps on going too long with embarrassing, nerdy snort-laughs.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (2)

12

SERGIO

(serious)

Son... You gotta quit doing that.

Samantha passes through, hearing Jonathan

SAMANTHA

Uh, yeah.

Jonathan sticks his tongue out at her and goes back to fiddling with his aquarium-computer. Danny comes in and tugs on his sleeve, hoping for his hug. Jonathan tussles Danny's hair affectionately as he works on his invention.

JONATHAN

Sorry, bud, you can't help me with this one. Now if I can just get it to quit--uh-- killing the fish...

Susan enters and approaches Sergio.

SUSAN

Sergio, look, you almost had her today. Why can't you make a few calls at City Hall and get Danny back in?

Danny approaches Sergio, arms outstretched, wanting his hug. Sergio misinterprets his gesture and starts to pull up on his sweater. He gets it up just enough to get it stuck, bunched on Danny's head, and then notices something on TV.

SERGIO

(distracted by TV)

What? What are you talking about?

Susan turns OFF THE TV at the console. Danny, out of focus in the background, walks around blindly with his stuck sweater, arms up like a mummy.

SUSAN

If he doesn't stay at St. Barnabas, we're doomed. We are denying him the opportunity to a successful path to the Ivy League--

SERGIO

Whoa, whoa. First of all, I'm not the mayor yet, OK? Secondly, I think that's called bribery.

Sergio flips back ON THE TV with the REMOTE. In the background, Danny continues to stagger around blindly.

SUSAN

Sergio, we have to get Danny back in there.

SERGIO

Mi amor, there's other preschools--

Susan flips OFF the TV.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (3)

12

SUSAN

Not good enough. Not for our family.

Danny is now jumping up and down, desperate.

SERGIO

(annoyed, turns on TV)

Susan! maybe we may just have to accept the fact that Danny--

SUSAN

What are you saying, that he is dimwitted!?

Danny SMACKS into a wall and tumbles down, where he finally gets the sweater off, panting.

SERGIO

Mi amor...

SUSAN

Don't you "mi amor" me! You want my vote? You be the candidate who campaigns for his own children.

SERGIO

Oh great. You're not going to vote for your own husband ...Hey, shhh, everybody, I'm on.

ON THE TELEVISION, A POLITICAL AD FOR SERGIO GALÁN FOR MAYOR.

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)

You know, being home from prison wasn't so great. My family was so weird. How was I ever going to have a normal family to grow up in?

Jonathan is puzzled by something. The Stickman is swimming inside his contraption. Sergio is intent on the TV where we HEAR HIS VOICE ON HIS AD.

SERGIO

Shhh...

SUSAN

You don't seem to think this is a problem...

SERGIO

Would you just let me watch myself?

Samantha walks by, wearing heavy makeup, and quietly slips out the front door, unnoticed.

The Stickman goes to the back of the television and jumps into the vents. The TV image flickers into STATIC. Sergio moans and picks up the remote.

SERGIO (CONT'D)

Oh c'mon...televisor de porquería!
[Spanish: TV piece of crap]!

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (4)

12

He fruitlessly pushes the buttons. ON TV: a cartoon of the Stickman who is holding a cherry bomb. The Stickman lights the fuse, waves bye-bye and jumps offscreen.

SUSAN (O.S.)
Sergio, we need--
(cell goes off)
hold on

JONATHAN (O.S.)
Dad, can you look at--

Suddenly -- BOOM! The television EXPLODES IN A BALL OF FIRE AND SMOKE as the cartoon cherry bomb ignites. Screams and smoke.

FREEZE FRAME ON THE EXPLOSION.

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)
Strange Thing #3: Our television
just exploded.

A singed, scratched-up Sergio is huddling over with Susan, and Jonathan. The TV is still sizzling in background.

SUSAN
Danny! Oh God!

Danny is on the ground, a little soot on his face but unhurt. Samantha rushes back inside after hearing the explosion.

Everyone runs to Danny and he gets held, HUGGED and fussed over. Danny glances to the side where he sees THE STICKMAN PANTOMIME A HUG, GIVE HIM A THUMBS UP AND A WINK AND JUMP BACK ONTO THE PAPER.

Susan goes into doctor-mode and checks everyone.

SUSAN (CONT'D)
Is everyone OK?

SAMANTHA
What happened?

JONATHAN
That was kinda cool.

SERGIO
(noticing Samantha)
Samantha?

OLDER DANNY (V.O.)
And while all I really wanted was a
normal family... mine wasn't so bad--

While everyone is comforting each other, Susan peers quizzically at something on the floor. It's Danny's picture with the Stickman back on it. Looking slightly different. Danny notices his mother's suspicion and becomes alarmed.

(CONTINUED)

12 CONTINUED: (5)

12

 OLDER DANNY (V.O.) (CONT'D)
--oh, no. How was I going to keep
everyone from figuring out what was
going on? Apparently, I was going
to have to be really careful what I
wished for.

Wide shot of the dazed family examining the destruction.

FADE OUT