

"First Kiss"

an original screenplay
for a short film

by Sam Nicolas

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FADE IN:

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

An OSCILLATING SPRINKLER attached to a garden hose FANS the front lawn of the Tucker home, a two-story wood and brick house on a tree-lined street of modest homes with very large front lawns. Arching water glistens in the early summer morning sun as it CASCADES onto the neatly trimmed grass.

Near the front porch, MRS. TUCKER (40) turns a spigot to increase the water pressure to the sprinkler. Satisfied, she leans against the house to rest a moment. She WIPES her moist brow with her shirtsleeve, a brown paper grocery bag full of weeds at her feet.

The screen door to the house FLINGS open.

JOSH TUCKER (12) races out past his mother. He LEAPS over the four steps of the porch, bound for the detached garage at the far side of the house.

MRS. TUCKER
Joshua Tucker!

Josh freezes mid-stride -- his sneakers SQUEAK on the wet cement walkway. He looks back over his shoulder to find his mother with her hands on her hips.

JOSH
Aw, Mom.

MRS. TUCKER
You see that?

Mrs. Tucker points across the street to a similar house, where the front lawn is overdue for mowing and the hedges need clipping. Josh moves out of the way of the sprinkler spray as it comes around. After thinking a moment, Josh slowly replies.

JOSH
It's Bonanza Day. I gotta help Matt with the booth. Tomorrow. Please.

Mrs. Tucker climbs the front porch steps.

MRS. TUCKER
She's old and alone. If your father were alive, he'd have done it already. It can't wait any longer.

Josh again dodges the spray of the sprinkler.

Josh hangs his head. He looks up across the street at the widow's house. The curtains in the front window of the house snap shut.

JOSH
Yea... Okay.

Mrs. Tucker opens the screen door to the house.

JOSH (CONT.)
Can I help Matt first?

MRS. TUCKER
That yard gets done today -- lawn,
hedges and all -- before you go off
with your brother to any carnival.

Mrs. Tucker disappears into the house. Josh stands looking at the house across the street.

Two houses down he sees JULIE ROBINSON (16), a pony-tailed high school sophomore, get into her old Ford Mustang convertible. She sees Josh and throws him a flirting smile. Stunned, Josh stares at her as the sprinkler returns and SOAKS the side of his head, but Josh doesn't move.

EXT. TUCKER GARAGE - DAY

MATT TUCKER (18) pushes up the front door to the two-car garage. Josh stands in the driveway with his hands in the pockets of his blue jeans. Matt motions for Josh to come in.

INT. TUCKER GARAGE - DAY

Matt shows Josh the drawing plans for the booth.

MATT
My science teacher, Mr. Zeckler,
will be here at noon with his
pick-up. Sure you can help?

Josh checks his wristwatch.

JOSH
It's a paying job, ain't it?

Matt reaches into his pocket and pulls out a single dollar.

MATT
It's all I got.

JOSH

Okay.

Josh reaches out and shakes hands with Matt, who pulls Josh close, puts his arm around him and gives him a fatherly squeeze.

Matt tucks the dollar bill back in his pocket.

INT./EXT. TUCKER GARAGE - DAY

SERIES OF SHOTS

Matt and Josh work together to carry lumber into the garage.

Matt shows Josh how to sharpen a hand saw.

Matt cuts two by fours, while Josh sits on his bicycle and watches.

Josh cuts two by fours.

Matt expertly nails two by fours together as Josh holds the boards in place.

Josh bends a nail while trying to nail together two by fours. Matt sees it and just shakes his head and smiles.

The brothers examine the completed carnival booth; they are proud of their work.

Josh finds a sheet of plywood four feet by two feet, which he presents for Matt's approval. Matt gives Josh a thumb's up. Matt draws with a pencil on the sheet of plywood. He outlines a large letter K for the sign.

Josh paints in the letters Matt outlined.

Josh holds up the sign for Matt to inspect:

"Cedar Hills High School Chess Club"

KISSING BOOTH

Kisses: \$1

INT. TUCKER GARAGE - DAY

Josh hammers in the last nail holding the sign to the booth.

MATT

I bet we make a thousand bucks.

JOSH

There ain't that many girls in town,
and most of 'em wouldn't wanna kiss
you anyway.

MATT

Not me. We got three girls coming in
to work the booth.

JOSH

There's no girls in the chess club.

Matt shows Josh the booth workers schedule.

MATT

We recruited. Meg, Junior Varsity
Cheer, from twelve to two; Janice
Reed, from the Drama Club, two to
four; and Janice got the new girl
across the street, Julie Robinson.
She's in the booth from four 'til
six.

Josh stares at the workers schedule. He focuses on what is
next to Julie's name: "4:00-6:00."

JOSH

A thousand? More like a million!

Matt laughs and folds up the schedule. Josh looks out
through the open garage door at the widow's yard across the
street. Then he looks down the street to Julie's house.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

Matt and Josh finish pushing the booth into the back of Mr.
Zeckler's pick-up truck.

Josh follows Matt to the passenger side door. Matt
remembers and pays Josh the one dollar bill for helping.
Josh puts the dollar in his back pocket.

MATT

You sure you don't want a ride?

JOSH

I got the widow's place to do.

MATT

You coming later?

JOSH
I don't know. I gotta see.

Matt gets into the truck next to MR. ZECKLER (50), who looks more than not like Albert Einstein. Mr. Zeckler nods to Josh.

Josh watches the booth go down the street past Julie's house.

EXT. WIDOW'S HOUSE - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Josh clips the hedges.

He hoes under some shrubs, the hot sun now beating on his neck. Josh stops a moment to daydream. He thinks he hears something.

SOUNDS OF A CARNIVAL: LAUGHTER, A ROLLER COASTER, A CARNEY BARKING

Josh rakes dead branches from the lawn.

He stuffs cut vegetation into a trash barrel.

Josh walks back across the street, the job half finished.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

Josh turns off the water to the sprinkler. He pulls the hose in from the lawn and coils it on the ground next to the porch. He unscrews the sprinkler from the hose. Holding the end of the hose away from him, he turns the water back on.

He watches the water GUSH from the hose opening. He leans over, puckers his lips and inserts them into the stream of water, closing his eyes.

Josh holds the hose above the top of his head. The cool water BUBBLES over his head and FLOWS down his tanned neck to his white tee shirt.

A car horn HONKS. Julie stops her convertible alongside the front of the Tucker house.

Josh looks up through the streaming water and sees Julie watching him. After a moment, he puts the hose down. Josh SHAKES off the excess water like a hound that's come out of a pool. He walks up to the Ford Mustang and briefly makes eye contact with her.

JULIE
You goin' over today?

JOSH
I don't know. I'm not sure.

JULIE
I'm working in the Chess Club booth.

JOSH
I know.

Josh runs his hand over his shirt, pressing out the excess water against his flat stomach. Julie watches the water run down the front of his dirty blue jeans.

JULIE
I'll see you.

Julie puts the car in gear and steers away from the curb. She glances back over her shoulder. Josh nods at her. She smiles back.

As he looks up at the brilliant sun now in the western sky, Josh covers his wristwatch with his opposite hand.

EXT. WIDOW'S HOUSE - DAY

The ROAR of a power lawnmower.

A SERIES OF SHOTS

Josh urgently pushes the rear-bag lawnmower across the grass, making cuts horizontal to the street.

He empties the cut grass from the lawnmower bag into the trash barrel.

The lawn mower quits. Josh checks the gas tank. It's empty.

Josh looks at the slightly opened curtains in the front of the widow's house. The curtains again close quickly.

Using a red gas can, Josh refills the lawnmower's gas tank.

Josh pushes the lawnmower across the grass, making cuts perpendicular to the street.

Josh leans on the lawnmower. Above the roar of the gas engine, he listens for sounds in the distance.

SOUNDS OF THE CARNIVAL: LAUGHTER, THE ROLLER COASTER, THE CARNEY BARKING, AND A FAMILIAR VOICE

MATT (V.O.)

Be the first to kiss the newest girl
in school. Step right up. Only one
dollar to kiss Julie Robinson. Your
first kiss will be her first kiss.
Step right up.

Josh checks his wristwatch, then pushes the mower onward,
with renewed speed.

The hot sun moves to 45 degrees above the horizon, as Josh
kneels on the lawn pulling weeds and putting them in a
brown paper grocery bag.

Josh edges the lawn next to the driveway.

He sweeps the last of the loose grass off the driveway onto
the now well-manicured lawn. When he finishes, he admires
his work. The lawn and hedges are beautiful.

Josh WAVES at the opening in the curtains. The curtains
snap closed again. Josh continues to watch. An old woman's
hand slowly parts the curtains and waves back at Josh for a
brief moment before returning behind the curtain. Josh
again checks his watch.

The time on the watch is 5:15.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

Josh runs into the house, letting the screen door slam
behind him.

INT. TUCKER HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY - CONTINUING

Josh bolts up the staircase skipping every other step,
pulling off his shirt as he goes.

INT. TUCKER HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY - CONTINUING

Josh slides open the closet door and plucks a clean, long
sleeved, dress shirt from a hanger.

He pulls open the bottom drawer of his clothes dresser and
takes out a pair of clean blue jeans.

INT. TUCKER HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

With a towel around his waist and another in his hand, Josh
stands in front of the mirror drying his hair.

In the mirror, he sees an IMAGE of Julie in the booth at the carnival. She sees Josh and waves to him. She blows him a kiss.

Josh looks down and picks up his wristwatch from the bathroom counter. When he looks up, the image of Julie is gone. The watch shows 5:30.

EXT. TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

A handsome, cleaned up Josh runs out the door, leaps over the porch steps and races to the garage.

EXT. STREETS OF CEDAR HILLS - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Josh pedals quickly on his bicycle, riding fast down the middle of the residential streets.

He weaves through the parked cars of the small town's grocery store parking lot, then jumps over a curb back onto the street.

Josh stands up as he pedals hard toward the High School in the distance.

EXT. CEDAR HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Josh leans his bike against the chain-link fence of the school, directly under the metal sign that prohibits riding bicycles on campus. The school parking lot is still half full. In the middle of the parking lot is the Ford Mustang.

On the other side of the fence, a remnant of a larger crowd wanders from booth to booth on the infield of the high school track.

Josh stops. He closes his eyes.

He jams his hands into his front pants pockets and then his back pockets, though knowing full well that they are EMPTY.

Josh looks at his wristwatch. The time on the watch is 5:50.

EXT. STREETS OF CEDAR HILLS - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Josh speeds away from the carnival on his bicycle.

There are more cars in the grocery store shopping center than previously, and Josh stays on the streets and goes around the parking lot.

Josh squeezes every ounce of energy out of his legs as he turns onto the street where he lives.

INT. TUCKER HOUSE - STAIRCASE - DAY

Josh hits every stair as quickly as his legs will go.

INT. TUCKER HOUSE - BATHROOM - DAY

Josh extracts the wet dollar bill from his dirty blue jeans. He folds the dollar bill in two and pushes it into the front pants pocket of his clean pants.

Josh covers his wristwatch with his opposite hand, pulls the watch from his wrist and tosses it onto the bathroom counter. He searches hopefully for a moment in the bathroom mirror, then rushes out.

EXT. STREETS OF CEDAR HILLS - DAY

A SERIES OF SHOTS:

Josh again rides down the middle of the street. Sweat pours down his face.

Josh strains to pedal out of the grocery store parking lot.

Josh rides slowly toward the High School.

EXT. CEDAR HILLS HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

There are only two cars left in the parking lot. Neither is the Mustang. Josh leaves his bicycle at the fence.

He slowly crosses the dirt track. The empty homemade carnival booths dot the abandoned track infield. Remnants of the carnival litter the matted infield grass.

Josh sees the Chess Club's booth. Tears fill his eyes. Exhausted, Josh breaks down. He sobs audibly, his chest heaving. He holds his face.

The sun nears the horizon.

EXT. STREETS OF CEDAR HILLS / TUCKER HOUSE - DAY

Josh walks his bicycle the last twenty yards to his house.

He lifts his tear stained face to see the Ford Mustang in front of the Robinson house. He drops the bicycle on his front lawn.

He looks across the street. Slowly, he backs up until his heels hit the porch. He steps up the stairs backwards, his gaze not leaving the widow's yard.

When he reaches the last step, he takes out the dollar bill from his pocket and looks at it.

He sits down. He buries his head in his hands. He cries again, into the dollar bill.

JULIE

Hey, Josh.

Julie sits down next to him. She moves close and puts her arm around him. Josh tries to control his crying. He takes a deep breath.

Julie strokes his matted hair. She puts her hand under his chin and lifts his face to hers. She looks into his eyes. Josh tries to smile; his eyes betray his sadness and distress.

Julie wipes his eyes with her fingers. She tenderly touches his cheeks, stroking away the tear stains.

She holds his hand in hers. Josh watches her hand as she takes the dollar bill from him. He closes his eyes.

Julie draws near. Josh can feel her light, cool breath on his face. She kisses him sweetly, tenderly on the lips. At first her eyes are open, but then she closes her eyes and presses her lips more earnestly to him. She finishes the kiss with a tender TOUCH on his forearm. She rises and walks away.

Josh lies back on the porch, enraptured, enlightened. He looks up through the heavenly evening air and sees the FIRST STAR of the night sky. After a moment, ANOTHER STAR appears next to it.

From above him, the DOLLAR BILL floats down toward his face. He grasps it and presses it to his chest.

Josh sits up and sees Julie walking away a second time. She looks back as she walks and smiles at him.

He smiles back.

FADE OUT.