

BLUE
BOY

The whirring sound of a VHS player sounds. A flurry of HOME VIDEOS statically dance across the frame. It clears and lands on a video of a child (ARCHY, 5) and his MOTHER (30's) fades into view. The mother appears to be in late stage pregnancy. The child feels her stomach and pulls away, giggling.

The baby is KICKING. The mother motions the child to come closer, makes a 'listen' gesture, and points to her stomach. The child carefully places his ear to her stomach. All sound cuts now--and what is left is the rapid heartbeat of unique life. Archy smiles and closes his eyes.

Black screen. The rapid heartbeat now slows to an even rhythm.

BLUE BOY

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM

Dust floats in the air. ARCHY (now 10) rests his ear against his DAD (late 30's) chest. The heartbeat marches on.

EXT. TRAP HOUSE - LATER

Archy walks up to a run down, shabby house. He knocks on the front door. A voice responds far off...

VOICE

Who is it?!

ARCHY

It's me!

The door unlocks and swings open. DEALER (early 30's) rears his head, obscured through a screen door.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

He's...sick again.

Archy holds up a wad of small bills. DEALER disappears again. Archy steps back and paces around. DEALER reappears and makes a trade.

INT. ARCHY HOUSE, VARIOUS - EVENING

Archy does an assortment of chores. He grabs mail which he puts atop a growing pile in the kitchen, picks clothes off the floor, takes out the trash. A daily routine of sorts. He notices TWO KIDS playing in the street outside. He watches them for a bit.

INT. ARCHY HOUSE, HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Archy cracks his Dad's door open to see him fast asleep. He backs away and approaches a closet. He hesitates, but eventually opens it. Inside are women's clothing and a mess of boxes. A past life stuffed out of sight.

Archy grabs a handful of the clothes and hugs them tight, as if a person. A faint sound of two people practicing whistling is heard. One who knows how, the other does not.

DAD (O.S.)

Ok. What's up, Doc. I think your patient's ready for his checkup. Heart rate check?

ARCHY (O.S.)

1, 2, 3, 4...well he's alive. But he could be better. I have just the thing!

DAD

Hold on -- you know what always calms a patient, Doctor? A good story.

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM - FLASH FORWARD

Archy and his DAD are huddled together as a DIY children's book is unveiled from under a pillow. A collection of handwritten slices of fiction. The cover reads:

ARCHY'S WORLD: BEDTIME TALES

Written by Dara Connell - Illustrations by Archy Connell

ARCHY

You found it!

DAD

Want me to read you one?

Archy nods.

DAD (CONT'D)

Make a fart...

Dad makes a fart sound with his mouth. Archy does the same, they both chuckle. The pages unfurl to reveal a familiar section.

DAD (CONT'D)

Ah. This is a good one. Turn that off.

Archy reaches to the lamp next to them and turns it off. As he does Dad turns on a flashlight.

DAD (CONT'D)

There was once an alien boy from a far away planet named Archy. Archy enjoyed spending time with his Mom and Dad, looking at nearby constellations from his Dad's spaceship, and creating stories of nearby planets and their people.

CUT TO:

INT. ARCHY BEDROOM - FLASHBACK

Archy lays tucked in his bed with his MOM sitting on the edge reading a story off a piece of crumpled notebook paper. A younger, healthier DAD kisses his son goodnight and exits the room.

MOM

He did not like strangers in his life because new things frightened him and he was very happy with what he had.

MOM (CONT'D)

But after a big fight with his parents Archy stole his Dad's spaceship and left his home planet. He flew and flew until the little ship could fly no more.

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

DAD flips the page. Each prose is accompanied by a child-like drawing.

DAD

He crashed on a strange, empty rock in the middle of space... and there he stayed. His home became the moon and he was very very lonely.

(MORE)

DAD (CONT'D)

He wandered the surface of this barren, gray rock- as he observed his surroundings, he was strangely drawn toward the strange blue planet in the distance... he wondered at its beauty.

INT. ARCHY HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS

Archy takes the small zip lock baggy from his pocket.

MOM (O.S.)

Time was slower to him, but fast for this planet, you see. And as it passed he watched landscapes get carved into dust and saw human children grow into human adults. He found company in the unknown...

He retrieves a lockbox from under the sink and opens it.

DAD (O.S.)

He lived through their experiences and shared in their lives... he laughed when they laughed, he cried when they cried... and after a while imagined himself as human, too.

Archy dumps a fine white powder onto the spoon and a few drops of water on top. He turns on his GAS STOVE TOP to cook its contents. A cotton swab soaks up the liquid and a syringe inhales the brown mixture. He examines it, closely.

INT. ARCHY'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - CONTINUOUS

Archy looks at his bedroom ceiling. The popcorn textured wall begins to glow and glint in the dark. Stars materialize and illuminate his room as his imagination takes over.

MOM

He couldn't wait to see his parents again and tell them of all the new people he's gotten to know from a distance. "Maybe up close isn't so bad after all" Archy thought to himself. Surely, his thoughts on strangers began to change.

A blue luminescent light materializes from the ceiling now. It hits Archy square in the face.

MOM (CONT'D)

Just then, a piercing blue light cut through the vastness of space...his Mom and Dad were calling him home.

Archy smiles.

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY - CONTINUOUS

DAD

It swept Archy off his feet and catapulted him lightyears away from his new found friends. And as that little blue planet fell from view, Archy felt grateful for company in a lonesome place.

INT. ARCHY'S BEDROOM - FLASHBACK - CONTINUOUS

The blue light dissipates as reality comes to a fold. Archy's Mom folds up the piece of paper.

MOM

Wanna do the drawings for me?

Archy looks at her and nods. She holds out her hand, in the shape of a 'half-heart'. Archy reaches out with his own hand and completes it. She reaches for the lamp.

MOM (CONT'D)

Night sweetie.

CUT TO:

INT. DAD'S BEDROOM - PRESENT DAY

Light turns back on. Archy takes the needle we've been seeing and inserts it into his Dad's arm. They press down on the plunger together. A real father-son effort. He loosens his grip and relaxes.

Archy rests his head on his Dad's chest. The heartbeat slows, further and further. Archy smiles and counts the beats in his head.

DAD

How we looking doc?

ARCHY (V.O.)

4,5,6...7...8.

DAD

Describe in a word what you want most after I get healed up. Pick three.

Archy closes his eyes and thinks.

ARCHY

Water--swimming. Piggy back rides.

DAD

(chuckles) That's not one word.

ARCHY

And... driving.

DAD

We're almost there bud. But hey. This stuff-- is just for us. It's special. We're really lucky to have it. It's making me whole again. Every day I get a little better. And when my leg can carry me again, we'll do all that stuff. Meet new people, have more fun... but until then it's just me and you, in our own little world.

ARCHY

I like it here.

DAD

Me too. But you know... If bad people found out about this medicine-- they'd do anything to get their hands on it. They'd even try to take you from me. Maybe worse...

DAD makes a gun with his finger. He looks at the wall which illuminates both of their shadows. DAD puts his 'finger-gun-shadow' against his sons head. Archy makes a 'hand-animal-shadow' next to it.

ARCHY

Grrrrrrrrr.

It attacks his fathers 'finger-gun-shadow'. DAD halfheartedly plays along, but gives up after a few seconds.

DAD

Come here.

DAD holds his son tight. We sit on this moment. A child completely oblivious to his reality and father who loves his son; helpless to his addiction. Archy's Dad runs his hand through his son's hair.

DAD (CONT'D)
It's time for a haircut.

INT. BATHROOM - NEXT DAY

DAD holds an electric razor and glides it over his sons head. After removing all his sons hair then his own. They look at each other in the mirror. Archy leaves.

He's left alone. He looks at himself, but doesn't recognize the person looking back at him. He can't help but look away and back again.

CUT TO:

EXT. SIDEWALK - DAY

Archy walks down an empty sidewalk, stick in hand; clattering against a fence. He chucks it.

EXT. SCHOOL PLAYGROUND - DAY

He plays on the empty playground while his peers are stuck inside. He swings on the swing and climbs the jungle gym. This isn't as fun as he thought it would be. He walks toward a classroom window. A bustling, lively class is in session. Archy watches for a time, then leaves.

EXT. TRAP HOUSE - DAY

He knocks on the door several times. No answer. Time passes. Archy unwraps a piece of hard candy and palms it into his mouth.

CLOSE UP of an ANT making its way past Archy's shoes. He picks it up and lets it traverse his fingers, then lets it back on the ground. He gets up and goes to the window to take a look inside. He lets himself down and walks off.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Archy makes his way home. In the distance he sees BOY #1(10) and BOY #2 (13) laughing and playing. He curiously watches them from afar.

They are each carrying two plastic bags, filled with something heavy. They nudge each other and continue their banter. Archy begins to follow.

We enter Archy's 'minds eye' for a moment. He becomes entranced in their relationship. They both look happy, well-adjusted, and by all accounts normal.

The moment breaks as the two boys have noticed this strange boy following them-- BOY #2 notices and throws up a wave, which fluidly turns into a MIDDLE FINGER. The two boys laugh. Archy turns to leave. Then--

BOY #2
Hey! Come over here, we were just playing!

Archy stops himself. He walks toward them. BOY #2 introduces himself and BOY #1 with a southern accent-- they are brothers.

JAKE
I'm Jake. This is Connor.

ARCHY
Hi. I'm Archy.

CONNOR
Like the haircut.

Archy runs his hands hand through his hair, self-conscious. Jake moves in--

JAKE
Can I feel?

Not waiting for approval, the two boys crowd him.

JAKE (CONT'D)
Dammmmn. This feels crazy.

Connor makes a "buzzing" sound and grabs his brothers hair.

JAKE (CONT'D)
How do you not just touch your head all day? I would...

Overwhelmed by the situation and energy from the duo, Archy awkwardly touches his hair.

ARCHY
I don't really think about it. My Dad let me cut it, actually.

JAKE

Your Dad sounds cool. Ours never lets us do anything like that.

CONNOR

Yeah, I wanted to dye my hair for Halloween, but he just got me a wig instead...

ARCHY

What's that?

JAKE

Expired Pop bottles. Our Uncle works down at the Freddie's and gave em' to us for free.

CONNOR

We're gonna see what happens when you throw em' up in the air and let 'em fall.

Connor grabs one out of a plastic bag on the floor.

CONNOR (CONT'D)

Wanna try?

Archy cracks a smile and takes a bottle.

THE THREE BOYS (O.S.)

1.....2.....3!!

ARCHY

Okay.

BOOM! Three bottles CRASH against the cement in unison and take off like a firework. A MONTAGE of the boys tossing various bottles of OFF BRAND SODA into the air ensues. They laugh and work through the rest.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - DUSK - MONTAGE

The boys walk down a residential street, conversing under a cacophony of crickets.

CONNOR

We're from Arkansas. We moved not too long ago, cus my Dad got a job here.

ARCHY

Does everybody sound like that there?

JAKE

Pretty much, yeah. Our Mom's from here though, so she sounds a lot different. What's your Dad do?

ARCHY

Oh...he's...a pilot in the airforce.

BOTH BOYS

Woahh, thats insane! Do you ever fly or anything?

ARCHY

I've been up once. He's gonna teach me when I get older, though.

INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - LATER

Archy stares at a home cooked meal. Mashed potatoes, gravy, green beans, and chicken. Chatter is heard under the surface. Archy responds and gives answers to questions. He smiles, he laughs, he eats.

He takes a moment for himself and gives a deep, fulfilling smile. For a moment he feels a part of a greater whole again. He takes another bite, present.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Archy holds the landline in his hand. The receiver drones with no one on the other end.

ARCHY

Hey Dad, can I sleep over? Why..?
Okay. No, I'm Okay.

The camera slowly pans to reveal his new friends sporting a sad disposition. Archy gives a thumbs down.

ARCHY (CONT'D)

Love you, too. Bye.

He hangs up.

JAKE

Fuck.

JAKE'S MOM

Hey!

The boys laugh amongst themselves. Archy holds his smile, but slowly lets go.

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - MORNING

Archy is cuddled up next to DAD. We look at them from a TOP DOWN perspective. An unoccupied Archy-sized bed lies on the floor nearby. Archy stirs.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Dad is lying on the floor in a seized up position. His eyes glazed over, arm stretched in an unnatural position, and neck tight. Archy walks through the front door and runs to his side.

ARCHY

No!

He leans over his father, shaking the bed. He remains unresponsive. He puts his ear to his chest. All sound cuts and all we hear is a few tepid beats. His labored breathing now turns into a snort. Archy darts out of the room. We hear commotion in the background as we remain locked on DAD. After a while Archy returns with an object in his hand.

He positions the NARCAN into his fathers right nostril and presses down on the red tab to release the fluid. His father coughs and jolts awake. Archy falls backward, tears streaming down his face.

DAD

It's okay. Yeah, no. I'm okay.

He tucks his knees to his chest and coughs again.

DAD (CONT'D)

You're okay.

Archy continues to cry. We focus on the empty box of Narcan on the floor. A sharpie written note on the box reads FOR EMERGENCIES ONLY.

INT. BEDROOM - LATE AT NIGHT

Another top down view of the two sleeping. However, this time Archy is firmly situated in his bed, back towards his father. He stirs and sits up.

He crawls underneath his blanket and flips on a flashlight.

INT. BEDROOM - UNDER THE COVERS - CONTINUOUS

He pulls the bedtime story book from under his pillow. He flips through the pages and looks at his old drawings and his mother's elegant prose. He shuts the book.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NEXT DAY

Rowdy commotion. The house is in disarray.

DAD

What do you mean you don't know?!
Arch, help me understand this! It's
been fucking TWO days!

ARCHY

(quietly) I'm telling you the
truth. I don't know where it went.
I'm sorry.

DAD struggles to move around the room. He neurotically goes back to the kitchen where the drugs are normally kept and checks again to no avail. He is sweating bullets. Archy watches, worried.

DAD

What? Speak up! I can't fucking
hear you! Do you not want me to get
better?!

ARCHY

(quietly) I do.

DAD

GET UP. AND. HELP, THAN! LOOK! I'M
DYING HERE!

Archy searches, knowing full well he won't find what they are looking for.

DAD (CONT'D)

I don't get another check for ten
days, Arch... we're fucked.

DAD takes a bad step and falls down. It's a sad sight. He gets back up and sits on the couch to compose himself. He sees the BEDTIME STORY BOOK in front of him. He grabs it and pulls out a lighter.

DAD (CONT'D)

Archy. I swear to god.

ARCHY
No! Please!

He starts the lighter and sets it on fire.

ARCHY (CONT'D)
Dad!!

He stomps out the fire.

DAD
I'll do it again. Look at me. Hey!

Archy avoids eye contact.

DAD (CONT'D)
This is important. For both of us--
please, I need you to be big for me
right now, okay? This is what being
an adult is. You gotta look me in
the eyes and tell the truth. And if
you don't? I might not wake up
tomorrow morning.

Archy looks at the half burned book. Then his gaze shakily shifts to the closet we saw earlier. Dad turns to look at the closet and then back at his son. A disgusted expression points back. He nods slightly, walks over to the closet and rifles around. He finds what he's looking for.

DAD (CONT'D)
I'm disappointed. I don't even
wanna look at you right now. This
is--

Crushed. Betrayed. Lied to. Archy sits in his thoughts. He slowly gets to his feet and walks off.

DAD (CONT'D)
Locks going on that door!

The sounds of his Dad preparing the drugs echoes throughout the house. DAD sits himself on the couch. He takes off his belt and finds a vein.

DAD (CONT'D)
You hear me?

He injects. The camera pushes in past his head toward a record player, which led by an invisible hand 'needle-drops'. DAD takes a deep breath and drifts into his high.

A feminine hand enters frame and PULLS him up. He opens his eyes and is greeted by a familiar face. His WIFE. She pulls him close and they begin swaying back and forth. DAD is suddenly light on his feet and moves around with grace. The diegetic music now becomes score as they waltz throughout the messy living room.

His wife leans in and whispers something in his ear. He smirks and lets out a laugh that's quickly met with tears. He grabs her tight.

As the song comes to an end we catch a glimpse of their shadow on the wall. Dad, however, reveals to be ALONE, swaying by himself in a drugged up stooper.

They sway towards the couch and release each other as the song ends. Dad gracefully floats to the couch and sits back. The moment breaks. His eyes open.

DAD (CONT'D)

Archy?

No response. He is all ALONE.

INT. BATHROOM - DAYS LATER

DAD is huddled over the toilet, puking. Dope sick.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER

DAD is drenched in sweat. Shaking. Crying.

INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MORNING

Dad flips the switch for the light. Nothing.

INT. KITCHEN TABLE - LATER

He looks through what is left of ARCHY'S BEDTIME BOOK and reads. He comes to the last page which has an unfinished story entitled 'Blue Boy'.

INT. LIVING ROOM - LATER

Dad sits alone on the couch, staring out the window. The house is so still. He gets up and hobbles to the closet. His wife's old clothes hang there. He grabs a handful of them and hugs them.

Above he finds a cardboard box filled with old family belongings. He retrieves a VHS cassette that is titled SUMMER OF '05.

He walks to the TV and puts it in. He sits back and watches. It's the same home video we saw at the beginning of the film. He watches and holds back tears. A stark reminder of how far he's strayed from his functional life. He hits the EJECT button and the moment breaks.

INT. LIVING ROOM - WEEKS LATER

Archy nudges his Dad, who is soundly asleep on the couch. His hair has grown a bit since the last time we saw him. Dad sits up. He hugs his son tight.

They sit down together. Dad sits in silence and looks at his son, but doesn't say a word. Archy looks at the coffee table and spots the BEDTIME STORY BOOK, reconstructed with tape and new pages. Dad notices this and picks it up.

DAD

Did my best to...

He stops himself while flipping through the book.

DAD (CONT'D)

We used to have this nickname for you. Do you remember? You were pretty young so... Wouldn't, uh...the day you were born, the hospital, you got all wrapped up in your belly button cord-- in her tummy. It got caught on your neck. The doctors all got really worried and wanted to get you out. "Right away, right away" they kept saying. They told us it could've really hurt you if we didn't yank you out. They called it delivering a "Blue Baby". So we used to call you our little Blue Boy. All your clothes were blue, thats why your room is blue... Anyway, a day before the surgery, you somehow managed to turn and... unwrap yourself... I guess. I don't know what you did, even the doctors were amazed.

DAD chuckles to himself as tears drop.

DAD (CONT'D)

I just remember seeing your Mom in that bed... holding you... getting probably the best sleep of her life. And she...

Archy looks at his father.

DAD (CONT'D)

She smiled and made up a little song... "Our little blue boy, no need to worry about him". She kept singing that.

Dad folds the book closed. He looks toward Archy.

DAD (CONT'D)

You think you can do the drawings for me?

CREDITS