

HOOVERVILLE, USA

Episode 1 - "King Kong Comes To Hooverville"

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We are inside a city bus where various types of people are on their way somewhere. Some are workers on their way home, some to work. A couple of students on their way home from school, chatting excitedly with each other. There is a young mother with a bag of groceries and an infant baby.

One elderly gentleman sits on his own looking out the bus window to the city streets. It is downtown of an old city. The buildings are old and some in disrepair dating back to the 1920's and 30's. In the alleys and in the distressed green park areas there are a number of homeless encampments. Make-shift tents constructed with tarps, cardboard and plastic. Here are the lost and the forgotten vets from the Viet Nam war and others down on their luck.

The older gentleman riding the bus is Liam MacDonald. He is 72 years old but he is still in pretty good shape other than the creakiness of age. He is handsome in a Gary Cooper ("Meet John Doe" film) kind of way with a face weathered by "life".

The young mother is holding her baby boy (around 2 years old) in her arms. She is around mid 30's, long dark shoulder length hair wearing an uniform. Her baby is looking to the back of the bus. Liam sees the face of the baby looking at him and he does a goofy look. The baby smiles and gurgles a bit at Liam's silly face. The mother turns to see what her baby is making a noise about and sees Liam doing yet another face. Liam has not noticed her looking and she has a small laugh. Liam straightens his face.

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh I'm sorry for disturbing you.

YOUNG MOTHER

Oh no trouble at all. He seems to like you and he doesn't warm up that quickly.

Liam is quietly touched by this.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)

You must have grandkids right?

LIAM MACDONALD

(His face turns a bit sad)
Yes...but I haven't seen them in quite some time. (Beat) They don't live here anymore. Their dad had to move for another job and...well it's tough for them to make it back here...you know.

YOUNG MOTHER

Oh yes I know. I needed to move here with my husband years ago for his job and then well...stuff happened and well...we split up.

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh I'm sorry.

YOUNG MOTHER

(Smiling) Ahhh it wasn't your fault.

LIAM MACDONALD

(Awkward smile back) I meant I'm...

YOUNG MOTHER

...Oh I know what you saying and thank you. It's been just over a year now and it's really for the best. And besides I have this little happy monkey in my life (kissing the baby on the cheek with a smile).

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes he does seem to have that spark in his eyes. The spark of happiness.

The Young Mother is touched by that comment and gets a smile of being touched on her face.

LIAM MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Are you a nurse?

YOUNG MOTHER

Yes...at the county hospital. It's not the best but it's a job and one has to be grateful to have a job right?

LIAM MACDONALD

(His face changes to a determined look) Oh yes one certainly does.

YOUNG MOTHER

And besides they have day care at the hospital so I can bring Franklin to work with me.

LIAM MACDONALD

Franklin? Oh that's a good name.

YOUNG MOTHER

Thanks...it's not a common name these days people use for kids but I named him after the president Franklin Delano Roosevelt. My grandpa liked him a lot. He said that he was a good man that struggled to do the right thing in a bad time.

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes he did.

YOUNG MOTHER

And he did it being handicapped. Did you know that?

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes he had polio.

YOUNG MOTHER

Yes, but they couldn't cure it like they can do now. (Beat) I'm sorry you know Franklin, I'm his mom Susan.

LIAM MACDONALD

I'm Liam MacDonald but my friends just call me Mac.

YOUNG MOTHER

(She shakes his hand) Nice to meet you Mac. You headin' home too?

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes, but I need to change buses coming up in a bit.

The young mother looks out the window.

YOUNG MOTHER

Oh this is our stop coming up. (She reaches up and pulls the cord) It was good to meet you Mac. Maybe we will see you again.

Liam looks out the window to the area and it is a bit dicey. He sees a homeless encampment across the street.

LIAM MACDONALD

(Concerned) Will you be ok?...it looks...well...

YOUNG MOTHER

Oh it's all ok around here really.

LIAM MACDONALD

Can I walk you two to your place?

Susan looks a little awkward with this question.

YOUNG MOTHER

Oh no we'll be ok really.

LIAM MACDONALD

I guess I'm just being a bit old fashioned and besides...I think well Franklin just winked at me that it would be ok.

Susan smiles.

YOUNG MOTHER

Well ok...if Franklin says it's ok then it's ok by me. But you'll need to pay another bus fare.

Liam gets a big smile

LIAM MACDONALD

(Smiling) Ahhhh it's ok I'm a vet and I have it covered.

CUT TO BUS STOP

Susan, Franklin and Liam exit the bus. We see Liam is carrying her grocery bag. The bus leaves and they turn and head down the street.

We track along with them as they head towards Susan & Franklin's apartment.

LIAM MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Boy it's been some time since I walked these streets. Things have and haven't changed that much.

Susan looks around with Franklin in her arms.

LIAM MACDONALD (CONT'D)

See that what was a movie theater over there? (He points to a closed and boarded up theater) That's where I met my wife. I was a teenager then and didn't know she'd be my wife...that came much later, but that's where I met her.

YOUNG MOTHER

Yes I wish it was still open being so close to where we live and all. I miss going to an old movie theater. People just rent movies and sit at home. I guess that's ok but there is something better about sitting in the big darkened room with about 100 of your best friends right?

Liam gets a big smile on his face and in his mind he is taken back.

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh yes indeed. To me going to see a movie was always a chance to travel somewhere else, somewhere that was better than the world outside where I lived at that time.

YOUNG MOTHER

Did you live around here Mac?

LIAM MACDONALD

Not too far...you know where Lincoln Ave meets the river?

YOUNG MOTHER

Yes, there is a nice park down there. We go there sometimes.

LIAM MACDONALD

I lived where the park is now.

YOUNG MOTHER

But I don't think there was any houses or buildings there was there? It was vacant I thought until the city coughed up money for a park years ago.

LIAM MACDONALD

Well yes there was never any buildings there except the ones my father and others built from wood, cardboard or whatever we could find. (Pointing to the homeless encampment) It sort of looked like over there.

CUT TO A HOMELESS ENCAMPMENT CONSTRUCTED OF FOUND MATERIALS

We see from Susan's POV the homeless situation.

YOUNG MOTHER

You...you were homeless?

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes there were many that were...actually all over the country. You may remember hearing about the Great Depression in school? Well I was one of them along with my mom, dad and sister Marion. We lived in what was called in many cities as Hooverville.

YOUNG MOTHER

Hooverville?

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes...named after the president at that time in the early 1930's Herbert Hoover.

Susan stops.

YOUNG MOTHER

This is where we live.

Liam looks around and at the old building. We see an old apartment building. It is old but it still has it's old charm to it.

There is a moment as Liam looks at the exterior of the old building.

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh...then I guess this is where I say goodbye.

Susan looks at him for a moment as she looks like she is evaluating something.

YOUNG MOTHER

Are you thirsty? It's a bit warm and you walked all this way with us...would you like to come in for a glass of ice tea?

Liam is evaluating as well.

LIAM MACDONALD

Well that's very kind of you but I don't want to intrude after you long day?

YOUNG MOTHER

Oh it wasn't that long as some and well (Smiling) I think Franklin just winked at you again.

Liam gets a smile on his face.

LIAM MACDONALD

You know what? I think he did indeed. Ok then I would love a glass of ice tea.

YOUNG MOTHER

Then come on in. Besides I want to hear about this Hooverville place you spoke of.

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh yes there are a few stories there. I'll tell you when King Kong came to Hooverville.

YOUNG MOTHER

King Kong? Oh that big monkey?

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh it was much more than just a big monkey to me when I was a young boy. I felt like I actually knew him.

YOUNG MOTHER

Ok, now I DO NEED to hear that story.

They enter the building.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF APARTMENT

It is an old stylish one bedroom apartment with high ceiling indicative of the architecture of the 30's and 40's. It is kept tidy and while not many pieces of furniture the pieces there are functional and classic.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)

Just put the bag on the table Mac and I'll pour us some ice tea and I'll get a bottle for Franklin.

There is the settling and they sit at the old wooden table in the kitchen area. Susan has Franklin in his high chair and he has his bottle and she brings two glasses of ice tea to the table and sits.

YOUNG MOTHER (CONT'D)

Ok, so tell me how you know King Kong?

LIAM MACDONALD

I'd say this is a short story but that would be stretching the truth. Short stories never tell you the whole story and the truth.

CUT TO A DIRT PATH

VOICE OVER WITH LIAM

(As Liam speaks we travel down a dirt path. We hear the sound of cheering kids. We follow the path until we get to the end of the path and then the end of Liam's VO.)

"It was late in 1932. Herbert Hoover was running for re-election as president but there was this new face in the race known as Franklin Delano Roosevelt that was giving a new sense of optimism and hope in that really dark time. I was 8 years old and didn't really know all about presidential stuff. I was more concerned with playing baseball."

MID-AFTERNOON - SPRING

We see a scrubby dirt field. There is some grass but it's patchy.

There is a group of young boys ages 7 - 12 playing baseball. They have made improvised bases with what they could have find...a wooden sign, a pile of rags, an old hat and a beat up hubcap on third base.

This is not a organized group of baseball players but a rag tag group that has no uniforms but are playing in their old clothes.

At the bat is an 8 year old Liam MacDonald. He is wearing baggy pants being held up by a belt too big for him where the extra notches have been bored in to allow it to be tight enough. His shirt is a bit ragged and the long sleeves were cut off to make it a short sleeve shirt for warmer weather. He wears old beat up sneakers and his roughly cut brown/blonde hair is being held by a newsboy style cap that was handed down and threadbare.

The other boys are similarly dressed, some a bit worse.

CUT TO THE PITCHING MOUND

The pitcher is 10 year old boy named Eddie Flannigan. He is of Irish descent, red haircut short of the sides with some freckles. He is a tough kid.

Eddie stares down Liam from the mound.

CUT TO THE CATCHER

The catcher gives Eddie a signal.

CUT BACK TO EDDIE

Eddie shakes his head.

There is some jeering from the players from Eddie's team.

"Come on Eddie, strike him out!"

"Hey batter, batter - you swing like a girl!"

"Get him out Eddie and we win!"

CUT BACK TO THE CATCHER

The catcher gives him another signal.

Liam's two best friends are off to the side cheering him on.

Donny Decker is 9 years old, athletic, dark straight hair cut short, blue eyes and tall for his age. Gerry Weiz is 8 years old, short and skinny with dark curly hair, brown eyes and he wears round framed glasses.

DONNY DECKER

You got this Mac!

GERRY WEIZ

Knock it over the fence Mac!

CUT BACK TO EDDIE

Eddie smiles and nods his head yes.

We see Eddie as he winds up the pitch and lets it go.

The ball travels straight at Liam and he connects with it sending it over the heads of the infield and way out to the outfield.

Liam takes off to the 1st base.

We see the opposing team players in the outfield run for the ball that has now landed and is quickly rolling farther into the outfield.

The center fielder and the right fielder crash into each other. They topple to the ground. The center fielder gets up and runs over to get the ball.

Liam is now making it just past second base heading for third base.

The third base player sees Liam racing to third.

We see the third base player look down at the old rusted hubcap as third base.

The spectators and team members are screaming to Liam to run!

The center fielder yells to second base and throws it and he catches it.

Liam is just to make it to third base when the third baseman kicks the hubcap out of reach of Liam and sticks his foot out and trips Liam.

Liam hits the dirt, rolls, looks to second base, gets up and takes off for home base.

The second baseman looks to see Liam now running as they are yelling at him to throw the ball.

Just before Liam reaches home base he slides feet first hitting a clumps of dirt and sand sending it towards the home base catcher.

The dirt flies up and creates a cloud of debris hitting the home base catcher in the face blinding him as the ball whizzes past him.

Liam is safe at home base and there is quiet.

The home base catcher wipes the dirt from his face, opens his eyes with some trouble and see Liam at home base.

The kids are screaming happily that Liam scored the run.

There is reactions from all of the kids, Donny and Gerry.

CUT TO THE HOME BASE CATCHER

CU of his face and he is angry.

He throws down his glove and jumps on Liam taking him by surprise.

The catcher starts to punch Liam and Liam tries to cover up but the catcher is a little bigger than Liam and is getting some good shots in.

CUT TO PITCHER EDDIE

Eddie sees what is happening and runs to home base.

CUT BACK TO THE FIGHT

Liam is blocking the punches but does not punch back.

Then out of nowhere Eddie grabs the catcher by his arm and easily throws him off Liam and stand in between them.

EDDIE FLANNIGAN

ENOUGH! Enough already! Mac was home!

CATCHER

(Angry) But he cheated and kicked dirt in my face!!

EDDIE FLANNIGAN

(With some condemnation) And I guess third base just moved on it's own and tripped Mac?

The catcher still has an angry face but turns his down a bit realizing he's being accused.

CUT TO THE THIRD BASEMAN

He has a face that is saying "Who me?".

CUT BACK TO EDDIE

Eddie is looking at Liam as he brushes himself off and adjusts his cap.

LIAM MACDONALD

Thanks Eddie.

EDDIE FLANNIGAN

No need Mac, you made it to home base and you won fair and square.

LIAM MACDONALD

No...I meant...(Looking at the catcher) you know?

EDDIE FLANNIGAN

What him? (Looking at the catcher with little loyalty) He's a punk, he should know better. Look Mac we ain't got much living here but we got the game and that's a lot...well, for me.

Liam smiles in agreement.

LIAM MACDONALD

Well you're a good pitcher Eddie. I think you'll be pitching in the majors like Lefty Grove and Dizzy Dean.

EDDIE FLANNIGAN

Ahhhh I think I like Red Ruffing more.

LIAM MACDONALD

Ya but he's a Red Sox.

EDDIE FLANNIGAN

(Smiling) Yaaaaa?

They share a smile.

LIAM MACDONALD

Well...I need to get back home. I got some homework and well...I'm sure I need to help my dad.

Donny and Gerry come up from behind to join them.

GERRY WEIZ

Hey Mac, we better get going.

LIAM MACDONALD

Ya, let's go.

They turn to leave and Eddie calls out to Liam as they are about 20ft away.

EDDIE FLANNIGAN

Hey Mac!

Liam turns to Eddie.

EDDIE FLANNIGAN (CONT'D)

You're fast on your feet...maybe you want to play on our team.

Liam smiles, looks at Donny and Gerry.

LIAM MACDONALD
 (Still smiling) Thanks Eddie but I
 got to help these losers out.

Donny reaches over and punches Liam in the shoulder.

CUT BACK TO EDDIE

Eddie adjusts his cap and smiles.

CUT TO THE CITY STREETS

Liam, Gerry and Donny are walking along heading home.

We now see the era of this story. It is the time of the Great Depression. There is a streetcar on tracks moving down the middle of the street. Moving along on both sides are cars from the late 1920's and early 1930's. There are men in suits with broad shoulders. Women in dresses with butterfly sleeves. There is activity on the streets with shopping but there is an edge of sadness as we do see some down trodden people in ragged clothes as well.

DONNY DECKER
 Hey Weezee does your old man still
 have that job at the warehouse?

GERRY WEIZ
 Why?

DONNY DECKER
 'Cause my old man in looking again.

GERRY WEIZ
 But I thought he had that job
 where...

DONNY DECKER
 It closed like the other places.

LIAM MACDONALD
 The place where my dad had some
 work closed too. My mom wants to
 work but my dad says she needs to
 take care of me and my sister.
 (Beat) Maybe we should get jobs?

DONNY DECKER
 Now Mac who's going to give a
 couple kids jobs when our fathers
 can't get any work?

GERRY WEIZ

Well there's stuff just...well kids
can do right? Maybe we could get
paid doin' it?

Donny gives Gerry a look of "What??"

DONNY DECKER

What Weezee? Doin' what? What kind
of jobs? They don't pay for playing
jacks, or Prisoner's Aisle or hide
and seek.

CUT TO GERRY

Gerry is of course a little defeated.

CUT TO DONNY

DONNY DECKER (CONT'D)

Look Weezee you're 8 years old,
Mac's 8 and I'm 9...there's not
much we can do...we're just kids.

They continue to walk along the city streets. There is the
typical street scenes of the 1930's with produce stands, shoe
shine stands, kids playing in the street.

The three turn a corner of the street. Gerry and Donny are
speaking to each other in an animated way not paying too much
attention what is front of them. Liam is out front of them.
Then as they step into the light of some marquee lit sign
Liam suddenly stops and they bump into him, slightly losing
their balance.

We have a CU of Liam's face. He is totally been mesmerized by
whatever is on the marquee sign.

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh boy I need to see this movie.

Donny and Gerry focus on the marquee.

CUT TO THE MARQUEE

It is a large illustration of a gorilla for the film "King
Kong" that is coming next to that theater.

DONNY DECKER

What?!? A movie about some giant
ape!?? I thought you just liked
dusters with Tom Mix?

LIAM MACDONALD

No, I hear this could be true. I heard that some scientists say that there might be places where the dinosaurs didn't die and they are there now. Still livin'.

DONNY DECKER

Come on Mac...really!? You think the dinosaurs are out there still?

GERRY WEIZ

No Double D, Mac's right...I heard that same story.

DONNY DECKER

Naaaah (swiping his hand down dismissively) I think you guys have been listening to that Fu Manchu Mystery radio show too much and it's messin' with your brains.

Liam stares longingly at the marquee.

LIAM MACDONALD

It doesn't matter really. I ain't got the dime to get in and if we had a dime we'd use it for food.

Then an older man steps up near them. He is tall, greying wispy hair combed back. His face has plenty of character lines and he has a small thin mustache that is both black and white. He looks at them looking at the marquee. He looks up at the marquee, looks down at them and smiles. He is Alwyn Jenkins who is the projectionist at the Capital Theater they are standing in front of at this time. He is from Wales, UK.

ALWYN JENKINS

Aye, it's a crackin' good adventure film.

Alwyn steps around them and walks into the alley alongside the theater.

The boys watch him walk down the alley, stop, takes a set of keys out of his pocket and opens the side door. As he is set to close he pokes his head out from around the door, sees the boys, smiles and then enters but...the door is not completely closed.

Liam looks at Gerry and Donny.

Without saying anything to each other they confidently walk down the alley to the theater door where Alwyn just walked in.

Upon reaching the door Liam reaches for the handle and slowly opens it.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF THE THEATER

Our POV is from the inside and we are looking at the partially opened door. Then the three faces of Liam, Gerry and Donny, one by one, appear around the door, look into the theater and peer to see what is back there.

CUT BACK TO THE EXTERIOR OF THE THEATER DOOR

Liam turns to the other two, he jerks his head in the direction of the interior of the theater. They step in and Donny being last closes the door behind them.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF THE THEATER AGAIN

The three of them stand there in the dimly lit area of the back of the theater not sure which way to go.

The boys hear some noises coming from down the hallway. They head towards the noises...quietly.

As they start to walk the narrow corridor their attention is drawn to the walls. The hallway is lined with movie posters of past shown films.

Gerry / "Weezee" recognizes some of them.

GERRY WEIZ

Hey Mac...look...remember we saw
this one a year ago?

Liam / "Mac" turns and steps up to look closer.

LIAM MACDONALD

YA! That was a good one weezee!

GERRY WEIZ

(With a little excitement in his
voice) Remember that part where Tex
was on that trail and (his voice
goes up a little more in volume) a
band of Indians snuck up on him
and...

LIAM MACDONALD

(Liam's voice matches Gerry in volume) and then he flipped up in the air and shot two of them - BANG! BANG! Then he...

GERRY WEIZ

(Gerry is louder now)...then he landed and rolled across the ground STILL FIRING SHOTS!!!

Gerry and Liam pretend their hands are guns and shoot each other audibly..."Bang!, Bang!!"

Suddenly a voice yells down the hall at them.

It is the theater manager, Alexia Zorovitch. He is Eastern European 5ft 8, stocky and almost bald and wears thick black framed glasses.

ALEXIA ZOROVITCH

Hey! What you kids doing in here!!!

They all turn to face Alexia and then Donny turns to see if there is way to escape but there isn't.

ALEXIA ZOROVITCH (CONT'D)

(Now yelling) I said what the hell are youz doin' in here!??

There is a small awkward silence.

LIAM MACDONALD

Sorry sir we...

Then a voice comes from behind the three boys. It is Alwyn Jenkins, the projectionist.

ALWYN JENKINS

(Looking at them) They're helping me out back here Alexia, organizing...(to the boys) right?

The three turn to see him. They look a little confused.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

(To the boys) Now I asked you guys to get those empty film canisters over there (pointing) and take them to the projection room (pointing in that direction)

Alexia looks doubtful.

ALEXIA ZOROVITCH
How comes you didn't tell me this?

ALWYN JENKINS
(Smiling) Ahhh Alexia you're much too busy keeping this theater going without worrying about these small things I do.

Alexia still looks a bit doubtful.

ALEXIA ZOROVITCH
But they are boys. How can they carry things?

ALWYN JENKINS
Ahh see they may look small but they are quite strong for their size. See (he is looking at Donny)we're...

LIAM MACDONALD
Double D

Alwyn looks a bit confused by the name.

ALWYN JENKINS
Yes, Double D can carry 3 of those (looking down the hallway) canisters by himself right...Double D? (smiling)

Donny smiles and...

DONNY DECKER
Oh yes no problem...watch!

Donny steps around Alwyn, takes a few steps, picks up the film canisters and walks back to where he started and stands to show Alexia proudly.

There is a moment where Alexia reviews the situation.

ALEXIA ZOROVITCH
(Making hand gestures of "whatever") Ahhh you crazy AJ! You could get bigger kids and you picked these kids?

ALWYN JENKINS
I know Alexia but these boys are hard workers and that suits me fine.

Alexia shakes his head.

ALEXIA ZOROVITCH

Ok! But if you want them to work
for you then you pay them! I pay
you enough, no more!

Alwyn smiles and nods his head a bit.

ALWYN JENKINS

Of course Alexia...I will take care
of it. Thank you.

Alexia shakes his head again and walks away.

CUT BACK TO ALWYN AND THE BOYS

Alwyn looks down at the boys with a smile.

LIAM MACDONALD

Thank you sir for...

ALWYN JENKINS

I hope you like show business
'cause it looks like you're working
here now. And I hope your mothers
will be ok with that?

The boys look at each other.

GERRY WEIZ

Really?

ALWYN JENKINS

(Raises his right arm like he is
taking a pledge) Really. Alwyn
Jenkins is a man of his word but
this will only work if your mothers
will be ok with it.

The boys look at each other again with smiles.

DONNY DECKER

Well sir...

ALWYN JENKINS

Call me AJ...my friends call me AJ.

DONNY DECKER

(Reluctantly says his nickname)
Well ok...AJ, but what should we
tell our moms?

ALWYN JENKINS

Tell them that their wonderful sons
now will be able to bring home a
loaf of bread.

They look at each other doubtful.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

What's the matter? Do you want me
to tell them? Do you live around
here?

LIAM MACDONALD

We all live down off of Lincoln,
near the river.

Alwyn gets a look on his face of recognition.

ALWYN JENKINS

Isn't that the...

DONNY DECKER

Hooverville camp? Yes.

Alwyn is silent for a moment putting it all together and it
affects him. His face is neutral for a moment and then he
pulls out a smile.

ALWYN JENKINS

Well it is certainly pretty by the
river isn't it?

The boys look at each other.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

Where I grew up in Wales, that's
over in England, we had a river
near our house. My ol mate Andy and
I would go fishing and swimming in
the summer. Aye it was grand. There
was one summer we built a raft with
whatever wood we could find. We
made a mast for this raft and I
took one of my father's white
hankies and painted a pirate flag
on it. (Smiling) Arrrrrgh. Then Andy
nicked on old eye patch that was
for his older brother when he hurt
his eye and said putting it on his
name was now "One Eye". Mine wasn't
so clever.

(MORE)

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

When I was young I had hair (he runs his hand over the top of his this grey hair) and it was red so he called me "Redbeard the Pirate". Even though we were too young to have a beard.

The boys are smiling at the story and Alwyn being called Redbeard the Pirate.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

Ok, well you know my name and I found out this is Double D so what's your names.

LIAM MACDONALD

I'm Liam MacDonald sir, but they call me Mac.

ALWYN JENKINS

It's AJ and it's nice to meet you Mac.

He reaches out and shakes his hand.

GERRY WEIZ

I'm Gerry Weiz but these guys call me Weezee. So you can too AJ.

ALWYN JENKINS

Well ok, good to meet you Weezee.

Alwyn shakes his hand.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

(Looking at Donny) So you're Double D but what's your name...just so I know.

DONNY DECKER

Donny Decker, AJ.

Alwyn then shakes Donny's hand.

ALWYN JENKINS

Well there we have it then...we're all now work mates. So can you boys work tomorrow?

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes sir...(smiling)I mean AJ.

GERRY WEIZ

We have school until 3.

ALWYN JENKINS

Ahh that's good, it's important to have an education.

DONNY DECKER

Ya but some of it is pretty dumb.

ALWYN JENKINS

(Chuckles at Donny's remark) Oh you remind me what I was like at your age but let me tell you a little secret. I know you won't believe me now but I thought what they were teaching me and my mates was pretty dumb as well but when I got older I found things they taught me started to be useful. Like arithmetic.

GERRY WEIZ

Uuuugh, I don't like arithmetic very much.

ALWYN JENKINS

Oh really Weezee?

GERRY WEIZ

Well ya it all seems like a waste of time.

ALWYN JENKINS

Waste of time eh? Ok here's a an arithmetic question for you that I think you will find useful.

Gerry squishes his face and looks a little doubtful. Liam and Donny smile at Gerry.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

Ok Weezee, what is 3 times 5?

GERRY WEIZ

Ahhh that's easy that's 15.

ALWYN JENKINS

Well you just figured out what I am going to pay you guys to work. A nickel each times 3 is 15 cents.

They all look at each other with smiles.

GERRY WEIZ

Really?

ALWYN JENKINS

Yes really and shhhh...(lowers his voice a bit) I will get you lads some popcorn as well.

Now even bigger smiles from all three.

GERRY WEIZ

I love popcorn but I haven't had any in...I don't remember when.

ALWYN JENKINS

Well I'll take care of that problem then. (Beat) Ok, I need to take care of things here but I will see you all tomorrow. There is a bunch of things that I need to organize back there (pointing behind him) so I will be (smiling) putting your muscles to work. Meet me here by the side door at 4 then. Ok?

They all say "Yes AJ" together.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

Good! I'll see you lads tomorrow.

They all turn and start walking to the door and Alwyn turns to head to the projection room.

Liam is about to reach the door when he turns and walks back to Alwyn.

LIAM MACDONALD

Pardon me AJ.

ALWYN JENKINS

(Turns to see Liam) Yes Mac?

LIAM MACDONALD

AJ...well since we will be...you know working here...ummm...will we get to see...well a movie sometime?

Alwyn gets a big smile on his face.

ALWYN JENKINS

Well of course Mac. That's part of the fun working here.

Alwyn is looking at Liam's face and it's joy of finding this out.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)
 You want to see that King Kong
 movie don't you?

Liam's eyes widen.

LIAM MACDONALD
 (A little sheepishly) Yes

ALWYN JENKINS
 Well that one will starts tomorrow
 but I will make sure you see it.

LIAM MACDONALD
 Thanks AJ...ok, I better catch up
 to the guys.

Liam starts to walk away.

Alwyn turns into the projection room and just before he
 closes the door he takes one last look at Liam and smiles.

ALWYN JENKINS
 Tomorrow Mac.

CUT TO EXTERIOR OF MOVIE THEATER

The boys are heading to the Hooverville where they live.

Liam is trying to catch up. Donny turns and sees Liam.

DONNY DECKER
 (Waving his arm in a sweeping
 motion) Come on Mac!

Liam catches up so now the three are back together.

DONNY DECKER (CONT'D)
 So where did you go Mac? Did you
 need to tinkle like a girl?

There is some chuckling and Liam gives him a look.

LIAM MACDONALD
 No I needed to ask AJ something and
 I think you'll like it.

DONNY DECKER
 He's going to my arithmetic
 homework?

LIAM MACDONALD
 Better.

DONNY DECKER

What?

LIAM MACDONALD

(Excitedly) We'll get to see the movies for free now.

GERRY WEIZ

And AJ said he'd give us free popcorn!

LIAM MACDONALD

Ya and I bet ya we might get to see the same movie twice.

DONNY DECKER

Now who wants to see a movie twice?

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh I don't mind. You get to see the good guys get the bad guys again.

Liam makes a fist into a gun shape again and shoots at Gerry.

LIAM MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Pow! Pow! Pow!

Gerry reciprocates and they have a dancing duel amongst themselves while walking down the street.

Donny is laughing and enjoying the other two acting goofy.

GERRY WEIZ

Pow! Pow! Pow!

Then all of a sudden Donny's attention is taken by something and his face goes neutral.

Donny's POV we see two little girls walking towards the three boys. On the right is Mary Barber. She is 9 years old, blonde hair and brown eyes. On the left is Sylvia Silverstone. She is 9 years old, pretty, shoulder length black wavy hair and striking blue eyes. Donny has a bit of a crush on Sylvia.

Donny has frozen up a bit as his two best friends continue to pretend they are shooting at each other.

Donny has stopped in his tracks and is looking at Sylvia and she notices him.

Donny notices his friends still pretending to shoot at each other with their index fingers. He grabs Liam's hand as he tries to start another round of shooting and Liam stops and he has one eye on Sylvia.

Gerry is pretending to load up his finger again and Donny puts his hand over Gerry's and lowers it.

DONNY DECKER

Ok Weezee you win, you got the bad guy. Put your gun away.

GERRY WEIZ

(Looks at him questionably) Ok Double D. (Beat) You ok?

Just then Sylvia and Mary reach the boys.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE

(Casually) Oh hi Donny.

DONNY DECKER

(Casually back) Hi Sylvia.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE

How's it going?

Gerry and Liam look at each other not knowing what is going on and why Donny is acting weird.

GERRY WEIZ

(Reacting to their greetings) How's it going??? Didn't you guys just see each other in class today?

DONNY DECKER

(More interested in what Sylvia is saying than Gerry) Ahhhh don't listen to him. (Turning his attention back to Sylvia) You heading home?

Gerry and Liam stand off a bit watching this exchange.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE

Yes. (Indicating to Mary) Do you know Mary?

Donny is being pleasant but is truly focused on Sylvia.

DONNY DECKER

Yes...hi Mary.

Sylvia is looking at Liam and Gerry waiting for introductions.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE

Who's your friends Donny?

DONNY DECKER
 (Almost forgetting Liam and Gerry)
 Oh...(pointing) that's Liam and
 that's Gerry.

They exchange "hi's" and then there is an awkward moment of
 silence.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE
 So...Donny how did you make out
 with that arithmetic quiz today?

Donny snaps out of his focus a bit.

DONNY DECKER
 Ahhhh I don't do so well with
 arithmetic really so I don't think
 I did that well.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE
 Well maybe I could help you if you
 want?

Liam eyes Gerry secretly with an eye-roll.

Donny is taken by surprise with this offer.

DONNY DECKER
 Ummmm...well, that would...I guess
 would be good right?

Sylvia smiles at this awkward acceptance.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE
 Well maybe I can come over to your
 house top help you then?

Donny is nervous and taken aback by this suggestion as she
 does not know he lives in the Hooverville homeless camp.

DONNY DECKER
 Ahhhh well...see...well, my folks
 are kinda particular about me
 bringing people over to our house.
 I could meet you say somewhere
 like...(he thinks) the park over on
 Maple Street? Would that be ok?

Sylvia looks a bit confused.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE
 Well...ok, I think that will be ok
 then.

Donny smiles and there is another awkward moment.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE (CONT'D)
So how about tomorrow then? Say
about around 4?

DONNY DECKER
Ya that sounds good, ok tomorrow at
4 then.

Gerry pokes Donny in the side and Donny gives him a look of
confusion.

DONNY DECKER (CONT'D)
What?...I'm talking to Sylvia.

GERRY WEIZ
You can't go to the park at 4.

DONNY DECKER
Sure I can.

LIAM MACDONALD
No you can't. Remember we just got
jobs.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE
You guys got jobs? How can you get
jobs? Don't you need to be older to
get a job?

LIAM MACDONALD
Well I don't know about that but we
got one.

GERRY WEIZ
(Proudly) We're special, we're
working at the Capitol Theater.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE
WOW! The Capitol Theater? I see
that they have that King Kong movie
playing there Friday. Oh how
exciting.

MARY BARBER
Yes I think that movie is going to
be good! I want to see it.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE

Oh me too! You know there are some scientists that say that there may be hidden places around the world where the dinosaurs and other creatures like them survived.

LIAM MACDONALD

(Directing this to Donny) See!! I told you didn't I that the dinosaurs might be still living. (His attention to Sylvia) I told him that and he said I was crazy to think that.

DONNY DECKER

(Jumps in to defend himself) No I didn't. I said that since we've not seen one it might not be true that's all.

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE

Well Donny there are many things we can't see by our eyes but it doesn't mean that they don't exist.

Donny is trying to smooth things and not to look too bad in front of Sylvia.

DONNY DECKER

Well...Mac he does sometimes come up with crazy things.

LIAM MACDONALD

No I don't. I just like reading and thinking about things it's...it's called...

GERRY WEIZ

Imagination.

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes Donny...I have imagination.

There is some chuckling.

MARY BARBER

Maybe we should all go see King Kong?

SYLVIA SILVERSTONE

Yes that would be fun right? My dad will give me a dime. How about you Mary?

MARY BARBER

Oh yes I can get a dime from my
daddy.

GERRY WEIZ

Well we can't afford...

DONNY DECKER

(Jumps in) We can't afford NOT to
miss it. That sounds good. Right
guys. And I'll get popcorn for us
all.

Liam and Gerry look at him doubtful.

LIAM MACDONALD

But we...

DONNY DECKER

(Putting his hands on Liam and
Gerry's shoulders and pushing them
forward) We've got to get going.
Liam said that we need to go help
his dad.

LIAM MACDONALD

No I didn't...

Donny is smiling and moving them along.

DONNY DECKER

Ahhh Mac you forgot. See you
tomorrow at the movies Sylvia.

CUT TO FARTHER DOWN THE STREET

The three of them making their way down the busy city streets
as the sun is setting.

LIAM MACDONALD

What was that all about Double D?

GERRY WEIZ

Ya we haven't even done any work
and you're already promising to get
popcorn for all of us.

LIAM MACDONALD

Ya AJ's not going to just give us
stuff without working.

DONNY DECKER

Ahhh come on guys it will be
alright.

Liam and Gerry are not quite sure about this.

There is a moment of them just walking and exchanging a couple looks.

LIAM MACDONALD
And what about this whole
arithmetic thing in the park?

Donny looks a bit sad.

DONNY DECKER
Well I couldn't take her to my
house could I? Where we live? Our
floors are dirt, our toilet is a
hole in the ground, there's not
enough food to feed us all of the
time and we have candles for
lights.

They are silent as they walk hearing this and reminding themselves where they live and how they live.

GERRY WEIZ
(Smiling) Ya but we got telephones!

Donny's face wrinkles a bit.

DONNY DECKER
Telephones? (A smile comes to his
face) We got strings attached to
tin cans!

Liam smiles at Gerry. Then Donny breaks out laughing.

DONNY DECKER (CONT'D)
Come on you goofballs! I'll race
you home!

CUT TO THE THREE OF THEM RUNNING

We see the boys running to the end of the block and the entrance to the Hooverville where they live.

CUT TO THE FIRST SHACKS IN THE CAMP

The shacks are made of any possible scrap of wood found, any piece of cardboard, wooden pallet pieces, discarded signs, broken glass and pottery.

We see individuals sitting on wooden boxes as chairs. An old man sits with a pipe smoking, women watching a couple young kids playing in the dirt, a kid and mom are digging in a makeshift garden and an old man with a beard has an accordion and is singing a folk song.

The boys run past the accordion player and down a path and the camera rises up to give us a view of the Hooverville.

From this aerial view we see the size of the encampment as it stretches for acres until it reaches the river. There is makeshift paths / streets in an irregular pattern.

With this viewpoint we see the three boys running through the series of paths.

We travel downwards until we are eye level and the three of them running towards the camera. Before they reach the camera they split up. Donny runs to the left and Liam and Gerry turn to the right.

LIAM MACDONALD
(Yells to Donny) See ya tomorrow
Double D!

Donny waves his hand and he is gone.

Liam and Gerry stop and try to catch their breath and are smiling.

GERRY WEIZ
Beat ya!

LIAM MACDONALD
No you didn't!

Liam is still catching his breath and smiling at Gerry.

LIAM MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Ok, ok Weezee ya did.

Gerry is smiling believing he has won.

GERRY WEIZ
Ok, I'll call you later.

Gerry walks a few steps and into a shack.

LIAM MACDONALD
Ok later.

And Liam turns and walks into the shack that is behind him and next door to Gerry.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF THE SHACK LIAM LIVES IN

The MacDonald Hooverville shack is basically one big room. In the far left corner there is an old metal wood burning stove with a cobbled exhaust pipe running up the wall and exiting through the roof. Next to the stove, stirring the contents of a pot is Liam's mother Betty. She is about 5ft 7, shoulder length wavy auburn hair. She is humming a tune.

There is a couple pots and a frying pan hung on nails off the wall. On a rescued table that has been mended is a wash basin and a few dishes of various sizes and chipped. In the far right side is a makeshift wooden bed and behind on the wall is a landscape painting of a quaint farmhouse with a red barn and cows lazily out in the field on a summer day.

Immediately next to the front entrance is a couple mattresses next to each other. This is where Liam and his sister Marion sleep. On the wall next to where Marion sleeps is pictures of movie stars of the day cut from a magazine and tacked to the wall. Next to Liam's mattress is a map of the world. Next to the mattress is a candle and one book, "The Magical Land Of Noom" by Johnny Gruelle.

BETTY MACDONALD

Oh there you are Liam. Where have you been? School was out a couple hours ago.

LIAM MACDONALD

Double D, Weezee and I got to play some baseball...and I scored a run that helped win the game.

BETTY MACDONALD

(Sort of paying attention) That's good son but your father will be home soon I hope and he wanted you to take the nails out of that wood he found today. He's building something, I don't know what.

LIAM MACDONALD

But something else happened today I want to tell you.

BETTY MACDONALD

Oh son it will need to wait. Those nails won't jump out of the wood by themselves.

LIAM MACDONALD

But Mom this is good, I...

BETTY MACDONALD

Why don't you save it and tell us
at dinner when your father gets
home.

Liam is discouraged and deflated but turns, opens the wooden box of tools, retrieves an old hammer and heads outside.

Liam grabs some of the wood his father brought home and sits on a box and starts to take nails out.

From Liam's POV we see images of his Hooverville camp.

- There is an elderly man sitting on a wooden box. He is missing a leg. He has a cigarette in the side of his mouth and he whittling some wood.

- Two toddlers around 3 years old playing in the dirt while their mother watches. The kids are dirty and their clothes are made up of ragged sheets that have been cut up.

- An older woman has a bucket and a washboard and is trying to wash the threadbare clothes.

Liam's sister Marion appears before him. She is 10 years old, her hair is wavy and long and dark brown. Even though her dress she is wearing is a bit ragged her pretty face distracts attention from it. She is carrying a cardboard shoe box with a few vegetables in it.

MARION MACDONALD

Wow I'm glad you're home 'cause mom was going to send me out here to do that.

LIAM MACDONALD

Ahhh I got it sis.

MARION MACDONALD

Where've you been?

Just before Liam can answer his mom calls for Marion.

BETTY MACDONALD

Mae...did you get any?

MARION MACDONALD

Yes mom.

Marion turns and goes inside the shack.

Liam returns to pulling nails out.

A man steps up casting a shadow over Liam, Liam looks up.

LIAM MACDONALD

Oh hi Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Bob Wilson is around Liam's dad's age, a WW1 vet. He is rail thin and his face carries the lines of someone who has seen a lot. Bob Wilson is 5ft 8, short dark hair. His clothes are filled with holes and he wears a beaten fedora.

MR. WILSON

Hey Liam is you dad home?

LIAM MACDONALD

Not yet but Mom said he'd be back in a bit.

MR. WILSON

Ok son, can ya tell him I need to talk to him when he gets home?

LIAM MACDONALD

Ok, Mr. Wilson.

Before Mr. Wilson turns he smiles watching Liam for a moment.

MR. WILSON

Your Dad building something again?

Liam looks up.

LIAM MACDONALD

I guess so...I don't know what.

MR. WILSON

(Smiling) You Dad is one clever guy Liam. He's like an inventor or something. When we were in the trenches in Catigny during WW1 you Dad saved many of us with his building skills. He knew how to keep the walls in the trenches strong. You can learn a lot with a man like him son.

Liam is smiling hearing about his Dad this way.

MR. WILSON (CONT'D)

Ok, I'll see ya later Liam. Remember tell your Dad I need to talk to him ok?

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes Mr. Wilson.

Mr. Wilson leaves and Liam resumes to his work and takes another nail out of the wood.

The light of day is fading and there is a warm glow that spreads over the camp.

BETTY MACDONALD
 (Calls out from inside the shack)
 Liam, come on in son, dinner is
 about ready.

Liam picks up the wood he has worked on and leans it next to the door and walks in.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF THE SHACK

Liam enters and walks over to where his mother is by the stove. He looks into the pot.

We see a stew of some sorts but there is not much to it and mostly looks like just broth.

Betty sees Liam looking and gives him a half smile.

BETTY MACDONALD (CONT'D)
 It's not much son but your sister
 got a couple potatoes and carrots
 from Mrs. Cowan and that should
 help. Did you wash your hands?

LIAM MACDONALD
 Ahhh they're ok.

BETTY MACDONALD
 (Giving him a look) Just because we
 live in a place like this doesn't
 mean we will forget our good
 habits. (Smiling) Now wash them up
 my boy.

Liam smiles and turns to the basin and starts washing his hands. As he does his dad walks in the door.

BILL MACDONALD
 (With a big smile) Ahhhh good we
 need to keep the monkeys clean.

They all turn as he comes into the door.

Bill MacDonald is 5ft 10, he is thin like most men going through the Great Depression. His dark hair is short and combed back under his battered fedora. He has blue eyes and has a bit of a limp from injuries from WW1.

BETTY MACDONALD
(Smiling) Hey honey...just about ready. It's not much but we got a few vegetables from Mrs. Cowan.

BILL MACDONALD
Ahhh bless her. Well we can add this and make it better.

He pulls two eggs out of his threadbare jacket and smiles.

BETTY MACDONALD
Oh dear how wonderful. Where did you get them?

BILL MACDONALD
Remember that nice old cop, Jack Smythe? I ran into him today and he gave them to me.

BETTY MACDONALD
Oh how nice of him. Wait...you're not in trouble are you?

BILL MACDONALD
Oh no Bet, I ran into him as he was heading home from the market. He was just being nice. He's a bit lonely I bet since his wife passed a while back. Thirty years they were together.

Betty looks pensive.

BETTY MACDONALD
We all should be grateful of everyone and each day we have even when it is like this.

Bill reaches over and gives her a kiss on the cheek.

He turns towards the kids and to Marion first.

BILL MACDONALD
Hey peanut, you ok?

MARION MACDONALD
Yes daddy, I got a B on my history test.

BILL MACDONALD
Oh how wonderful. Good for you peanut. How about you Sport, you got any good news for your dad?

LIAM MACDONALD
Yes, I got a job today.

Bill's eyes open wide.

BILL MACDONALD
What? Who gave you a job? You're
only 8 years old.

LIAM MACDONALD
AJ, I mean Mr. Jenkins who runs the
projector machine at the Capitol
Theater gave Gerry, Donny and I
jobs helping him out.

BILL MACDONALD
Doing what?

LIAM MACDONALD
Just moving stuff and organizing I
think. And he is giving us a nickel
each. (Turning towards his mom) So
Mom I can get us a loaf of bread.

BILL MACDONALD
Are you sure Liam?

LIAM MACDONALD
Ya Dad and he says we can watch
movies there too and I'll get to
see that King Kong movie...oh and
some popcorn as well.

Betty looks on a bit concerned.

BILL MACDONALD
Do I need to go see this Mr.
Jenkins to make sure this job is on
the up and up?

LIAM MACDONALD
No Dad, it's real...really. You'll
see I work tomorrow after school
and I'll bring home the nickel.

Bill looks a bit doubtful but given circumstances he
relinquishes.

BILL MACDONALD
Well...I guess the two MacDonald
men have some work then.

Betty's eyes light up.

BETTY MACDONALD
You got some work honey?

BILL MACDONALD
Well it's not much but it might
turn into more.

BETTY MACDONALD
What is it? Have you started?

BILL MACDONALD
Ahhh it's just some grunt work,
unloading and loading stuff in and
out of trucks. But hey it's work
and they'll pay me \$0.00 A day.

BETTY MACDONALD
(A little cautious) So it's like a
warehouse job then?

BILL MACDONALD
Well yes I guess so.

BETTY MACDONALD
How did you find this job anyway
Bill?

BILL MACDONALD
You remember Bob Wilson? He's a WW1
vet, lives over closer to the
river?

BETTY MACDONALD
(She has a concerned face) Oh yes,
wasn't he the one that got in
trouble with the mayor of our sweet
little world here?

BILL MACDONALD
Ahhh Bet he really didn't do
anything. He told me they got
things wrong.

Betty is not truly convinced quite yet.

LIAM MACDONALD
Oh ya Pop, Mr. Wilson came by
looking for you. He said he needed
to talk to you.

BILL MACDONALD
When did he come by son?

LIAM MACDONALD
He was here about 10 minutes ago.

Bill turns to Betty.

BILL MACDONALD
I bet he has something about the
job. I beter go see him.

BETTY MACDONALD
(Sighs a bit) Well have something
to eat first then go. It's not much
but with the eggs it will make it
better.

Bill smiles and kisses her on the forehead.

BILL MACDONALD
Ok Bet, let's eat. (To the kids) Ok
you guys grab a bowl and let's be
thankful.

FADE AND WIPE 1 HOUR LATER

The dinner is over and the kids are cleaning dishes and Bill
is rolling a cigarette.

There is a knock at the door and at the opening is WW1 vet
and friend of Bill's, Bob Wilson.

BOB WILSON
Hey Bill, hey Betty. Ya ready for
some work Bill?

Bill looks a bit confused.

BILL MACDONALD
Right now? I thought we'd be
starting tomorrow.

BOB WILSON
(He appears like he is hiding
something) Well ya...see here's the
thing we work when a shipment comes
in and there is one coming in a
little while so we need to get over
there tonight.

BILL MACDONALD
(With some hesitation) Well ok, I
see.

Betty looks a little suspicious.

Bill looks over at Betty and she looks away.

BOB WILSON

Betty I will get him home just as soon as we finish up. We'll work for a few hours and bang we get some dough and come home.

There is look between Betty and Bill.

BOB WILSON (CONT'D)

Well are ya comin'? We need to hustle over there.

BILL MACDONALD

Well..if it's like this I guess.
(Turning to Betty) I better go Bet but I'll be back in awhile.

Betty acknowledges this and looks him in the eyes.

BETTY MACDONALD

Be careful Bill.

Bill smiles and puts his hand on her shoulder.

BILL MACDONALD

I will honey.

Bill turns to the kids.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Ok, Liam, Marion take care of your mom and I'll see you in a bit.

Bill turns to leave and he takes another look at Liam.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Son...looks like the MacDonald men are working men now.

Bill smiles at Liam and Liam returns feeling proud of the acknowledgment from his father.

Bill exits with Bob Wilson.

CUT TO LIAM

We see Liam walking to the door to see his father leaving. It is night, there is a big moon out and a million stars.

Liam stares up at the moon.

Marion walks up to him from behind.

MARION MACDONALD
It's so big, it looks like we could
reach out and touch it.

Betty quietly walks up to the door hidden from view and
listens.

Liam turns to see his big sister and smiles.

LIAM MACDONALD
Just like Janey and Johnny?

MARION MACDONALD
(Smiling) From the Magical Land Of
Noom book?

LIAM MACDONALD
Yes, what an adventure they had.

MARION MACDONALD
But Liam it's only a book. They
didn't really fly to the moon.

LIAM MACDONALD
I know but I love that book.
(Looking up) And I would like to go
to the moon one day. (Beat) It
could happen.

They stand there looking up at the moon and the stars. There
is a moment.

We see a reaction from Betty. She is smiling.

LIAM MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Marion, do you think there is
anybody up there?

MARION MACDONALD
You mean like the man in the moon?

LIAM MACDONALD
Ya.

MARION MACDONALD
Oh Liam I don't think so. But if
there is hope it's better than here
where they have enough food and
warm clothes I would go.

We see Betty's face turn from a smile to sad hearing this
from her kids.

Then we hear this disembodied voice calling Liam's name

GERRY WEIZ

Mac!, Mac!, hey Mac...you there?

Liam turns to his left and looks at a tin can hanging by a hook low enough for Liam's height. The tin can has a string coming from the bottom and stretching between the shacks.

It is a childhood phone system using two tin cans with waxed string connecting to each other. It is Gerry calling Liam.

GERRY WEIZ (CONT'D)

Mac!

Marion hears it and looks over at the tin can hanging there.

MARION MACDONALD

Sounds like Weezee is calling you.

Marion turns to head in and Betty steps back to not get caught eavesdropping.

Liam steps over and takes the tin can off the hook and speaks to Gerry.

LIAM MACDONALD

Hey Weezee!

He puts the empty can up to his ear. We cut back and forth between the two boys in their respective shacks connected by the tin can phones.

GERRY WEIZ

Hey Mac!

LIAM MACDONALD

Whatta doin'?

GERRY WEIZ

Just finished dinner.

LIAM MACDONALD

Me too. What did you have? We had soup.

GERRY WEIZ

(In a distressed tone) Soup too, it's always soup.

There is a moment.

LIAM MACDONALD

Weezee?

GERRY WEIZ

I'm here...hey what was going on with Double D and that Sylvia girl?

LIAM MACDONALD

I know right? I think he likes her Weezee.

GERRY WEIZ

That's gross. She probably doesn't even like baseball.

LIAM MACDONALD

(With sarcasm) GIRLS!

GERRY WEIZ

That's a fact Mac!

LIAM MACDONALD

Hey Weezee did you tell your mom about your job?

GERRY WEIZ

Oh Mac they were all excited. It's the first time in a long time that my dad has smiled.

LIAM MACDONALD

Me too! Plus we'll get to see that King Kong movie.

GERRY WEIZ

And get some popcorn. Oh I want some popcorn Mac.

We hear Liam's mom Betty calling him off camera.

BETTY MACDONALD

Liam, time for bed.

LIAM MACDONALD

Hey Weezee, gotta go. See ya tomorrow.

GERRY WEIZ

Ok Mac.

Liam hangs up the tin can back up on the hook and goes inside.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF THE SHACK

BETTY MACDONALD

How is Gerry?

LIAM MACDONALD

Ahhh he's ok, he's excited about working at the theater but mostly about getting popcorn.

Betty gets a smile.

BETTY MACDONALD

Well you better get some sleep. You've got school and your first job tomorrow.

Liam has a big smile. He turns top go to the mattress on the floor but stops and turns to his mom.

LIAM MACDONALD

Hey mom...dad and I have jobs now, maybe we can get some chicken for our soup? And I will be able to get some bread.

Betty is touched by her son's concern for them at 8 years old. She reaches for him and give him a hug.

BETTY MACDONALD

Liam son, we'll be fine. You just do well in school and maybe be an engineer like your father.

There is a tear visible in her eye and she is still holding him.

BETTY MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Ok son, get some rest.

Betty releases him from the embrace and give him a kiss on the top of his head.

LIAM MACDONALD

Good night mom.

Liam crosses the room to the mattress on the floor. He takes off his shirt and underneath is a dingy undershirt. He hangs the shirt up on a nail that is in the wall and then climbs into bed.

FROM LIAM'S POV

Liam looks at the map of the world that is tacked to the wall next to his mattress. His sister quietly speaks to him from her mattress on the floor.

MARION MACDONALD

Where are we going tonight Liam?

Liam looks at the map, smiles and...

LIAM MACDONALD
France. Where father was in the war. Do you know about the Eiffel Tower?

MARION MACDONALD
That is one of the tallest buildings in the world?

LIAM MACDONALD
But did you know that they paint it every seven years and it takes 60 tons of paint?

CUT TO BETTY

We see Betty smiling at their exchange. Proud to be their mother and a teacher.

MARION MACDONALD
And it takes over a year to paint it.

LIAM MACDONALD
Oh ya...and there is 20,000 light bulbs on the tower.

MARION MACDONALD
And then in...

BETTY MACDONALD
(Smiling) Ok you two bedtime.

We see Liam and Marion smile at each other and then Marion blows out the candle.

CUT TO THE NEXT DAY

INTERIOR - BACK OF THE CAPITOL MOVIE THEATER

Suddenly we hear a crash of metal.

A small voice is heard in the low lit area.

GERRY WEIZ
Ow!

LIAM MACDONALD
You ok Weezee?

GERRY WEIZ
Stupid canisters!

DONNY DECKER
I told you Weezee, don't try to
carry too many.

Gerry walks into the light holding film canisters.

GERRY WEIZ
Oh I was fine, I just tripped in
the dark.

Alwyn steps out of the door of the projection room which is a
few steps up. He's smiling.

ALWYN JENKINS
Everything ok out here?

LIAM MACDONALD
Ya AJ, Weezee just tripped.

ALWYN JENKINS
You ok Weezee?

GERRY WEIZ
Ya I'm ok.

Alwyn reaches into the projection room and pulls out three
bags of popcorn.

ALWYN JENKINS
Ok enough to have some hot buttered
popcorn???

All three boy's eyes light up.

AJ is about to hand them the bags when he pulls them back for
a second and...

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)
Is everything stacked up and
organized back there?

They all answer "yes" in unison.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)
Good...here ya go!

They happily take the bags and taste the first kernels.

Gerry has a face of joy and AJ notices.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)
You ok Weezee??

Gerry just turns with a glazed and a mouthful of popcorn look and smiles.

GERRY WEIZ
Yeeeeesssssss.

They all laugh together.

DONNY DECKER
Is there anymore you need done AJ?

AJ gets a smile recognizing good kids.

ALWYN JENKINS
No, you guys did very good today.
It's already looking better back
there. Can you hard working young
men come back tomorrow to work some
more?

Gerry with a mouthful of popcorn replies.

GERRY WEIZ
(Mumbles by popcorn) Yes.

AJ chuckles.

ALWYN JENKINS
Ok, go out and get a seat (He
straightens up and pounds on his
chest with his fists) and meet King
Kong!

They all look at each other happy to finally be in a movie theater and away from the Hooverville camp.

Gerry and Donny turn to leave and Liam hangs back. AJ walks back into the projection room.

DONNY DECKER
You coming Mac?

LIAM MACDONALD
Ya, I'll be right there.

They leave and Liam is standing looking at the projection room and hearing AJ working in there.

Liam walks up the couple of stairs to the open door of the projection room.

CUT TO THE PROJECTION ROOM

AJ is busy inside and doesn't notice him at first because he is busy getting things set up. He turns and is surprised to see him.

ALWYN JENKINS

What are you doing Mac, you should go get a seat.

LIAM MACDONALD

(Looking around the room really for the first time) How does this all work? How do you know which button to push?

AJ gets a smile on his face.

ALWYN JENKINS

Ahhhh well it looks like a lot but once you get the hang of it, it's pretty easy.

LIAM MACDONALD

Could you show me how it all works?

ALWYN JENKINS

Well showing you how it all works would take a lot of time and don't you want to see King Kong?

Liam smiles.

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes.

AJ looks at him for a moment and then..

ALWYN JENKINS

Ok, how about I show you one thing before you go get your seat then.

Liam gets a smile happy to learn.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

Ok, come over here and I'll give you your first lesson.

They stand next to one of the two projectors.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)

So you see here? This is where the film will feed through to the light...

LESSON #1 - MONTAGE OF AJ SHOWING LIAM

AJ has stopped the lesson.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)
So Mac do you have a big family?

LIAM MACDONALD
It's just my mom, my sister Marion and my dad. My dad was in the war. He was an engineer building and designing things but he joined up and went to France.

ALWYN JENKINS
My younger brother Lloyd went as well but...well...he didn't make it back. You're lucky to have your dad.

LIAM MACDONALD
Ya, he's a good dad. I help him build things. He built our house down...well you know...down by the river in the Hooverville camp.

There is a moment as AJ takes this in.

ALWYN JENKINS
So Mac, was your mom happy about your job here?

LIAM MACDONALD
Oh yes but even more so was my dad. Oh he was so happy. He just got a job himself at some place loading trucks with stuff. (Proudly) So the two MacDonalds have jobs!

AJ is smiling hearing this then diverts the attention back to the projector.

ALWYN JENKINS
Ok, so all you need to do now is push this button here and it starts the whole thing up. I'll teach you about changing the reels of film next time.

LIAM MACDONALD
(Smiling) Ok...AJ?...can I push the button?

ALWYN JENKINS
Of course Mac. I think you might be the next projectionist here.

Liam still smiling reaches over pushes the button and the reel starts. He is proud of himself.

ALWYN JENKINS (CONT'D)
 Ok, now go get your seat with
 Double D and Weezee. You don't want
 to miss the movie.

CUT TO THE INTERIOR OF THE THEATER

We see Liam find his seat with his friends by the light of the projection.

He sits and sinks into the seat and the action starts.

We see the wide-eyed look on Liam's face watching this iconic movie. He is so very happy and the outside world is gone for the time being.

CUT TO EXTERIOR OF THEATER - CITY STREETS

The three boys are going home. They are excited by what they just watched.

LIAM MACDONALD
 Wasn't that crazy when King Kong
 was fighting that dinosaur!!??

GERRY WEIZ
 And it was just like we heard where
 the dinosaurs still are living.

DONNY DECKER
 Weezee it's a movie! They make
 things up!

GERRY WEIZ
 But they got the idea from
 somewhere.

DONNY DECKER
 Ahhhh you're crazy Weezee.

LIAM MACDONALD
 But wasn't it scary when King Kong
 took that lady up the Empire State
 building?

GERRY WEIZ
 Ya and those planes shooting at
 him. (Pretending he has a machine
 gun) Rat-tat-tat-tat!!

DONNY DECKER
Ahhh it wasn't that scary.

LIAM MACDONALD
But Sylvia was scared. I saw her
grab your arm.

GERRY WEIZ
(In a sing-song voice) Ya she
grabbed your arm Double D.

DONNY DECKER
Ahhh shut up you guys. She's a girl
and she couldn't help it.

LIAM MACDONALD
Oh Double D she likes you!

GERRY WEIZ
Ya she probably wanted to kiss you!

DONNY DECKER
Cut it out you two or I'll...

Just then sirens from fire trucks come racing by them.

LIAM MACDONALD
Wow, they're in a rush. I wonder
where they're going?

GERRY WEIZ
Let's find out. Come one let's try
to catch them.

The three take off down the streets trying to catch up to the
fire trucks.

We see them running amongst the people in the streets.

They turn a corner and they all stand transfixed. Dead in
their tracks at what they see.

CUT TO THEIR POV

We see there is a fire in their Hooverville camp. It is
raging in the distance.

DONNY DECKER
Come on, let's go! We need to help!

They take off down the last street and enter the camp.

They keep running and get to Liam's shack. Out front is his
mom and sister Marion.

His mom sees Liam.

BETTY MACDONALD
Liam!!! There you are! You're safe.

LIAM MACDONALD
Yes mom, we were at the King Kong
movie.

BETTY MACDONALD
Donny, Gerry...oh good you're here.

LIAM MACDONALD
Where's dad?

BETTY MACDONALD
He's down at the fire trying to
help.

The boys look at each other.

DONNY DECKER
Come on let's give them a hand.

And they take off down the paths as Liam's mom screams at
them to come back.

We see them running and as they get closer the flames grow
brighter.

They come on the scene where all the men are gathering water
in whatever they have from the river and running towards the
structures on fire.

Liam sees his father and runs to him.

LIAM MACDONALD
(Loudly) Dad! Dad!

Bill turns to see his son.

BILL MACDONALD
Liam what are you doing here? Go
back it's too dangerous!

LIAM MACDONALD
We came to help.

Bill sees Gerry and Donny.

Bill is going to say something and a few firemen appear.

The 1st Fireman looks at the fire and shakes his head.

1ST FIREMAN

You need to get out of here before
it's too late.

BILL MACDONALD

Get out!! Where!!? This is where we
live.

2ND FIREMAN

There's no hope. Our hoses won't
reach down here from the hydrant up
there. (Pointing behind him)

BILL MACDONALD

Don't you have water on the truck?
Can't you drive it down here?

1ST FIREMAN

There's not enough on board. It's
over mister get your families out
of here before it spreads.

Bill looks at the firemen for a moment while the brigade
behind him carries water as best they can.

BILL MACDONALD

How far can the hose get down here?

1ST FIREMAN

We're about 100ft too short.

Bill looks for a minute to where the hoses would be and turns
to the fire.

BILL MACDONALD

Liam, do you know where we put all
of those rubber hoses behind
Murray's shack?

LIAM MACDONALD

Yes, there's a whole bunch of them.

BILL MACDONALD

Ok, you Donny and Gerry go there and
show the fireman where they are.

Bill turns to the firemen.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)

Go with them and get that long
rubber hose, I have an idea.

Liam, Gerry, Donny and the firemen take off.

Bill returns to the fire brigade.

We see Bill and crew lining up a long line of a bucket brigade as they dip their bucket and pass it along the line to the last guy and he throws it on the fire.

Some new men arrive.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)
 (Yelling to the new men on the scene) You guys!! Do you have any buckets or pans or anything?

A few of them run off to grab more containers.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)
 Ok, let's get another line of you guys all the way to the river and start handing the water up. Let's go!

We see two long lines of men handing to each other like a relay race the containers of water captured from the river and then throwing it on the fire.

From behind a stocky older man comes up. He is Jack Smythe, a cop who gave Bill the couple eggs earlier in the story. He is 5ft 9, tough as nails and in his late 50's.

JACK SMYTHE
 Bill!

BILL MACDONALD
 Officer Smyth, what are you doing here?

JACK SMYTHE
 I came to help. What do you want me to do?

Bill looks a bit confused why a cop would get involved in a homeless camp.

BILL MACDONALD
 You can grab a bucket and get in line and start passing water. The fire hose won't reach here so I sent Liam to help the firemen bring back something that could help.

We now witness the flurry of activity of the men working together with Bill and Jack in an effort to fight the fire.

Buckets of water being raced to the heart of the fire. Men running back and forth from the river.

CUT TO LIAM ARRIVING WITH GERRY, DONNY AND FIREMEN WITH A LONG LENGTH OF LARGE RUBBER TUBING

Bill sees them arrive.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)
(To Firemen) Ok, can you bring your fire hose down as far as you can.

The firemen run through the shantytown to bring the hose down while the rest still carry on with the bucket brigade.

JACK SMYTHE
What's the plan?

BILL MACDONALD
Well since their hose won't reach we'll use the this rubber hosing to act as an extension and maybe, just maybe it will do the trick.

Jack gives a look of uncertainty.

The firemen arrive with the hose.

1ST FIREMAN
Ok, it's here. Now what?

BILL MACDONALD
Ok, we'll put this hose in the nozzle of your hose, turn on the water just enough and we'll hold the other end at the fire.

They go through the steps and the water at the other end is coming out but without enough coverage.

Bill looks at the spray from the extension and sighs. It's just not reaching and getting enough coverage.

Bill looks around and then to Liam.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Liam, you know that dust pan your mom uses when she sweeps?

LIAM MACDONALD
Yes.

BILL MACDONALD
Run back and get it.

Liam takes off.

They keep directing the hose at the hot spot of the fire and it's only doing some good but not enough.

JACK SMYTHE
(Looking around) It's spreading.

BILL MACDONALD
I know, I know. I have another
idea.

Jack is again not sure.

Liam shows up with the dust pan.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Ok give me the end of the hose.

Holding the dust pan tightly Bill takes the end and places the jet of water into the bed of the dust pan and the water suddenly spreads out like a fountain.

Bill yells back.

BILL MACDONALD (CONT'D)
Increase the water!!

The water flow increases and we see while Bill holds on tightly the water spread even farther and wider.

We see it having an effect on the fire. It starts to die down.

Jack steps up closer to Bill. Bill turns a bit to see Jack smiling.

CUT TO SOME TIME LATER

The fire is out but there is quite a lot of damage and home lost.

Bill is surveying the damage. We see the firemen gathering their hose and the 1st Fireman comes over.

1ST FIREMAN
Well I had my doubts but that
little piece of ingenuity worked.
We need to make you an honorary
fireman.

Bill smiles but it changes as he sees one of the families there trying to find items.

BILL MACDONALD

Thanks but I wish I could have done more.

1ST FIREMAN

Now you know how we feel.

1st Fireman walks off and Jack steps up.

JACK SMYTHE

That was some thinking Bill.

Bill gives a half smile.

BILL MACDONALD

You know Officer Symthe everyone is so careful and we've never had an accident. We're lucky no one was badly hurt or killed. It just doesn't make sense. It's too suspicious. It's like someone knew that the fire department wouldn't be able to reach us out here.

JACK SMYTHE

Bill I don't think it was an accident either. I don't have proof but being on the street like I am there are some around here that don't like any of you here. They think this whole Hooverville is an eyesore.

BILL MACDONALD

But where the hell can we go!!! We've no home to go to. Lousy Hoover didn't give us vets that bonus we were promised and now we live on dirt floors. Officer Symthe God help those if they started this fire, hell will reign down on them.

JACK SMYTHE

Now Bill I know you believe that type of retribution is justified but we have ways of dealing with people who do things like this.

Bill gives him a serious look.

JACK SMYTHE (CONT'D)

Let me deal with it. Bill you are
decent guy, an honored vet and
you've been dealt a hand you or
nobody deserves. Let me help you.

Liam walks up next to his dad and Bill puts his arm around
Liam's shoulders.

BILL MACDONALD

Thanks Officer Symthe.

Jack reaches out his hand to shake.

JACK SMYTHE

It's just Jack. My friends call me
Jack.

Bill tightens his grip.

BILL MACDONALD

Ok Jack, ok.

As we pull away we see a shadowy figure leave the scene.

END OF EPISODE 1