

BLOCKWORLD

an original screenplay by

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ESTABLISHING SHOT - EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - NIGHT

A suburb of Chicago. The near future.

A cul-de-sac street in an upscale neighborhood.

A house is abuzz with a high-school party.

INT. VAN COTT HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Techno music pumps through the speakers. TEENAGERS talk, drink, dance.

In the back corner of the living room, GLENN FRASER (17, sarcastic, smart, yet even-tempered) sits around a table with MARIA (16), KIM (16), CHRIS (18), and DYLAN (17).

Glenn, Kim, Chris, and Dylan crowd around Maria, who plays a 3D racing video game on her cell phone. They cheer her on.

INSERT - CELL PHONE SCREEN

Maria's car darts around the track at high speed. After a few laps, the car crashes into a side wall and explodes into debris. The screen flashes: "Game Over."

RESUME

The kids at the table wince and scream with exaggerated glee.

CHRIS  
Ohhhhh shiiiiitttt!!

DYLAN  
You are so done!!!

MARIA  
(to Glenn)  
Your turn.

Maria points her cell phone at Glenn's cell phone and "beams" the game to him. Now Glenn starts to play the game on his phone.

EXT. SUBURBAN STREETS - NIGHT

The sounds from the party spill outside.

In a home bordering the Van Cott house, two people observe the goings-on through a living room window.

INT. JENKINS HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

MR. JENKINS (40s) and MRS. JENKINS (30s) peer out at the raucous festivities. The noise level of the party reverberates throughout the Jenkins home.

MRS. JENKINS  
I bet they're doing games.

MR. JENKINS  
It's ten o'clock. The parents should know where their kids are.

MRS. JENKINS  
Yes, but barcodes don't lie - kids do.

The JENKINS SON (5) and JENKINS DAUGHTER (9) enter.

JENKINS SON  
Mommy, I can't go to sleep.

JENKINS DAUGHTER  
It's really loud.

Mr. Jenkins and Mrs. Jenkins exchange troubled looks.

MRS. JENKINS  
(to Mr. Jenkins)  
I could bring them to my mother's.

MR. JENKINS  
We're not the ones breaking any laws.

He picks up a phone, dials a number.

MRS. JENKINS  
Don't give them your name.

MR. JENKINS  
I'm calling David and Melissa.

MRS. JENKINS  
They're in Europe!

MR. JENKINS  
I think they'd like to hear what's happening at their house before it gets trashed.

INT. VAN COTT HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Glenn continues to play the racing game on his phone. Maria, Chris, Dylan, and Kim look on.

ON THE CELL PHONE SCREEN

Glenn's car runs out of gas before it crosses the finish line.

INTERCUT - LIVING ROOM/CELL PHONE SCREEN - NIGHT

Maria, Chris, Dylan, and Kim show disappointment.

DYLAN  
Good try, bro.

The game asks "Do You Wish To Continue?"

KIM  
Go again!

GLENN  
Nah, I'm good.

CHRIS  
Oh come on, man.

GLENN  
Really - I'm cool.

MARIA  
Whatever. Who's going next?

CHRIS  
Me, me, me!

Glenn aims his cell phone at Chris's cell phone and "beams" the game to him. Chris begins to play on his phone.

COURTNEY ARMSTRONG (17, attractive, insecure and cautious) approaches Glenn.

COURTNEY  
Hey, have you seen Adam anywhere?

GLENN  
He was here a minute ago.

Courtney searches around the living room in vain.

INT. VAN COTT HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

The basement is packed with MORE TEENAGERS drinking, talking, dancing.

ADAM HILL (17, smart, but with an edge) sits on a couch next to JENNIFER (17, brunette, attractive). They each wear virtual reality goggles, gloves, and earphones and gyrate in simulated sexual acts.

On a flatscreen TV, a videogame version of a man and woman have sex.

ON THE SCREEN

A kaleidoscope of psychedelic colors washes over the cyber-characters.

Points accumulate with each movement Adam and Jennifer make.

An instrumental version of an electronic-funk dance song provides a soothing yet entrancing beat.

RESUME

Adam and Jennifer are immersed in the game, laughing and shouting in ecstasy. They are egged on by some of the other TEENS in the room.

TEEN GIRL (O.S.)

Ten thousand points for an orgasm!

TEEN BOY (O.S.)

BJ on the next round!

EXT. VAN COTT HOUSE, DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Two police cars pull up to the foot of the house. Teens milling about on the driveway scurry in a state of panic.

TEENAGERS

(overlapping)

Shit! Fuck!

FOUR POLICE OFFICERS (male, 30s/40s) emerge from the cars and corral the kids on the blacktop.

POLICE OFFICER 1

Inside!

POLICE OFFICER 2

Everybody inside! Let's go! Now!

INT. VAN COTT HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A GRUNGY BOY (17) runs into the living room to inform the others.

GRUNGY BOY

Cops are here!

TEENAGERS

(overlapping)

Goddamn it! Who called the cops?

Shit! Fucking barcodes!

A HIPSTER GIRL (17) races to the basement door, knocks repeatedly. No response.

She tries the handle. Locked.

INT. VAN COTT HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

The deafening cacophony of the partying teens and the videogame drown out the knocking and the attempt at turning the door handle.

Adam and Jennifer remain immersed in the game.

INT. VAN COTT HOUSE, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

The living room falls silent as the cops enter.

Two of the officers take out wands that resemble standard-issue police batons.

POLICE OFFICER 2

(shouting)

Phones out where we can see 'em!

The teenagers begrudgingly hold up their cell phones. Police Officers 3 and 4 use the wands to scan each teen's phone.

After scanning the phones of Glenn, Dylan, Maria, Courtney, and Kim, Police Officer 3 scans the phone of Chris. The wand rings loudly and a green light turns on - guilty.

POLICE OFFICER 3

(to the cops)

Game!

POLICE OFFICER 2

Come with me, son.

He escorts Chris out.

Police Officers 1, 3, and 4 continue to walk around the house. They hear the muffled sound of music and laughter from the basement door.

Police Officer 1 turns to a RAVEN-HAIRED GIRL (17).

POLICE OFFICER 1

Are there more down there?

She shrugs. Police Officers 1, 3, and 4 approach the door, try the handle. It's locked.

INT. VAN COTT HOUSE, BASEMENT - NIGHT

A few moments pass. Then -

Police Officers 1, 3, and 4 bust through the basement door. The basement teenagers scream and panic.

POLICE OFFICER 1  
Phones out! Phones out!

The room falls silent as the teenagers open their phones and hold them out for scanning. Police Officers 3 and 4 begins the process.

Adam and Lauren are still playing the virtual sex game, unaware of what's going on around them, since their goggles and headphones cut them off from outside stimulation.

Police Officer 3 rips the goggles and headphones off their faces.

Adam and Lauren quickly stand up, somewhat embarrassed.

Courtney and Glenn poke their heads through the busted door. Courtney looks pissed and leaves the party in a huff. Glenn shakes his head in disbelief.

Police Officer 3 runs his wand across Lauren. Nothing.

He runs his wand across Adam. It turns green and rings at Adam's mid-section. Police Officer 3 smirks. He frisks Adam's pants pockets, pulls out two game cartridges.

Adam and Police Officer 3 give each other the evil eye.

Nothing but the looping instrumental music from the videogame hangs in the air, almost teasingly.

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Adam and Chris are brought into a jail cell. A device on the ceiling scans their barcoded skin. There is a beep.

Adam and Chris take seats in the cell. The door shuts.

Adam sits patiently but nervously. He and Chris observe two VGEA agents, JOEY and SAM (50s, gruff, weathered) whispering to one another. Occasionally they throw a glance toward Adam.

After several moments, Sam approaches the cell, beckons for Adam. Adam rises. Chris watches with a quizzical stare.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - NIGHT

Adam sits in a chair at a large conference table. Waiting.

Joey and Sam enter. Joey slams a few game cartridges on the table in front of Adam and circles him.

JOEY  
Why don't you tell me what those things are in front of you.

ADAM  
Chairs.

JOEY  
No, smart-ass. These.

He pushes the games at Adam.

ADAM  
"Ultimate Bloodbath 3." "Combat Warriors."  
(a beat)  
"Virtuana."

JOEY  
They yours?

ADAM  
They're my friend's.

JOEY  
Oh yeah? Where'd he get 'em?

Adam shrugs.

JOEY (CONT'D)  
Pretty fancy stuff. Your friend must be loaded.

ADAM  
(sarcastic)  
He cuts a lot of grass. With those new energy-efficient lawnmowers on the market, business has been booming.

Joey stares him up and down.

JOEY  
I think these games belong to you.

ADAM  
No, that's not -

JOEY  
(interrupting)  
You must have got 'em from one of those wizard scumbags on the South Side.

ADAM  
No I didn't, I swear.

SAM

Joey, ease up, will ya?

Awkward silence. Sam pulls up a chair and sits near Adam.

SAM (CONT'D)

We heard from your father. And while he's a real nice guy and a real big tipper, we're gonna call this strike two. For your sake, I hope we never meet again.

Adam nods.

SAM (CONT'D)

Get outta here. Go do something useful for America.

INT. TRAIN - NIGHT

Adam sits on the El train amid PASSENGERS, immersed in his thoughts, quiet and contemplative.

He sits near a poster on the train that shows a glassy-eyed teenager. A caption reads, "Hooked On Games? Call Our Toll-Free Helpline."

EXT. EL STATION - NIGHT

The train pulls into the station and Adam gets out. He walks past a video billboard advertisement.

A WOMAN pops up on the video screen.

ON THE SCREEN

WOMAN

Hello. I'm Susan Grauer, your alderwoman from the 7th ward. This is a reminder from the City of Chicago and the Chicago Police Department. Video games are no longer a hobby - they're a crime. Gaming has been shown to cause serious physical and psychological effects in children and young adults. If you or anyone you know is involved in gaming, take immediate action and contact the proper authorities. Get serious with your life. It's time to stop playing games.

INT. RAINBOW MARKET - NIGHT

Adam enters a gourmet health food store.

A device on the ceiling scans his barcoded skin and beeps.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - EXT. HILL HOUSEHOLD - NIGHT

A well-appointed home on a quiet street.

INT. HILL HOUSEHOLD, LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Adam's father STEWART HILL (60s, WASP, professorial) and sister EMILY HILL (16, gentle, mature, soft features) are in the living room.

Stewart sits in a sofa armed with a textbook, Emily stands in front of him.

STEWART  
(reading)  
I am loved.

EMILY  
*Je suis aimee.*

STEWART  
(reading)  
You are being loved.

EMILY  
*Vous etes aimes.*

Stewart's phone buzzes on the table next to the sofa. He quickly glances at it. The phone indicates a map with a small dot that reads - "Adam - Rainbow Market."

Stewart goes back to the book. Long pause.

STEWART  
(reading)  
He had been loved.

EMILY  
*Il serai aime.*

STEWART  
Try again.

EMILY  
*Il aura ete aime.*

STEWART  
No, go again.

INT. RAINBOW MARKET - NIGHT

NOAH BRAVERMAN (40s, slightly overweight) sits at the register.

He finishes bagging the groceries of a YOUNG COUPLE (20s). They depart.

Noah watches Adam roaming the aisles. Adam approaches the counter.

ADAM  
Got any organic produce?

NOAH  
Not much. Such a demand for it these days.

ADAM  
I'll take whatever you have.

NOAH  
(beat)  
There might be some leftovers in the back.

Adam frowns.

NOAH (CONT'D)  
Follow me.

Noah leads Adam to the rear of the store. They both look around anxiously to make sure no one is looking.

Noah pulls open a shelf of vitamins, revealing a long flight of stairs. Noah gestures to the stairs. Adam walks down the steps, with Noah following and closing the shelf behind him.

INT. RAINBOW MARKET, BASEMENT - NIGHT

Noah and Adam walk through a den-like arcade. TEENAGERS play an assortment of video games on flatscreen TVs and tablet devices. It's an amalgam of sound and light.

INT. RAINBOW MARKET, BASEMENT - NOAH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

Noah and Adam take seats in Noah's cramped office. Noah opens a drawer, pulls out a handful of video game cartridges and pushes them at Adam. Adam scans the titles, his face awash in disappointment.

ADAM  
I've done so many of these RPGs and sims.

He slides the games back at Noah.