

Blind Turn

BRIAN HILL talks over black, then shots of hallways appear, about five seconds each. All hallways shot looking down towards the end/turn. Houses, schools, hospitals, churches, offices, alleyways.

FADE IN

INT. Shots of hallways in different buildings, homes...

BRIAN (v.o.)

Life is a long hallway. Most of us would probably say our hallways are inclined, always taking two steps up and one back down. At many points along the way, we are asked who we are. So, who are you? Are you the person always looking down, trying to find a destination? Knowing everything you pass is taken care of, making only one stop: at the end of your journey.

INT. Office hallway

WOMAN walking with documents, looking down, talking on phone, quick pace.

INT. School Hallway - Middle of the day

BRIAN (sitting outside classroom)

Maybe you are the custodian, getting the most of every room along the way. Sure, you're not doing what you'd like to be in the rooms, but you know they need cleaning. With your rolodex of keys, you go home with every room clean and behind you, knowing they will only be dirty again the following day.

Brian sitting on the floor outside of the classroom, next to the door in the hallway. His arms are wrapped around his curled up legs. Passing Brian down the hall, is a custodian mopping the floors.

BRIAN

My hallway is dark. I can't quite reach the light switch. Most kids my age don't realize they live in halls because they've found the first room and stayed in it. Here at Glendale Middle School, we're supposed to be in our tiny classes, not seeing things in length or depth.

Camera follows behind a young blonde girl down the hall. She holds her books and turns right before Brian into the room of students. Teacher teaching a lesson. Shot scans over students in class.

BRIAN

(still sitting, talking to camera, but looking down)

When we talk, we should hear it echo off the walls, forever repeating, never knowing loss. Confined in their tiny atmospheres, my peers couldn't understand what its like to lose something special. They wouldn't know what to feel if their only shred of family got hit off the road by a drunk driver. They have shelter in their rooms. I have reality in my hallway.

Close to Brian's face

BRIAN (softly)

My dad died four months ago. He turned. I call it turning because that's how a hallway ends. We can't see past this blind turn, and since what we see is what we believe, how can we believe anything exists in a place not visible to us? I'll tell you how. When my father turned... off that highway, into that wall, trying to avoid that swerving pickup truck, he died. He died instantly. Right on impact. For a moment, I died with him.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

INT. Classroom

BRIAN is sitting next to a new student, SARAH. She sits there, not knowing Brian's quiet, loner reputation; she engages him in conversation. TEACHER is talking in background.

SARAH (friendly, softly)

Hi, my name is Sarah. My family and I just moved here from Watson. It's a few hours away.

BRIAN (quietly with minimal eye contact)

Hi. I'm Brian.

He pauses after a brief silence.

BRIAN (continues)

You prolly want to sit over there, nobody ever sits in this desk, the legs are off-balance see?

Brian points to a desk three away and then to the legs of her current seat. She notices that if she moves, he will have nobody siting next to him.

SARAH (outgoing)

Here, I'll just swap 'em. Now you'll have a neighbor. What happened to your arm?

She looks to his bandages and he looks down at them.

BRIAN (eyeing his arm, then the floor)

A car accident. I was in an accident this summer. A drunk driver.

This draws her interest and she reacts by turning to face him.

SARAH (voice raises from a whisper)

Oh my gosh, I'm sorry. I'm glad you're not seriously hurt. So many people die in accidents due to drunk drivers. At my old school, a few policemen came and talked about the dangers of drunk driving, and how every day people die from those accidents.

Brian is quiet, staring down, because he sees the teacher coming towards them.

TEACHER (kindly, slight fib)

Sarah, can I see you at the beginning of lunch briefly? I just need to check over some things from your old school.

SARAH

Sure thing.

Teacher turns to Brian, she glances at his closed textbook.

TEACHER

Have you guys filled in the chart sheet for the end of chapter four?

Brian opens mouth but is interrupted.

SARAH

Yea... we did it together. Here.

Sarah holds up her chart with Brian's name written under hers.

TEACHER

(knowing Brian didn't do any)

Great, it's good to see you guys working together.

EXT. School yard

Brian sits on his wall, eating a brown bag lunch. He looks out and through the window of his classroom and sees his teacher talking to Sarah. She is explaining the crash and how his dad died, how she probably shouldn't talk to him more about the crash. Sarah feels terrible, and she quickly turns her head out to the yard, but doesn't see Brian.

EXT. School yard - Lunchtime

Sarah is sitting on the other end of Brian's wall, they play tag with glances and she scoots over next to him, but still giving him space. He opens his sack lunch.

SARAH

I'm so sorry about your father, I didn't know he passed away in the accident. I shouldn't even be mentioning it, this must be so hard for you. I'm really sorry, are you all right?

BRIAN

At lunch last year, the kids would play ball or sit around and throw food.

Sarah turns her head slightly to the side; this was not the reaction she was expecting, so she stops rambling as Brian talks.

BRIAN

My dad used his lunch breaks at work to come spend time with me. He was my best friend. We'd talk about stories, or music, or what I was doing in school.

Takes a bite of his sandwich and turns back to Sarah. She sits silently and listens, seeing where he goes with this.

BRIAN

My relationship with him was that of two friends; not an adult and kid, but two people equally learning from and teaching each other. He tried to make it everyday, and when he couldn't, he'd send me to school with a book or cd to keep me company.

Brian digs through his backpack to hold up a cd player.

BRIAN

It was ironic that the majority of my learning at school was from the person I go home to everyday. My dad

taught me all about life, and three months ago, he taught me about death.

Brian looks down at an uneaten sand witch, sets the sand witch down, sighs and looks up to her.

BRIAN

I think I'm doing all right.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. School yard, classroom, steps outside of school

BRIAN and SARAH in different shots sitting together, waiting for their rides, at lunch, in class. They are talking, but it's mostly him. She acknowledges him like he is saying something important. Like a student and a teacher.

EXT. School yard - Lunchtime

BRIAN and SARAH sitting on the wall, he holds a piece of chalk. Brian is teaching Sarah what he learned from the crash. His chalked out diagrams map out the hallway metaphor and the rooms that the kids were in. She quietly watches and listens; doesn't understand the concepts, but understands their importance. Brian is realizing that he needs to teach her as much as he can.

BRIAN

I really appreciate you sitting with me. Thanks for listening to these stories and lessons, if you'd call them that.

SARAH

You're a great guy, I don't know why those kids don't see it.

She looks out on the steelyard at the kids playing.

BRIAN (looks down)

That's not what I mean. Look... What do you need to do before you die?

SARAH (slightly puzzled)

Well I guess I want to get through school, go to college, buy a house. All that, right?

BRIAN

No, What do you *need* to do? There's no right or wrong, there's just something in your head says you have to do this one thing. What is it?

SARAH (pauses then speaks)

I think I *need* to have a family. To be a mother, Yuka' know?

BRIAN (establishing eye contact)

You're going to be an amazing mother. That's great. Now, I need you to try to understand something. It's not easy to understand, but I need you to, just like you need to be a mother.

SARAH (looking worried)

What is it?

BRIAN

What I needed to do with my life was teach somebody. The person I needed to teach was you. My father was the one who taught *me*. I need to be with him again, and you have to understand that that's what I *need* to do.

She stared down at the sandwich on the ground, and though she didn't want to understand, she did. Brian and Sarah sit silently on steps outside school, she looks different now. Not as innocent, but in a good way, she looks older, more conditioned. Wiser.

FADE OUT

FADE IN

EXT. Highway Overpass

Sarah is sitting on the overpass looking out on the traffic. Sirens ring directly below her, but they sound distant. She is listening to a cd player, and has a book in her lap.

SARAH

Our lives are hallways. We fool ourselves into thinking that our rooms aren't connected, but when you step outside, you see everyone else looking right back at you. There is no 'one way' to go, there is no leader or direction to follow. All we can do is open our

eyes and see what is around us. Front, back, either side. It's impossible to know what we can't see, so at the end of our halls, we have a choice to make. Will we try to see around a corner that is blind, only to turn around and tell the others what we wish to be there? Or will we take a leap of faith...

INT. Opening hallway

Sarah is sitting where Brian was originally sitting, outside the classroom.

SARAH

Do we dare to ask the question, "Is this it? Is this hallway all we have?" There must be more than we see here. Because I know that if we truly look, we'll realize that everything we've ever wondered is right in front of us.

Camera follows Brian down the hallway, walking how Sarah did in the first scene. He walks toward the ending corner and passes Sarah. He hands his books and cd player to Sarah and looks her in the eye. She looks up at him. He walks on, and eventually turns to face the darkness. He stands still looking into the unknown, he reaches out his arm. A father's hand reaches out into the light. Brian grabs it and steps forward.

INT. Darkness

Everything is black until a small boy's hand turns on a light switch at the top of his reach. A focused beam of light shines. It reveals a map that the father and son's hands are holding either side of. The map looks like a small hallway that is the beginning of a wide, intricate maze. The father hands the son a book and a cd player, and they start off together into the dark.

FADE OUT