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## Title

Dear You, One Choice Has Community Consequences

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## **Author** Marella, Alexie K.

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### DEAR YOU, A SINGLE CHOICE HAS COMMUNITY CONSEQUENCES

By

Alexie Kaethea Marella

A capstone project submitted for Graduation with University Honors

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APPROVED

Professor Keun-Pyo Root Park Department of Theatre, Film, and Digital Production

Dr. Richard Cardullo, Howard H Hays Jr. Chair University Honors

#### Abstract

With the increase of technological advancements in the world, there comes a hefty price of addiction. The yearly increase in deaths due to distracted driving shows for a necessity to change the way the youth and young adult community are presented the dangers of distracted driving. Over the most recent years, the new generation of drivers are shown outdated informative videos, old public service announcements, and simplistic billboards that do not truly capture the detrimental community consequences of phone use while driving. In an effort to address this issue, a public service announcement film will be created that shows not only how the victim and the distracted driver are affected but also how the communities and loved ones around them are affected as well. The film will include scenes such as informing loved ones about the death or jailing of their child, memories of their past with friends and families, and memories of the future they would never be able to experience. As the scenes are displayed, a letter addressed to their loved one will be read aloud as a voice-over. It is anticipated that this film will have a more effective impact to the newest generation of drivers compared to previous videos because of the display of how the community around them is affected by this one choice. The significance of this project is to spread awareness of this growing issue and to remind the public that this single choice that they make on the road has community consequences.

#### Acknowledgments

I would like to thank my faculty mentor, Professor Keun Pyo Root Park, for all his guidance throughout my Capstone Project. Professor Park, thank you for introducing me to the wonderful world of filmmaking, for all the lessons in script writing, story boarding, lighting, audio, & filming techniques, and for inspiring me to make an impact with the content I create. I truly appreciate all the time and generosity you have shown in sharing your expertise with me and mentoring me through this project. To my parents, thank you for always emphasizing the importance of safety while driving on the road and thank you for always supporting me in all my passions and aspirations in life.

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#### Introduction

It is a bright sunny day on the 60 freeway, and you are finally driving home to visit your family after a long time being away. You missed being home. You missed the warm hugs from your mom, the jokes your dad would always crack, your childhood friends coming over to hang out, your grandmother's cooking, and the sound of your little sister running around the house chasing the family dog. You missed it all. After reminiscing for a while, you notice a bothersome cumulation of sounds coming from your phone.

"Who put this song into my playlist?" you wondered.

You clicked the next button only to be led to yet another irksome song. You thought to yourself, "How did this song get into my playlist? Whatever, time to find another. I was getting tired of this one anyways".

As you mindlessly scroll through your playlist, your mind focuses on each song trying to find the perfect collection of songs to get you through your drive.

Then suddenly, the wholesome family homecoming turned into the worst day of your family's life. Ambulances, police cars, and firetrucks came rushing to the scene. Two motor vehicles were involved in the crash. One vehicle was a van with a mother, father, and two sons that were on their way to their very first piano recital. The other car was a sedan with a person who was just looking forward to coming home and spending time with family and friends after a long time of being away. No survivors.

With the new developments of technological advancements that happen almost every day, there is an increase in the usage and addiction to technology. In society, phones have become such so essential that people actually rely on them on a day-to-day basis in order to get ordinary tasks done (Wiederhold 473). Today, technology is being used more now than ever due

to the pandemic. Lecture halls have been traded for computers, walking to the store to get food has been replaced with Door Dash, and even doctor's appointments have been switched for a facetime with a physician. Although technology has wonderful abilities to make the world a better place through applications that aid navigation, social connectivity, and portable entertainment, it also has the ability to cause danger and increase the risk of harmful behaviors when not used responsibly.

An addiction to technology has led society to engage in and normalize harmful behaviors such as distracted driving. Research has shown that 5.3% percent of drivers in the nation are in physical contact or are controlling a cellphone while driving during the daytime (National Center for Statistics and Analysis). This statistic may seem small at first glance; however, it is crucial to recognize that 5.3% of the United States population is equivalent to about 17.4 million human beings who chose to engage in distracted driving (National Center for Statistics and Analysis). Even more shockingly, it has been found that 34% of teenagers between the ages of sixteen and seventeen years old will admit to using their phone while driving (McGinn 1). New drivers who are still learning how to operate a motor vehicle are already participating in this normalized practice of distracted driving. As a society, it is the moral obligation of the people to make a change to this behavior as early as possible in order to decrease the risk of danger and increase the safety of all loved ones driving on the road.

Everyone has heard of the phrase, "don't text and drive". This slogan has been seen on billboards on the freeway, commercials, and advertisements over many years. However, how effective is this slogan today? In the year 2017, the National Safety Council reported that about 100,000 crashes were caused by the choice of texting while driving (Quillin 13). If everyone grew up hearing and seeing the slogan "don't text and drive", why would they still choose to do

it? All drivers were taught at their local Department of Motor Vehicles that distracted driving is extremely dangerous and can lead to deadly car collisions. Why is there still a large number of people every day who are negatively impacted by the choice of phone-use while driving?

As a result of discovering these findings, it is apparent that society needs to update the ways in which the dangers of phone use while driving are presented. Past efforts such as the "don't text and drive" slogan is outdated, overused, and do not really emphasize the dangers of distracted driving. For example, phones are not just used for text messaging anymore. Due to technological advancements, phones can be used to play music, go on social media, take pictures, and order food. It is important to inform and remind drivers that all uses of the phone while driving are dangerous, not just texting. Furthermore, the slogan "don't text and drive" does not have a lasting impact on drivers. There is no implication in the statement that reminds drivers that engaging in this behavior can lead to a deadly catastrophe. Further, this slogan emphasizes only the individualistic perspective of the risk. There is no implication in how that single choice affects not only the individuals involved, but also the communities around them.

In an effort to change the way the dangers of distracted driving are presented, "Dear You, A Single Choice Has Community Consequences" depicts how different people are affected when one person chooses to use their phone while driving. It is with a great hope that after changing the ways these dangers are presented to the public, individuals might reflect differently on how the community around them might be affected by their choices further encouraging them to practice safe behaviors on the road.

#### Methods

#### Research:

In order to understand the process of creating a public service announcement on the dangers of phone use while driving, further research needed to be conducted. First, I researched articles containing information about distracted driving. I found articles that held valuable statistics in how common the issue was in the nation. Afterwards, I searched for articles and blogs of people who were affected by the choice of using the phone while driving. This helped me to get a deeper understanding of the true emotions that the victims and perpetrators feel when reflecting upon the incident.

#### The Writing Process:

In writing the script for my PSA films, I consulted with my faculty-mentor Professor Park. We decided on having two different films; one would depict the point of view of the victim (Gracie) and the other would depict the point of view of the perpetrator (Gregg). I wrote the script similar to a letter format. For Gracie's video, the beginning starts out with a bit of a backstory of the situation. Following the backstory, the scene would cut to a black screen and you would hear Gracie say, "Dear Mom,". Afterwards, flashbacks of memories and future experiences would appear on the screen as Gracie continues to talk to her mother through this letter. At the end of the film, it cuts to a black screen and Gracie's voice addresses the audience. She reminds them that a single choice that someone makes on the road has community consequences. For Gregg's video, the format was similar except he would be addressing his letter to his father. In the writing process I created two scripts for the two different PSA videos. It was important that I consulted with Professor Park to get advice on the proper formatting and breakdown of the script.

Along with writing the scripts, I also created storyboards and shot lists in order to organize my ideas and have some kind of visual organization before filming. For the storyboards, I drew all the scenes out, making sure to note the dialogue that happened within each scene and note how the camera should move for each of the storyboards. For the shot lists, I noted which scenes should be filmed on the same day, which characters were present in the scene, and what props were needed.

#### The Casting Process:

Originally, I had plans to recruit some of my colleagues to assist me in bringing my script to the screen. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic I was not able to follow-through with this plan. This created some changes to the script in order to maintain a pandemic-safe set. Instead, I was able to recruit my parents and my sister. In order to ensure the safety of all my loved ones, I decided to film with only my immediate family because we were all living within one household. By only filming with my immediate family, I was able to reduce the risk of possibly contracting and spreading COVID-19.

#### The Filming and Editing Process:

I first consulted with Professor Park before filming so I could get his advice on proper lighting, camera angles, editing and audio equipment. After gathering my materials, I began to film. The filming process took several months to finish. I filmed all scenes using the FilmicPro app on my iPhone device. Afterwards, all editing was done on the iMovie software.

#### The Story

In the beginning of the PSA film, "Dear Mom" a phone rings and Mrs. Hastings answers it. She is then informed by a police officer that her daughter (Chloe) was involved in a motor vehicle accident and is in the ICU at Adam's Hospital. Yesterday afternoon, Chloe and their neighbor's daughter Gracie both left to attend a concert. In a shock, Mrs. Hastings gets out of bed and runs to her car. As she approaches her car, she looks up and sees a police sheriff talking to the mother of Gracie (Mrs. Anderson). The sheriff has informed Mrs. Anderson that Gracie unfortunately did not survive the collision. A distraught Mrs. Anderson sits at the front steps of her house and begins to cry for her daughter as the sheriff drives away. Gracie's voice then reads a letter to her mother thanking her for all the beautiful memories, apologizing for all the moments they will never get to share, and then addressing the audience. She reminds the audience that a single choice has community consequences.

In the beginning of the PSA film, "Dear Dad", a phone rings and Mr. Thompson answers the phone. At first, Mr. Thompson is excited to hear from his son in college. However, suddenly things turn for the worst. Gregg explains to his father that he was on his way to a party with his friends and that he wanted to send a snapchat to his friend letting him know that they were on the way. However, in doing so Gregg explains that he hit a car and the two girls in the car were severely injured and unresponsive. Mr. Thompson disappointed, tells his son to remain calm and that he would be on his way. Eventually, Gregg was arrested and put in jail for the death of Gracie Anderson. Gregg's voice then reads a letter to his father thanking him for all the beautiful memories, apologizing for not being able to be there for his family, and finally addressing the audience. Similar to Gracie, he reminds the audience that a single choice has community consequences. **Dear Mom (Gracie's Perspective)** 

#### DEAR MOM

INT. MR. AND MRS. HASTING'S BEDROOM- EARLY MORNING

The phone rings at six o'clock in the morning and MRS. HASTINGS picks up the phone.

MRS. HASTINGS (sleepily) Hello?

OFFICER HIGGINS (V.O.) Hello, is this the mother of CHLOE HASTINGS?

> MRS. HASTINGS Yes, who is this?

#### OFFICER HIGGINS (V.O.)

This is OFFICER HIGGINS calling from the Police Department. Ma'am we regret to inform you that your daughter was involved in a motor vehicle incident and she is in critical condition at Adams Hospital. We need you and your husband to come down immediately.

> MRS. HASTINGS (in shock) Wha-what? I'm coming, I'll be right there!

> > 1

2

Mrs. Hastings runs out the front door.

EXT. FRONT YARD OF THE HASTING'S HOUSE- EARLY MORNING

As she runs towards the car, she sees her neighbor, MRS. ANDERSON who is the mother of Chloe's best friend, GRACIE, who was also in the car with her last night. Mrs. Anderson is taking to a POLICE SHERRIF.

EXT. DRIVEWAY OF THE ANDERSON FAMILY'S HOUSE- NIGHT

GRACIE Bye Mom! I'll see you tomorrow.

#### MRS. ANDERSON

3

4

5

6

7

EXT. FRONT YARD OF THE ANDERSON'S HOUSE- EARLY MORNING

Immediately Mrs. Anderson falls to her knees crying into her hands. She cries her daughter's name, Gracie, out loud.

Blackout.

INT. BLACKOUT

GRACIE (V.O.) Dear Mom,

EXT. PARK- DAYTIME

Mrs. Anderson and Gracie (Kid) play catch and they are laughing having a great time.

GRACIE (V.O.) Thank you for taking me to the park to play.

Gracie (Kid) gets a scrape on her knee and Mrs. Anderson comes to the rescue with a band-aid.

GRACIE (V.O.) Thank you for making all the ouchies feel better.

INT. ANDERSON'S LIVING ROOM

Mrs. Anderson and Gracie (Teen) are jamming along to one of their favorite songs.

GRACIE (V.O.)

Thank you for dancing and singing to my favorite songs with me.

INT. ANDERSON'S LIVING ROOM

Gracie (Teen) is sitting with Mrs. Anderson on the couch talking.

GRACIE (V.O.) Thank you for always giving me the best advice.

INT. ANDERSON'S HOUSE- NIGHTTIME

Gracie (Teen) slams the door and tears are running down her face. Mrs. Anderson brings Gracie a handfuls of chocolate.

GRACIE (V.O.) Thank you for making all the ouchies feel better

#### EXT. UNIVERSITY GRADUATION- DAYTIME

Gracie (Adult) is smiling for a picture with diploma in hand. Mrs. Anderson hands Gracie her graduation sash.

10

8

9

GRACIE (V.O.)

I'm sorry you will never get to see me graduate college

EXT. WEDDING

Gracie (Adult) is getting ready and Mrs. Anderson helps Gracie with her veil.

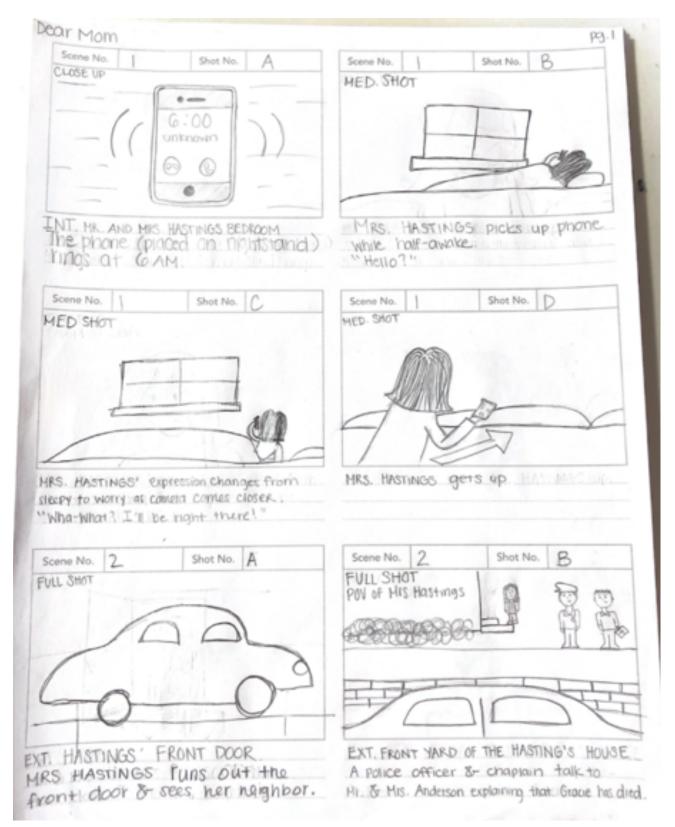
GRACIE(V.O.)

I'm sorry you will never get to see me walk down the aisle. 11 INT. BLACKOUT

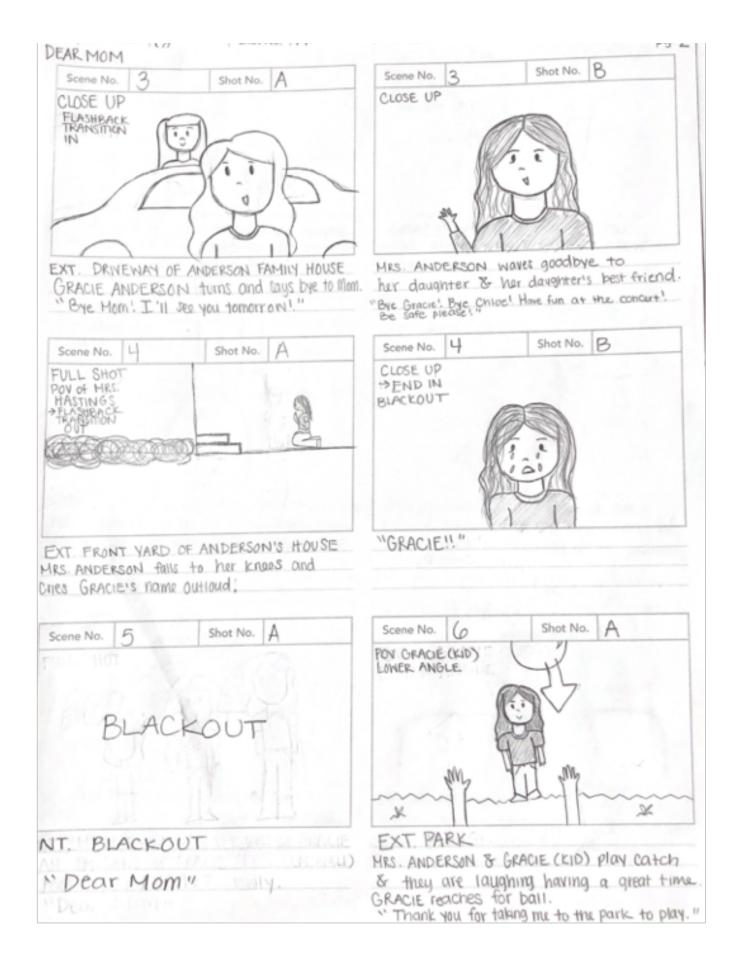
#### GRACIE

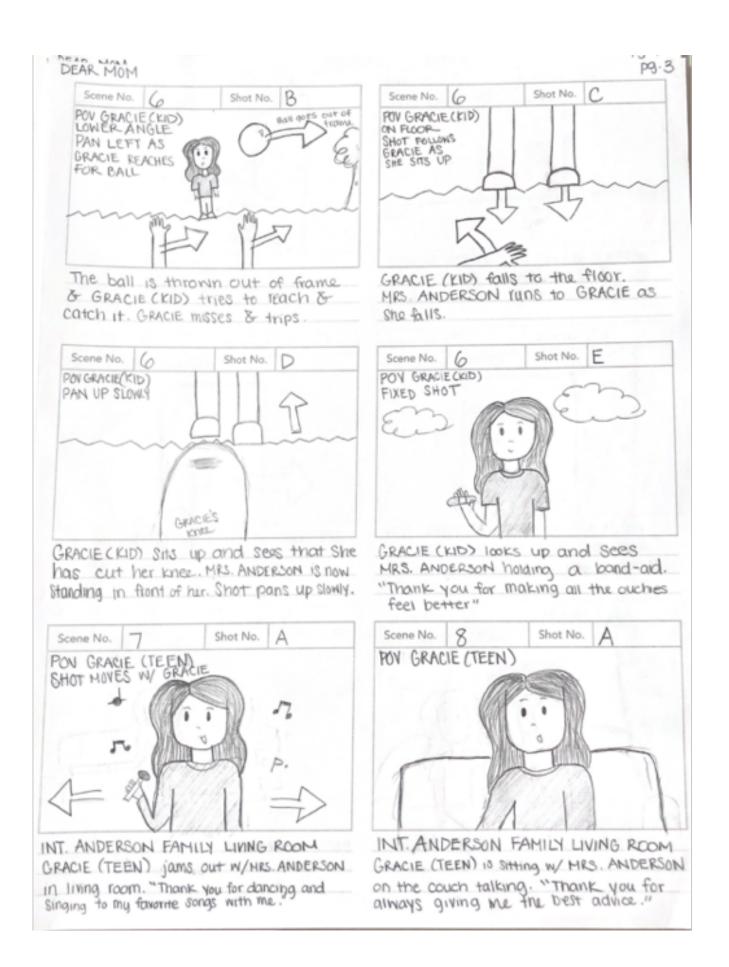
Because of the choice that this individual decided to make, so many people's lives were changed forever. So many words will remain unspoken and so many things will never be experienced. Thank you, I'm Sorry, and I love you Mom.

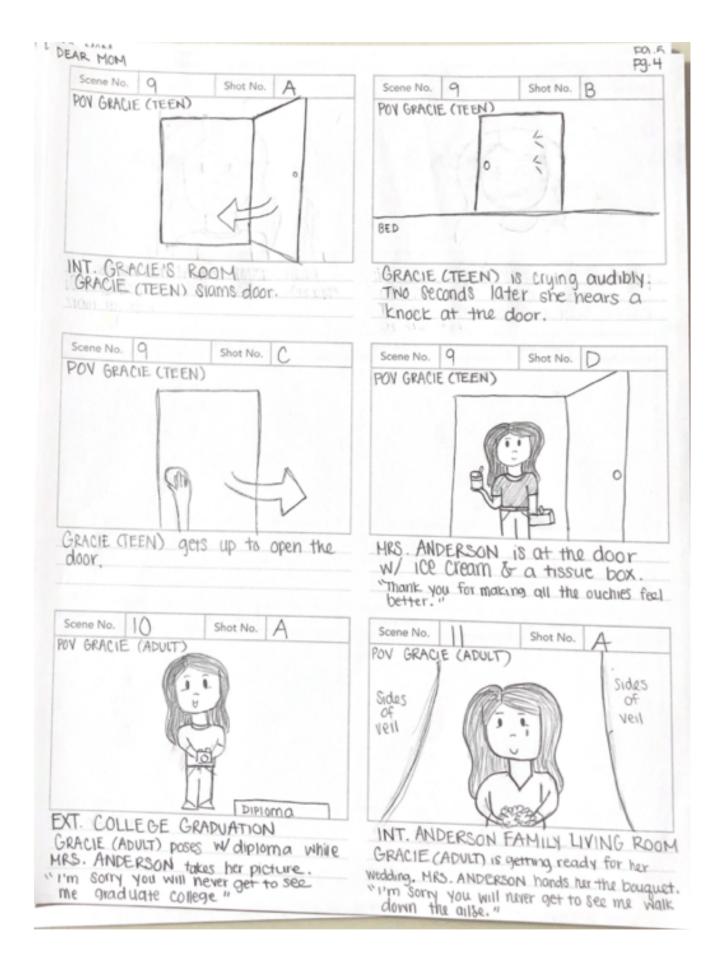
Dear You, the choices that you make on the road have community consequences. Sincerely, Gracie



#### **Storyboard for Dear Mom (Gracie's Perspective)**







Scene No.	2	Shot No.	A	Scene No.	12	Shot No.	В
				CLOST UP	SILCE .		
	BLACK	OUT		BL	ACKO	UT	
NIT OF	6	A			4	2	
Because of	the choice.	Mom.	CIE. (TEEN) M	"Dea	r You	<i>T</i>	nd all
Scene No.		Shot No.		Scene No.		Shot No.	
Scene No.		Shot No.		Scene No.		Shot No.	
Scene No.		Shot No.		Scene No.		Shot No.	
Scene No.		Shot No.		Scene No.		Shot No.	
Scene No.		Shot No.		Scene No.		Shot No.	

**Dear Dad (Gregg's Perspective)** 

#### DEAR DAD

INT. MR. THOMPSON'S BEDROOM-TWO O'CLOCK IN THE MORNING

The phone rings and MR. THOMPSON picks up the phone.

MR. THOMPSON (sleepily) Hello?

GREGG(V.O.) (panicked) DAD, it's GREGG.

MR. THOMPSON

(surprised yet confused)

Uh-hey Gregg, how's college son? It's two a.m... Aren't you supposed to be sleeping or studying for a test? I know you coffee obsessed college kids are always pulling those allnighters-

> GREGG(V.O.) Dad, I-I just got in a car accident.

A look of panic appears on Mr. Thompson's face.

MR. THOMPSON (concerned) What?! Are you okay? What happened?

GREGG(V.O.)
(struggling to explain)

I was driving over to a small get together with some of the guys and we were just jamming out to some music and I wanted to send a snapchat to MIKEY to show him we were on the way there and next thing you know I-I...

MR. THOMPSON
(disappointed)
You what?

GREGG(V.O.) (struggling to explain and terrified) I-I hit a car. I got out to check on the two girls that were in the car that I hit, a-and both are unconscious. One girl doesn't

even have a pulse. They're both really hurt. I don't know what to do. The guys are on the phone with 911 right now.	
MR. THOMPSON	
Oh, my goodness, do you have any idea how this is going to	
affect your life? Do you have an idea how this is going to affect those girl's lives? We'll figure this out, stay calm, I'm	
coming.	1
Blackout.	-
INT. BLACKOUT	
GREGG (V.O.)	2
Dear Dad	L
INT. THOMPSON FAMILY LIVING ROOM	
Mr. Thompson and Gregg (Kid) are playing video games together in the living room.	
GREGG (V.O.)	3
Thank you for being my best friend.	5
INT. THOMPSON HOUSE	
Gregg (Teen) is studying hard for his SAT test.	
Mr. Thompson comes in and gives him a plate of snacks and a fist bump.	
GREGG (V.O.)	Λ
Thank you for always supporting me and believing in me.	4
INT. JAIL CELL	
Gregg (Adult) reads a letter from his little brother.	
GREGG (V.O.)	5
I'm sorry I can't be a role model for Tommy.	-
INT. JAIL CELL	
Gregg (Adult) receives a gift from his father in a jail cell.	

GREGG (V.O.)

I'm sorry we have to spend holidays apart from each other.

INT. JAIL CELL

Gregg (Adult) looks at a picture of his family.

GREGG (V.O.) I'm sorry that I let you guys down.

INT. BLACKOUT

GREGG (V.O.)

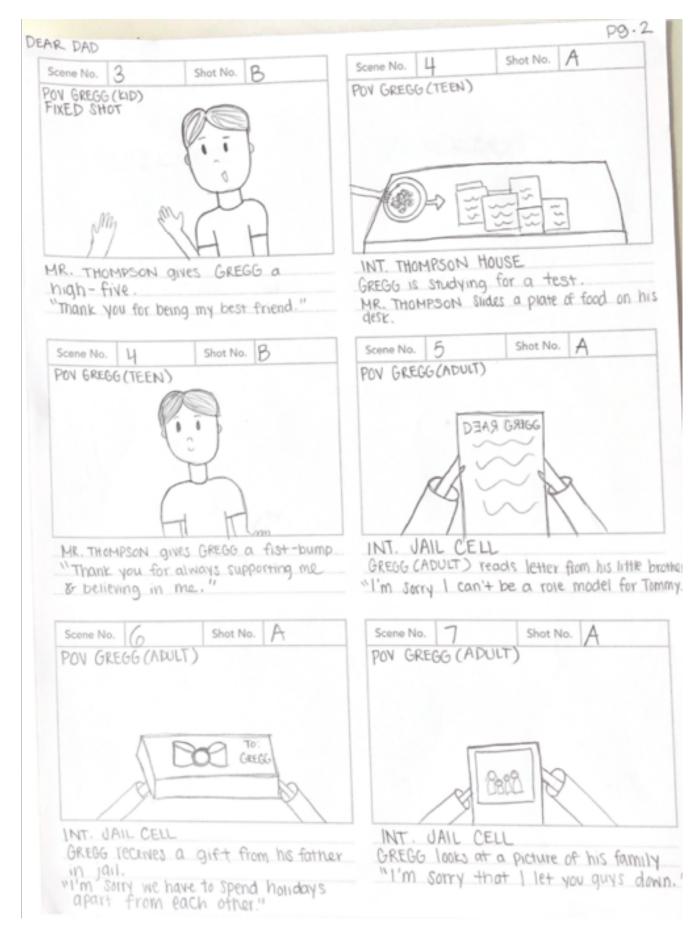
Because of the choice that I made, so many people's lives were changed forever. Nothing I do can ever make those girls' families feel better. So many words will remain unspoken and so many things will never be experienced. Thank you, I'm Sorry, and I love you Dad.

Dear You, the choices that you make on the road have community consequences. Sincerely, Gregg.

8



#### Storyboard for Dear Dad (Gregg's Perspective)



Shot No.	A	Scene No. 8 BLACK	Shot No.	B
ACKOUT				
BLACKOUT				
OUT of the choice	MMUIT) Dad."	INT. BLAC "Dear Yo	ŁOUT u"	nght Z <del>.</del> shot.
Shot No.		Scene No.	Shot No.	
Shot No.		Scene No.	Shot No.	
	Shot No.		Shot No.	Shot No.       Scene No.       Shot No.

## Google Drive to PSA Films:

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1VnBcsY5RH39mdZv9BiWczFmb20YoIHQL?usp=sharing

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