

NORMAL PARK

Laura Bailey

Baileypm1105@gmail.com

FADE IN:

1 EXT. BURGESS STREET, NORMAL PARK - NIGHT 1

A minivan held together by rust and curse words backs down the driveway of a modest ranch and starts through a post-war neighborhood.

Guttering light from the streetlamps glints off a baby crib strapped to the roof and overflowing with possessions. The van turns down ...

2 HURON AVE., NORMAL PARK - CONTINUOUS 2

The main downtown drag. The van passes a sign that reads:

**"Welcome to Normal Park!"**

And below that, graffiti scrawled in spray paint:

**"Unenjoyment - 100 percent"**

The van passes a mountainous, abandoned auto plant enclosed by a chain-link fence, heads past this decay into ...

3 DOWNTOWN NORMAL PARK - CONTINUOUS 3

The van passes a rustbelt jumble of ethnic restaurants, liquor stores, boarded storefronts ... Its headlights sweep the neon sign of Normal Park's best-known landmark, THE LANDING STRIP titty bar ...

... and it continues down Huron to the frayed edges of town ... until it rounds a curve and the taillights wink out ...

This is a city only a mother can love.

4 INT. NORMAL PARK COMMUNITY CENTER - NIGHT 4

A handful of people are sitting in a semi-circle watching something on a roll-down audio visual screen.

ON SCREEN

Is an amateurish cartoon of a woman in a director's chair working with actors on set.

The cartoon director turns to face the audience and says:  
**"Meet the real people of Normal Park. We make movies!"**

The cartoon actors also turn to face the audience and yell in unison: "**Action!**" The cartoon ends.

ON AUDIENCE

MANFRED, 30s, the artistic director of the Normal Park Community Theater, swells with pride. Manfred always walks like he's wearing epaulets.

MANFRED

Well? What do you think?

BONNIE DUNCAN, 40s, steps to the front of the group. She's quite overweight and dresses with flair. She's wearing enough bling to decorate a Christmas tree.

BONNIE

You don't see anything wrong?

MANFRED

No. What's the problem?

BONNIE

It's a cartoon. The real people of Normal Park are cartoons.

MANFRED

We wanted to tell personal stories.

BONNIE

Then use people.

MANFRED

We couldn't afford actors.

BONNIE

Half of Normal Park takes your acting class!

MANFRED

(defensive)

They aren't camera-ready.

BONNIE

I don't believe this.

Manfred sniffs, his pride wounded.

MANFRED

As director of the Normal Park Community Theater program you rely on my professional opinion.

BONNIE  
You're a volunteer.

MANFRED  
Well, if this were a paid position  
you'd be paying me a lot!

BONNIE  
(addressing room)  
Listen. Mayor Duncan formed this  
committee to develop a marketing  
video to attract the movie industry  
to Normal Park. We're competing  
with dozens of other communities.  
The film office wants to hear from  
residents, and there aren't any  
Normal Park residents in this.

NICK, 18, hot, and window-licking stupid, points to the  
cartoon, the last frame of which is still frozen on screen.

NICK  
I don't know. That old guy there  
looks a lot like Emmet.

EMMET, 80s, a turnip-nosed farmer, squints at the screen.

EMMET  
Yep. And there's my wife. There's  
Ada. Standin' right next to me.

BONNIE  
That's not you and Ada.

MANFRED  
Why don't you show the mayor and  
see what he thinks?

BONNIE  
I can't show this to him.

MANFRED  
He's your husband. If you think  
he'll hate it, you should be the  
one to show him.

NICK  
He'll get really mad at us.

EMMET  
Why isn't Chuck here now?

Concern darkens Bonnie's eyes. She doesn't answer.