

BRIGHT JAZZY MUSIC, Bunny Berigan's "I Can't Get Started With You," erupts as TITLES quickly cut in and out over BLACK.

TITLES, as they will, END.

FADE IN:

EXT. FIELDS DAY

Farmland. Rolling hills. Hot as homemade sin. A deer scampers through tall grass.

A small clear stream flows through the country. You could drink this water. You would want to drink this water.

EXT. STREAM

We FOLLOW this stream through the woods. Sun twinkles across its surface. A beautiful day.

We hear DRONING of insect wings. A pair of dragonflies, mating, fly into frame.

THE DRAGONFLIES

Swoop up and down the water's edge, past flowers and reeds. Lighting here and there.

Ahead of us, we see a family picnic. MOTHER, FATHER, a BOY, his YOUNGER BROTHER, and two still younger SISTERS. The Boy is ten. By their dress, we see it is the early sixties.

The Father and the Boy squat by the creek turning over rocks as the dragonflies zip into view.

EDGE OF CREEK

The Boy sees them.

THE BOY

Daddy?

THE FATHER

Yes?

THE BOY

Why are they stuck together?

Father and son study the dragonflies intently.

THE FATHER

That's a good question.

Dragonflies dance before them.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

mature male voice)

It was one hell of a question. Everyone asks it in some form or other. Most folks aren't lucky enough to be told by their fathers. Generally, people get it from a kid a year older at school who isn't sure he has the right information anyway.

THE FATHER

Well, let me tell you...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

At least he had the right information. I mean, he'd done it.

The Father curls his arm around his child.

THE FATHER

It's like this...

The Boy looks at his father, deeply interested.

ANGLE ON ENTIRE PICNIC AREA

The mother cooks soup on a small stove. The three younger children, the youngest girl being four, scramble around -- exhibiting varying degrees of interest in her cooking.

MOTHER

Lunch is ready!

The Boy and his father arrive from their spot up the creek. The Boy's eyes are as wide as dinner plates.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

So he told me.

The Boy seems in another world.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

It was hard to believe.

The Boy stares at his mother as she serves him lunch. He watches her legs in her shorts. The same legs he saw half an hour ago, but not the same...

Father pecks the Mother's cheek.

THE FATHER

Well, I told him.

MOTHER

And?

The Father smiles... it's hard to tell.

The Boy sits down with his lunch. Unaware it's there.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This was quite a bit to handle for such a hot afternoon.

He lifts his ice water from the ground, opens the neck of his shirt, and pours it down his back.

INT. AUTOMOBILE DAY

The Boy stands on the floor behind the driver's seat. His father drives down a small country road. The air conditioner is on full blast.

THE BOY

Daddy, I got a question about...
The Phenomenon...

NARRATOR (V.O.)

That's what I called it. The Phenomenon. It's still a good name

for it, because I still don't understand it.

THE FATHER

Shoot.

THE BOY

Why don't you go to the bathroom when you're inside a girl?

THE FATHER

Well, you just don't.

THE BOY

Never?

THE FATHER

Not ever. Just works out that way.

THE BOY

I was worried about that.

THE FATHER

What are you going to have for lunch?

THE BOY

Hamburger. Daddy?

THE FATHER

Yes.

THE BOY

Do you have to do it every time you want to have a baby?

THE FATHER

Yes, you do.

THE BOY

(a little horrified))
Every time?

THE FATHER

trying not to smile)
Every time.

THE BOY

Ew.

THE FATHER

Maybe I didn't tell you enough.

THE BOY

There's more?

THE FATHER

When a man and a woman make love
it feels very good. It's the most
fun two people can ever have
together.

THE BOY

(awestruck)

Really?

The Father rubs his son's head affectionately. Nods.

THE BOY

It feels good?

THE FATHER

Wonderful.

The Boy is intrigued, pleased.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This was certainly good news.

THE FATHER

Any other questions?

THE BOY

Not just now.

Leaving his son to ponder this new morsel of intelligence,
the Father snaps on the RADIO.

The car barrels down the highway past a Seven-Up billboard.
You Like It, It Likes You. A woman in a swimsuit.

The Boy stares.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

This was something big.

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM DAY

A roomful of TEN YEAR OLDS trying not to take a nap is a gas.

A THIN HATEFUL TEACHER grades papers while the students, heads on their desks, pretend to sleep.

The Boy peeks through his fingers at a PRETTY GIRL across the room.

She looks up, smiles at him, lays her head back down.

NARRATOR (V.O.)

I should've had the sense to quit early on.

The Boy glances at the teacher, absorbed in her papers. He stealthily lifts his desk top, extracts a drinking straw and sheet of paper. He tears off a corner, wads it, slips it in the straw and shoots it at the Pretty Girl.

It hits her desk with a PING.

THIN HATEFUL TEACHER

(thin hateful anger)

What. Was. That!?

The paper wad rolls across the floor.

Thin Hateful Teacher scans the room, furious. All the children feign sleep - except the Pretty Girl who points across the room at the Boy.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY DAY

The Teacher drags him by the ear down the shiny hall as the class DIES LAUGHING offscreen.

EXT. GRASSY BOULEVARD AFTERNOON

The boy and his father stroll side by side down the street. They have done this before.

THE FATHER

You have to handle every girl differently. With time, you'll

learn what each one wants and the best way to make each one happy.

THE BOY
But how do you know?

THE FATHER
Experience.

THE BOY
Yeah, but how do you ever get it?

THE FATHER
It comes.

THE BOY
And then I'll know what to do?

THE FATHER
One of these days, you'll know what the girl wants before she does.

The boy trips and falls.

NARRATOR (V.O.)
After all, he did get my mother to marry him, so he may have known how... I still haven't figured it out.

Father lifts him up, dusts him off, and they continue, holding hands.

INT. MASTER BEDROOM NIGHT

The Boy, his Younger Brother and Sisters sprawl across their parents' bed watching them get dressed to go out.

His father shaves in a white tile bathroom.

BIG BAND music rockets from a Victrola.

MOTHER
You and your little brother be sure and help your sister fix dinner.

SISTER

They always leave a mess.

LITTLE SISTER

P. U.!

THE BOY

We do not.

SISTER

Do so.

YOUNGER BROTHER

Do not.

SISTER

Yes you do yes you do!

MOTHER

That's enough. You just help her
when she needs it.

The Mother begins putting on makeup. The Father ties his
tie. He kisses her lightly.

THE FATHER

(indicates music))

Nice beat.

THE MOTHER

Make you want to move your feet.

She syncopates across the room, gathers him in her arms and
they foxtrot while the children watch contentedly.

INT. KITCHEN AFTERNOON

Four children wreak havoc as a young black MAID heats her
curling iron on the stove.

MAID

You children clear on outta my
way. Percy's gonna be here and I
ain't gonna be ready.

THE BOY

He your boyfriend?

MAID

A finer man you'll never meet.

YOUNGER BROTHER

You ever kissed him?

MAID

Boy, that ain't none a your business. You ask me another sassy question like that an' I'm liable to tell your momma. Now leave me be.

The curling iron is cherry red. She slaps it to her head, working fast while it's still hot. It makes a unique smell.

YOUNGER BROTHER

Oh gross.

THE BOY

Why you have to do that?

MAID

Make me look... enticing.

THE BOY

It looks funny.

MAID

Not to Percy.

THE BOY

Then he's crazy.

MAID

'Bout me. That man crazy 'bout me.

She shimmys sensually across the room.

YOUNGER BROTHER

We are too, Sarah Louise.

THE BOY

You won't ever leave us will you Sarah Louise?

MAID

Huh! Just soon's I finish at A and I.

THE BOY
Oh. When's that?

MAID
Two years.

YOUNGER BROTHER
That's okay. We'll be grown up then, won't need a maid.

MAID
Way you clean your room, honey, you gonna be needin' a maid a long long time.

A car SWOOSHES down the driveway, TOODLES its horn out back.

MAID
That's Percy. You boys go talk to him. I gotta put on my lipstick.

INT. BACK PORCH

The Maid hurries from the kitchen down to the basement.

The boys scoot out and down the back steps. We see a large black car beyond the screen door.

EXT. BACK YARD

A late fifties Lincoln Continental stretches by the back sidewalk, its motor TICKING OVER.

An immaculately dressed, lanky NEGRO GENTLEMAN opens the door and eases his feet out on the grass. A DARK COUPLE lounges in the back seat, necking and sharing a pint in a paper sack.

NEGRO GENTLEMAN
How's my main man?

THE BOY

I'm just fine. How're you today
Percy?

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

It's a beautiful day. I got a date
with Sarah Louise and, far as I'm
concerned, rest of the world can
go pack sand up its ass.

The boys dissolve in laughter. He said "ass."

YOUNGER BROTHER

Can I be your main man, too,
Percy?

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

Just gotta join the club.

YOUNGER BROTHER

What club?

THE BOY

I'm in it.

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

Percy's club.

YOUNGER BROTHER

How you join?

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

Y'gotta know the secret handshake.

YOUNGER BROTHER

What's that?

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

Here.

He makes a fist, gestures for the small boy to do the same.
His large dark hand approaches the small white one. The
Negro Gentleman extends his pinkie. Little Brother does
too. They touch pinkies. He extends his thumb. So does
Little Brother. Slowly the Negro's fingers unfurl,
revolving around and shaking Little Brother's hand.

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

Now you're in the club. Now you're
my main man too.

YOUNGER BROTHER

Wow.

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

Where's my Sarah Louise?

YOUNGER BROTHER

Doin' girl stuff.

THE BOY

Why do you take out Sarah Louise?

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

I love her.

THE BOY

She love you too?

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

I hope so. I surely do.

THE BOY

Don't you wanna stay here with us?
You can have some lemonade and we
got a record player.

The Gentleman points. On the hump in front of the wide
front seat perches a small record player. With a 33 1/3 LP
on it.

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

So do I.

The Maid trots down the back stairs. The screen door SLAPS
behind her.

MAID

Hey baby, let's get to it.

She clings to him like Saran Wrap and delivers a slow,
searing kiss.

The Boy's eyes go wide.

NEGRO GENTLEMAN

See you men later.

The Maid slides into the car, he drops in beside her. They sit close as a skin graft. He switches on the little record player, sets down the needle. SULTRY R & B MUSIC slides through humid air.

The couple in the back passes forward the pint. The Negro Gentleman softly closes the big Lincoln's door and gently backs out the driveway, MUSIC BLARING.

The little white boys watch them go.

THE BOY

Neat.

YOUNGER BROTHER

She kissed him.

THE BOY

(stunned)

She sure did.