

THE MIGHTY, MIGHTY LIONS

Written by

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FADE IN.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

It is game day at Blake Bradford Stadium in the small (fictional) town of South Leonardo, Georgia. The streets are empty, as everyone is at the game.

Blake Bradford stadium is packed with 12,000-plus students and community members, with the red and white of the LARSON LIONS outnumbered by the gold and green of the SOUTH LEONARDO GAMECOCKS 3-1.

The gold and green are cheering loudly as the score is 26-20 for South Leonardo. The Gamecocks prepare to kick off with 4:13 left in the game.

INT. PRESS BOX, BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Sitting at the center of a row of JOURNALISTS is the team announcer MATTHEW WOODERSON. The press box is nice for a high school field, with comfortable chairs. Wooderson talks into a radio microphone.

NOTE: When Wooderson is not on screen, his voice is heard over a radio as a disembodied voiceover.

WOODERSON

Hey, folks and welcome back to
Blake Bradford Stadium, where your
hometown South Leonardo
Gamecocks...

CUT TO:

The Gamecocks wear green jerseys with white lettering that reads "SLG" just above the number; gold pants; gold helmets with a Gamecock logo on the side.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

...lead your hometown Larson Lions
by six with just over four minutes
to play.

The Lions wear white jerseys and red pants. Their red helmets have the school's lion logo on one side and a big "L" on the other.

In Larson section of the stands, the FANS follow along with the CHEERLEADERS' chant:

ALL
 (simultaneously)
 We are the Lions/The Mighty, Mighty
 Lions/Everywhere we go/People wanna
 know/Who we are/And why we score...
 SO MUCH!

The Larson section cheers. Scattered boos come from the South Leonardo section.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 This classic match-up has been
 brought to you by interim Larson
 Coach Ali Berke...

ALI BERKE discusses plays with Assistant Coach SHAWN PICKFORD. Berke is a white woman in her 40s, wearing a black, long-sleeved shirt, tan slacks and Jordans. She wears a Star of David around her neck. Pickford is a Black man in his late 20s. He wears a team hoodie and matching sweatpants.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 ...and controversial South Leonardo
 Coach Adam Newhouse.

NEWHOUSE stands on the sideline, arms crossed. He is a white man in his 40s, graying brown hair, dressed like he'd rather be playing golf, highlighted by his short sleeves and visor. He is flanked on either side by identically-dressed ASSISTANT COACHES.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 What looked to be a blowout was
 turned around as Larson scored
 three second half touchdowns to tie
 up the game before South Leonardo
 answered with a touchdown drive
 that took 10 minutes off the clock.

On the field, the SOUTH LEONARDO KICKER runs towards the ball and boots it into the air. The crowd is on their feet, amped for the finale.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 With four minutes and all their
 timeouts, do the mighty, mighty
 Lions have what it takes to come
 back and win the AAA state title?
 We're about to find out.

Lions' kick returner JASON FLOYD settles under the ball at the five yard line. Floyd is under 5'6" and no more than 140 pounds. His jersey is #1.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
Jason Floyd receives the kick--

Floyd loses the ball in the sun and it goes through his arms and towards the end zone. Two SOUTH LEONARDO DEFENSIVE PLAYERS bear down on Floyd as he scrambles for the ball.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
FUMBLE! FUMBLE! Floyd lost the ball!

Floyd falls on top of the ball at the 2 yard line as the South Leonardo players pile on him, grabbing at the ball. The referee digs into the pile and signals first down for the Lions from their own 2.

Floyd smacks himself on the helmet as he stays on the field for the huddle. Quarterback WILEY KRAMER pats him on the shoulder. Kramer is a white teen who is 6'2" and 220 pounds.

WILEY
Shake it off. Just means our winning touchdown drive will be 98 yards.

Wiley winks. Floyd chuckles nervously.

EXT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

The one-story brick building is painted white with a big red lion's head on the side. Beyond the field house is the practice field. Next to it, kids in P.E. class play basketball. The court isn't standard asphalt, though, it's top-of-the-line polymeric rubber.

INT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Waiting for an adult to show up, the FOOTBALL PLAYERS are rambunctious. Horseplay, jokes, play fighting, people on devices, people playing games.

Principal CHRISTINE FAULKNER walks into the room and everyone quiets down. She commands instant respect. The players know her. She is a white woman in her 50s, hair held tightly in a bun, a stylish, but conservative, dress and matching flats.

FAULKNER
Keep it quiet.

She prepares to read from a piece of paper. J.J. DOUGLAS, a massive defensive lineman speaks.

DOUGLAS
Where's coach?

FAULKNER
Save all your questions until the end.

Oohs and aahs.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
Mr. Douglas, please join me at the front of the class.

More oohs and ahhs. Douglas stands up, displaying his muscles like a champion.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
Quiet down. As I call your name, join Mr. Douglas.

The players she calls out are all the big and athletic players.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
Autrey Brittain.

BRITTAIN is a tall, lanky wide receiver, he gets up and joins Douglas to catcalls.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
Juston Niles.

The massive center, NILES, gets up.

NILES
Looks like she's calling up this year's all-state team.

Cheers. Niles high fives Brittain.

FAULKNER
Tanner Brumley.

BRUMLEY is a short, but stout, fullback. He joins the others.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
Austin Nesbit... Jonathan Gordon.

The two tackles are both over 6' and 250 lbs.

JONATHAN
It's all the people who have
scholarships already.

FAULKNER
Cole O'Donnell.

The running back is 6' and 190 pounds.

O'DONNELL
We're about to work out for scouts,
that's what it is.

WILEY
(sarcastic)
That's it.

Some oohs and ahhs.

O'DONNELL
Oh no, Wiley lost his scholarship.

Wiley shrugs. He's not buying into the hype.

FAULKNER
Gentleman, please wait for me
outside.

Niles and Brumley exchange a glance of bewilderment. Douglas shrugs and walks out the door. The others follow.

Faulkner waits patiently for the door to fully close.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
I know this is a tough time for
this, after losing Randall Kramer
and Justin Monsour to military
service, but the students who just
left the room have been expelled.

The rest of the players explode with shock and dismay.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
Quiet down! Quiet down!

They don't.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
QUIET! NOW! Or there will be
further suspensions.

They quickly quiet down and settle in their seats.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
 Additionally, head coach Nicky
 Bruno and ALL of his assistants
 have been fired and will no longer
 be allowed on campus.

The players are stunned into silence.

INT. U.S. ARMY TENT, ISLAND NATION OF ST. POCO - DAY

The inside of this standard Army field tent holds 8 people at capacity, but only six cots are set up. Towards the back, a banner dominates the tent. It's the image of a majestic lion with the words "The Mighty, Mighty Lions" written across the bottom in metallic silver magic marker.

In the cot closest to the entrance lays RANDALL KRAMER, Wiley's fraternal twin. They do look very similar, although Randall is a little shorter and a little thinner. He holds an envelope in one hand and reads from a letter.

SASHA (V.O.)
 ...So that updates you on
 everything around here. I can't
 wait to see you again. Check the
 envelope before you throw it away.
 A little surprise for you. Wink
 wink. And don't forget to call your
 brother and the boys before the
 game. They need your support in
 SOME way. Love and kisses
 forever... Sasha.

He looks in the envelope and finds a picture. He pulls it out and turns it over to see Sasha wearing tasteful but sexy lingerie. He quickly pulls it in close so no one else can see. He guards it jealously and looks around.

They didn't. SGT. FRANKLIN ignores everyone as he lays on his cot reading "L.A. Confidential," by James Ellroy. Franklin is a Black man in his late 20s, close-cropped hair and mustache.

Towards the center of the room, JUSTIN MONSOUR, CHRIS DAVIS and ALEX BRECK are playing Go Fish. Justin is a six-foot tall white guy who is very fit, but not overly muscular. Davis is a Black man, a little skinny, a little tall. Breck is a white man, 5'9", 200 pounds.

BRECK
 Boom! Four queens, fools!

He slams the cards down on the table. Randall recoils from the sound.

He wraps the picture inside the letter and sticks them both back in the envelope. He stuffs it under his pillows and pulls the sheets up to his chin.

But he can't sleep.

EXT. MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS RESTAURANT - EVENING

SUPER: Earlier

SASHA DAWSON parks in front of a restaurant called MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS and gets out. The restaurant sits between a gas station serving the interstate and a chain daycare center, MOMMY'S LITTLE HELPER. Trucks pull in and out of the gas station parking lot while cars whiz by on the interstate.

Sasha is a Black woman in her mid-20s. She is dressed as a waitress: nametag, apron and all. She's already tired. She sighs as she opens the door and goes inside.

INT. MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS RESTAURANT - CONTINUOUS

Mothers and Truckers is your standard 1950s-style diner inside, with a long bar on one side. The kitchen is behind the bar and booths line the opposite wall. Near the entrance are more private tables in a larger dining area.

Sasha walks in, goes behind the counter and clocks in. MICHELLE "MICKEY" KRAMER bursts through the kitchen door, carrying two orders of the house breakfast special: biscuits and gravy, scrambled eggs, bacon, sausage links and ham.

MICKEY

Out of the way, hot plates coming through!

She blows past Sasha, who has to step quickly to avoid getting hit with a plate.

Sasha goes into the kitchen and grabs an apron from a peg on the wall. She walks towards the kitchen and waves to CHICK SANCHEZ, the short order cook, sweating over a hot grill.

CHICK

What's cooking, Sasha?

She chuckles and heads back out to the dining room. She looks back and smiles as she goes through the door.

SASHA

You are, Chick, as usual.

He flips a omelet with a smile.

In the dining room, Mickey finishes up with her customer and comes to talk to Sasha. Mickey is a white woman in her mid-20s, brown hair, glasses, medium size and height. She resembles Wiley and Randall quite a bit.

Working the register is JULIE MORRIS. Julie is much shorter than Mickey, barely over 5'. Barely more than 100 pounds, blonde hair tied in a ponytail.

MICKEY

My brother and his friends are coming by, so we'll probably get busy.

SAMMY CHEN is a thin Chinese American teen.

JULIE

Oh, you mean the Nerd Squad?

SAMMY (O.S.)

Say our name three times while you look in the mirror and we'll appear in your bathroom.

Laughter.

JULIE

Ewww!

Wiley walks in, followed by Randall, Jason and the rest of the Nerd Squad: GLENN FINNEGAN, DWAYNE SAPOLU and ANTHONY OLSON. Finnegan is white, tall and thin. Sapolu is a Samoan teen over 6'3" and nearly 300 pounds. Olson is a Black teen who is 5'10" and 220 pounds.

SAPOLU

Hey, Mickey, you finally gonna take me up?

Mickey laughs.

MICKEY

You 18 yet, Dwayne?

He grins.

SAPOLU

Two more months. That mean we have a date?

MICKEY

You're not my type.

FINNEGAN

Oh yeah, what is your type?

She ignores the question.

MICKEY

You guys ordering or you
bullshitting?

WILEY

I'm here to eat. What's today's
special?

Olson claps Sapolu on the shoulder.

OLSON

You'll figure it out one of these
days.

SAPOLU

You know I will.

MICKEY

(to Wiley)

Today, we have a miso-glazed
salmon.

WILEY

Gimme that. What's the side.

MICKEY

Kale.

Audible disapproval from the rest of the nerds.

SAPOLU

You have meatloaf today?

MICKEY

Now Dwayne, you know that we've had
meatloaf every single day you've
lived in this town. Any reason
today's different?

He laughs.

SAPOLU

I'll take TWO orders.

Mickey laughs.

MICKEY

Of course you will.

SAMMY
Burger and fries.

OLSON
Same.

SAPOLU
(to Mickey)
Why aren't you writing any of this
down? I've already forgotten half
of it.

MICKEY
Every time you guys come here, you
get the same thing. Every time that
ANYONE in this town comes in, they
get the same thing.

OLSON
But Wiley got 'mee-so' salmon. He's
never gotten that before.

MICKEY
I come up with a new special every
day. And every day, the only person
that EVER eats it is Wiley.

SAPOLU
Then why do you keep making new
things? For like one person?

Mickey sighs.

MICKEY
Otherwise, I'd just be making the
same thing over and over again.
Nothing would ever change.

She's not really joking.

FINNEGAN
You've inspired me. I do want to
change it up!

Mickey gets excited.

MICKEY
'Bout time.

FINNEGAN
Add pickles.

MICKEY
To what?

FINNEGAN
Burger. And fries.

He grins. She turns and walks away.

MICKEY
We're out of pickles.

She flicks him a bird without looking back.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, Larson 2-Yard Line

Wiley, wearing #13, stands in the huddle, but he's the only player with any energy. The others look down and defeated. They stare at the ground or the stands or the scoreboard.

WILEY
Hey guys...

He claps Floyd and massive center, JOEY KERR, on their shoulders. Kerr wears #66, he's a 6'2", 275-pound white man. Notably, the last three fingers on Wiley's left hand are taped together.

WILEY (CONT'D)
We got this. We've been doing it
and we're going to keep doing it.
They haven't stopped us this half.
We have them on their heels. They
don't know what we're gonna do. You
guys ready?

Mumbles of assent.

WILEY (CONT'D)
You've gotta be kidding me. No way
that's how this huddle ends. Let's
try that again. You guys ready!?!

ALL
(simultaneously)
YEAH!

FLOYD
(under his breath)
Hell yeah.

WILEY
Okay. Shotgun. Red bull left. On 3.
Break!

They all clap and say break. They move up to the line and get set. Wiley gets set in the shotgun, with Floyd flanking him on the right. The tight end and three receivers are also loaded to the right.

The ref blows the whistle. Wiley holds his hands ready to catch the snap.

WILEY (CONT'D)
Set... hut, hut... hike!

Kerr snaps the ball. It's a little wobbly, but Wiley has it. He drops back.

On the weak side, the tackle and guard drop back into the pocket a few steps, allowing the DEFENDERS to move past the line of scrimmage. The entire defensive line surges forward.

Floyd flares around the linemen and is open.

A towering defensive end, BEN O'BANNION, #99, spins off of Kerr's block and grabs for Wiley. Kerr recovers, though and knocks O'Bannion to the ground.

Wiley floats the pass into Floyd's hands at the five. RORY SLATER, #42, a big fast safety, combines with linebacker PARKER MARKS, #55, to tackle Floyd. Marks is 255 pounds and 6'1", he wears the captain's C on his jersey.

WOODERSON
Marks and Slater combine on the tackle. Jason Floyd was a back-up receiver and return specialist until the Larson suspensions. He's now a starter. He's the fastest guy on the team, but he might just be the lightest and shortest, too...

3:59 remains in the game as the clock ticks.

EXT. MAIN STREET, SOUTH LEONARDO - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

A reporter, SHARON ALLIGOOD, stands on the corner in front of City Hall. She is a tall white woman in her early 20s. She has long red hair and wears a calf-length skirt and matching jacket with pretty good-sized pockets. She carries a pen and a pad.

The square around City Hall is busy as Main Street and the surrounding blocks are filled with busy shops and restaurants.

Wiley walks directly up to Sharon and shakes her hand.

WILEY
Ms. Alligood?

ALLIGOOD
Sharon.

He nods.

WILEY
Sharon it is.

WILEY (CONT'D)
Let's go for a walk. You can't get
to know me unless you get to know
this town.

ALLIGOOD
Let's do it.

WILEY
Awesome, c'mon.

He walks down Main Street. She follows.

CUT TO:

They approach the busiest section of the street, which is
filled with shops and pedestrians.

WILEY (CONT'D)
Did you bring your hungriest
stomach?

She laughs.

ALLIGOOD
I sure did.

He grins.

WILEY
Good, because I am about to treat
you to the best of South Leonardo.
And you're going to love it so much
that you'll write about it for your
big city readers.

Bigger laughter.

ALLIGOOD
Let's do it!

He waves his hand and opens the first door. He escorts her inside under a sign that reads "Jiro's Sushi."

CUT TO:

They sit at a table across the room from the sushi bar. Between them two pieces of sushi, very elegantly plated to look more like art than food.

WILEY

Get ready for something awesome.

He grins as he watches her. She takes a bite, consuming half her sushi.

WILEY (CONT'D)

What do you think?

ALLIGOOD

I've had real sushi and, you know, this isn't bad.

WILEY

Right?

Wiley eats his piece of sushi.

ALLIGOOD

That Jiro?

She nods towards the SUSHI CHEF behind the counter. Wiley's taken aback at the suggestion.

WILEY

Wow, what a thing to assume.

She points to the name on the menu. And the big sign across the back of the restaurant. And the front door.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Oh, sorry. That's Sachiko.

ALLIGOOD

Well he's definitely not from around here.

She eats the other bite.

CUT TO:

Wiley and Alligood walk down the street. Wiley waves at several passersby. A few people snap pics.

Alligood looks around and sees that most of the shops and stores on Main Street are closed and boarded up. Those that ARE open are doing good business, likely because they have little competition.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)
What's going on...?

She waves her arms at all the abandoned stores.

WILEY
There was a Yamaha factory here for years. But they left for Mexico. Devastated local businesses.

ALLIGOOD
The ones left seem to be busy.

WILEY
That's because they make REALLY good snacks. Like Main Street is Snack Central.

He holds open the door to "Franny's Fudge" and they go inside.

CUT TO:

They look at the case, with dozens of fudge options.

ALLIGOOD
So many choices?

WILEY
No, there are only two. Have a seat.

She sits at a nearby table. He pays at the counter and then sits down with her. He hands her two pieces of fudge and keeps two for himself.

WILEY (CONT'D)
This one is 'apple butter betty.'

He eagerly eats his. She sniffs hers and then takes a bite.

ALLIGOOD
Wow, that's my new favorite thing ever.

She finishes the piece quickly.

WILEY

It WAS your favorite. This one is
'dark chocolate Georgia peach.'

He grins as he eats his fudge. Alligood eats hers. She's
flabbergasted.

ALLIGOOD

I've never had anything like it.

She finishes her bite.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

Let me get some to go.

She walks up to the counter. Wiley watches with a grin.

CUT TO:

They walk through a door beneath a sign that says "Ginnie's
Hand-Made Pretzels."

WILEY

The specialty here is the Hot
Garlic and Sea Salt Soft Pretzel.

He takes two steaming pretzels from the CLERK.

ALLIGOOD

That certainly is a mouthful.

WILEY

It sure is.

He hands her the pretzel.

ALLIGOOD

Oh my god.

WILEY

Take a bite.

He takes a bite. She follows. She LOVES it.

ALLIGOOD

Oh my god!

He smiles through a mouthful of pretzel.

WILEY

I know, right?

ALLIGOOD
Aren't you supposed to do salty
THEN sweet?

WILEY
Well, ma'am, I truly believe you
can do things just about any way
you want to.

She raises an eyebrow.

ALLIGOOD
As long as you aren't hurting
anybody else?

WILEY
Of course.

ALLIGOOD
Of course.

She writes in her notebook.

CUT TO:

Wiley and Alligood walk down the street, they're further away
from the shops now.

WILEY
Well, here we are.

Wiley waves his arm at Larson High School like a spokesmodel.
She looks up and stares at the most expensive high school
she's ever seen.

ALLIGOOD
Wow.

WILEY
Yeah, wow.

The building IS unique. It has modern architecture that was
designed by a famous architect. It's almost abstract in
design.

WILEY (CONT'D)
Despite the looks, it IS, in fact a
high school. A public magnet
school. With a LOT of super rich
parents who pay lots of money.

Alligood scribbles more notes.

ALLIGOOD

Any of that money make it down to instruction? The capital expenses are obvious.

WILEY

Of course. Larson has a goal that EVERY graduating student goes to college. The instruction is top-notch.

Alligood is impressed.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Yeah, the school is part of an eSports league with similar schools across the South. I think they play Tallahassee later.

ALLIGOOD

And there are enough kids in South Leonardo that want to do this stuff?

Wiley laughs.

WILEY

Not really. They recruit HEAVILY from out of the district and even outside of the state.

ALLIGOOD

That the gym?

She points to an even more modern, but smaller building next door to the main one.

WILEY

That is the Walter Day eSports Arena.

ALLIGOOD

Arena?

WILEY

The parents of this school are generous and, well, they have a lot to be generous with.

ALLIGOOD

Must be nice.

WILEY

It is pretty sweet. The school actually competes in that stuff a lot, so the parents are really into it. And they pay for it. The IRL football team is actually pretty new, only been around for just over 20 years.

ALLIGOOD

Never seen anything like it.

Wiley shrugs.

EXT. ZAKI HILL, ST. POCO - DAY

Zaki Hill is the tallest part of the island, the peak of an undersea mountain. A plateau tops the mountain and the St. Poco Royal Palace covers most of the plateau. Curling around the mountain is a two-lane road that leads to the palace. Anything on the mountain that isn't palace is covered with tropical rainforest.

At the base of the mountain, not too far from the road up is where the three tents of the U.S. squad are set up.

From the back, we can see two men walk into the last tent. One is dressed in military fatigues, the other in civilian clothes.

INT. U.S. ARMY TENT - CONTINUOUS

STAFF SGT. DONALD FRANKS walks into the tent, where Sgt. Franklin and privates Davis and Breck are napping or reading. Franks is a white man in his late 20s. He walks with a stiff, orderly gait and has no hair.

With him is JEREMY HIRSCHFELDER, an average white guy in his 20s.

FRANKS

Men, I want you to meet your new roommate, Jeremy Hirschfelder.

HIRSCHFELDER

Felder.

Franks holds a hand up to his ear.

FRANKS

Come again?

HIRSCHFELDER
My name... It's... Never mind.

Franks steps towards Sgt. Franklin.

FRANKS
This is Sgt. Franklin.

Franks and Hirschfelder shake hands. Hirschfelder looks back and forth from Franks to Franklin.

FRANKS (CONT'D)
No relation.

Franks points to Davis and Breck in turn.

FRANKS (CONT'D)
Privates Davis and Breck.

They give him a nod or a wave. He returns the nod.

FRANKS (CONT'D)
He's that reporter I told you
about. He'll be embedded with us
for the next week. Treat him well,
tell him your stories. Nothing
classified.

Nervous laughter.

HIRSCHFELDER
Hi, everyone, I'm Jeremy
Hirschfelder from the Atlanta Star-
Courier. I'm here to do a story on
your squad and its two local boys.

FRANKS
He has to sleep in here with you
guys.

Franks leaves. Hirschfelder moves towards the closest open
cot.

HIRSCHFELDER
Is this one mine?

The soldier he speaks to is Justin.

JUSTIN
No, that's Randall's.

HIRSCHFELDER
Who?

RANDALL (O.S.)

Mine.

Hirschfelder turns to see Randall standing before him.
Randall reaches out to shake hands.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Randall Kramer.

HIRSCHFELDER

Jeremy Hirschfelder.

They shake.

RANDALL

That's yours in the back.

He points towards an empty cot. Justin puts a bandage on a
small cut and then leaves them to find the trash.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

You the guy from Atlanta?

HIRSCHFELDER

That's me.

RANDALL

Why don't you get settled in and we
can get to know each other? Knock
out your basic questions?

Hirschfelder shrugs.

HIRSCHFELDER

Sure.

RANDALL

What are we going to be chatting
about?

HIRSCHFELDER

To start? Can we talk about your
mission. Here on St. Poco?

RANDALL

You should talk to Lt. Col.
McKinney.

HIRSCHFELDER

I did. He sent me to you.

Randall cocks an eyebrow.

RANDALL
Okay. He say why?

HIRSCHFELDER
I'm here doing a story about
Georgia boys on the front line.

RANDALL
You originally from Georgia?

HIRSCHFELDER
Yes.

RANDALL
Atlanta?

Hirschfelder laughs.

HIRSCHFELDER
No, I'm from a tiny town down
South.

RANDALL
Wait, which one?

HIRSCHFELDER
North Leonardo.

RANDALL
You're kidding me?

HIRSCHFELDER
Ha! Why would I kid you about that?

Randall chuckles.

RANDALL
I'm from SOUTH Leonardo.

HIRSCHFELDER
No way. I guess THAT's why I'm
here.

RANDALL
Uh-oh, that sounds bad.

HIRSCHFELDER
No, it's... It's a job... Seems my
editor saw that we were from the
same part of the state and thought
I'd be the best to interview you
and...

Hirschfelder looks down at Justin's name on his notepad.

HIRSCHFELDER (CONT'D)

Justin?

JUSTIN (O.S.)

Speak of the devil.

Justin walks back in.

RANDALL

My mom said never to take the devil's name in vain. I took her at her word.

HIRSCHFELDER

And?

RANDALL

It didn't help. The Devil came anyway.

Silence, as if to not arouse Him.

INT. PRESS BOX, BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Wooderson stares over the field as he speaks.

WOODERSON

The South Leonardo Gamecocks are not only the defending 3A state champs, they're seeking their 8TH title today.

The wall behind the South Leonardo bench is covered with state championship banners. The CAMERA pans across the South Leonardo bench, the players are all big and fit.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

In 20 years of competing at high school football, this is the farthest the school has ever been into the state tournament. Shoot, they only won their first-ever playoff game three years ago, when freshman Wiley Kramer led them to an upset of Cedar Grove.

The CAMERA pans down the Larson bench and it's clear that Larson has many smaller players and some of the players on the sideline look pretty out-of-shape.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

When the Lions have the ball, there are three key defenders you have to keep an eye on, all three made first team all-district and all-state this season. First up is defensive captain Parker Marks. He leads the state in tackles this year, not just at the 3A level, but at ANY level.

Marks stands in the defensive huddle, giving pointers to a YOUNGER PLAYER. Marks is 250 pounds of pure muscle.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Up front, you have defensive end Ben O'Bannion, a complete stud who has tallied double digit sacks and double digit tackles for loss in each of the past two seasons. He's already signed a letter of intent for USC. The kid is just a beast.

O'Bannion jumps up in down and stretches his neck. Standing over six-feet and weighing in at a svelte 300 pounds, he's surprisingly agile.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Last, but certainly not least is safety Rory Slater, the hardest hitter in the Peach State.

Slater is a good 240 and almost 6'. He pays rapt attention to Marks. Slater is always FOCUSED.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

On the other side of the ball, Larson's talent begins and ends with QB1, Wiley Kramer.

He chuckles.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

That's a little unfair. Starting tackle Joey Kerr is all-district, BUT he's all-district at tackle. Because of the suspensions, he'll be the starting center tonight. That leaves only one starting lineman for the Lions playing his regular position.

Kerr sits on the sideline grass, meditating.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

If Kerr can handle the switch,
Wiley MIGHT have enough weapons to
get this done. Especially if Jason
Floyd can shake off that fumble.

He laughs with excitement. The CAMERA goes back into the
press box and focuses on Wooderson, who talks directly into
the CAMERA.

WOODERSON

We are back from our TV timeout,
today's game is being broadcast on
the NBS Sports Western Southeast
Network.

A watermark on the screen is an outline of the network's
logo, which is simply the letters NBSSWSN.

WOODERSON (CONT'D)

This is gonna be one DOOZY of a
finish, folks! Gotta love that high
school football!

The CAMERA freezes on his HUGE smile, with lots and lots of
teeth.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 2nd & 5, Larson 7-Yard Line

The Lions break from the huddle and get set on the line. Next
to Wiley is running back RYAN ROPER, #32. Roper is 5'10' and
220 pounds of muscle.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Sophomore Ryan Roper in the
backfield with Wiley Kramer...

Kerr snaps the ball cleanly. O'Bannion is through the line
untouched. He breezes right past guard TEMPLE PLUMMER, #68,
who is 5'10" and 265.

Wiley tosses the ball to Roper, who sees O'Bannion coming at
him and he bounces outside the other tackle. Wiley tries to
block O'Bannion and gets knocked to the ground.

Roper gets three yards past the line when Parks, Slater and a
couple of other Gamecocks converge on him.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Temple Plummer has his hands full
against Ben O'Bannion and Co.

(MORE)

WOODERSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)
 today. He's been called for holding
 twice and has had trouble even
 slowing Big Ben down. He seemed to
 completely whiff on that one. Not
 gonna have enough time to get down
 the field at this rate.

There is 3:48 left in the game.

INT. CONFERENCE ROOM, LARSON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Sharon Alligood sits at one end of the conference table, with
 Ali Berke, Shawn Pickford and Principal Christine Faulkner
 sitting at the other.

ALLIGOOD
 On behalf of everyone at NBS and
 Sports Central, thank you for
 having me here.

FAULKNER
 It's my job to serve not only my
 students, but the parents and
 broader community that sends those
 students to our school. Thank you
 for giving us a chance to clear the
 air.

ALLIGOOD
 Just doing my job.

FAULKNER
 Don't downplay it. You do important
 work.

ALLIGOOD
 Thank you.

Beat.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)
 As you know, some of the questions
 I'm going to ask are... uh...
 somewhat... sensitive.

Faulkner raises an eyebrow.

FAULKNER
 Of course.

Alligood flips the pages in her notes.

ALLIGOOD

I don't need to go over the...
uh... rather... GORY details. I've
seen the police reports and...
photos. And I've talked to
witnesses.

FAULKNER

Then you know as much as we do...

She looks back and forth from Berke and Pickford, each of
whom nods eagerly.

ALLIGOOD

I'm not a crime reporter. I'm less
interested in the past and more
interested in the future of the
team... the school... the
players... the coaches...

She nods towards Berke.

FAULKNER

Do you have a question?

ALLIGOOD

Of course, I see you've brought in
your replacements for Bruno and his
assistants?

FAULKNER

Obviously.

ALLIGOOD

And you've replaced them with only
these two?

Berke's face sours at the question.

FAULKNER

For the one remaining game in the
season? Yes.

ALLIGOOD

It's a pretty tough game.

FAULKNER

That is definitely NOT a question.

ALLIGOOD

What makes these two prepared to
coach a 3A state championship game?

Faulkner is exasperated. She takes a deep breath.

FAULKNER

I take great pride in hiring ONLY the best of the best here at Larson.

ALLIGOOD

Then how do you explain Bruno?

FAULKNER

I didn't hire him. He was already on board when I arrived and his contract was rock-solid. There was no means of firing him before the... uh... allegations.

ALLIGOOD

You mean the sexual assault allegations?

FAULKNER

We did the right thing and we fired every one involved. As soon as we learned of the allegations.

ALLIGOOD

And what about their replacements?

FAULKNER

Because of the nature of the allegations, we felt it best to put a woman in charge of the team. We also wanted someone familiar with the school and its students, so we only chose current staff: Ms. Ali Berke, who will serve as head coach, and Mr. Shawn Pickford, who will serve as her assistant.

ALLIGOOD

Ms. Berke, what experiences do you have that you think give you the knowledge and expertise to coach a football team?

BERKE

Master's in sports psychology from Duke. National champion basketball player. First round WNBA draft pick. Five years in the league before an injury. Two-time all-WNBA. The injury came after the Gold Medal in the 2012 Olympics. Spent one year as an assistant at Duke.

(MORE)

BERKE (CONT'D)

This is my seventh year at Larson,
where my girls have won seven
consecutive district titles and two
state championships, including
2019. Any questions?

There are none.

CUT TO:

Pickford sweats as he answers a question.

PICKFORD

I have a certificate from the Ken
Tremendous School of Sports
Analysis.

ALLIGOOD

Is that a real thing?

PICKFORD

Uh... yes, I do believe it is.

ALLIGOOD

Is it accredited?

PICKFORD

Probably. But I do not know what
that word means.

Laughter.

ALLIGOOD

Is it a real school with real
credits or are they ripping off
students?

PICKFORD

Well, I don't really appreciate the
insinuation. Such a question
insults an entire institution, one
that has educated thousands of
young men and women. In these
turbulent times--

ALLIGOOD

Got it.

She starts scribbling on her notebook.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

Not accredited.

Beat.

PICKFORD

Hey!

Alligood grins, but it's light-hearted.

EXT. ZAKI HILL - DAY

The full squad lead Hirschfelder through safe terrain. The jungle at the base of Zaki Hill is well outside the combat zone.

HIRSCHFELDER

And it's safe out here? Like SAFE safe?

Chuckles from the nearby soldiers.

SGT. FRANKLIN

Everybody's safe when I'm around.

No laughter.

SGT. ROOSEVELT is a Black man in his mid-20s. He's a little overweight, but moves quickly, more athletic than his appearance. He shakes Hirschfelder's hand.

SGT. ROOSEVELT

Sgt. Roosevelt.

HIRSCHFELDER

Jeremy Hirschfelder.

ROOSEVELT

Yes, I AM related, very distantly, to THOSE Roosevelts. I never met anyone from that part of the family tree because it's very, very distant...

He laughs.

ROOSEVELT (CONT'D)

Franklin here was named after NEITHER Roosevelt or Benjamin. But he's a good soldier.

Franklin walks ahead with no comment. Hirschfelder turns to JAKE JENNER, a white man in his early 20s, very out of place in a war zone, looks and acts more like he belongs in a country club.

HIRSCHFELDER

What about you?

JENNER

Jake Jenner. I went to Yale.

Hirschfelder looks at him funny. He misheard something.

HIRSCHFELDER

Like... prison?

Everyone that isn't a sergeant laughs.

JENNER

No, fucker, the University.

More laughter.

JENNER (CONT'D)

I mean I smoked too much weed and went to too many silent discos till 4 a.m. and flunked out and got drafted, but I got in and well, none of y'all did, right?

He pointedly looks at each of them. They demure, as they've been through this song and dance routine before.

JENNER (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

Varied scoffery.

JOHN GORDON slaps Jenner on the back. Gordon is a Black man in his early 20s. He hasn't quite put on the weight of his fellow soldiers and is shorter than most.

GORDON

You proved your point, Magna Cum Loudly.

Like one of the soldiers is literally rolling in the aisle.

GORDON (CONT'D)

I am a DISTANT relative of that pitcher guy that Stephen King wrote about.

HIRSCHFELDER

TOM Gordon?

Gordon nods.

JUSTIN

Oh! Is that the one with the little girl lost in the woods?

HIRSCHFELDER
That WAS scary.

GORDON
Right? That's like my mama's
cousin's uncle's nephew or
something.

Hirschfelder chuckles. He walks up to the next soldier, BILLY BUTTERMAKER. Buttermaker is a thick, farm-bred kinda guy in his early 20s. He talks in a DEEP Southern accent.

BUTTERMAKER
They call me Billy Buttermaker from
Buford, Texas.

The other soldiers laugh. Hirschfelder is shocked, but doesn't say anything.

BUTTERMAKER (CONT'D)
Nah, kidding. Dude, I'm from L.A.

Now he sounds dazed AND confused.

HIRSCHFELDER
Really?

Finally, Buttermaker speaks in his real voice. He has a mild accent.

BUTTERMAKER
Fuck, no! I grew up in Kansas.

Laughter.

FRANKLIN
Alright, we got you the lay of the
land Hirschfelder. Let's get you
back inside before the shooting
starts.

Hirschfelder is shocked.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Kidding. I think.

Hirschfelder doesn't feel any better.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Besides Franks has prepared a press-
friendly briefing. So you know what
all of this is about.

Hirschfelder finally gets excited.

INT. U.S. ARMY BRIEFING TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Franks stands at the front of the tent. All the troops are present. Hirschfelder sits in the back.

FRANKS

This will be a limited briefing while Hirschfelder is here. Then he will be excused while we go over the details. Hirschfelder, nothing you hear or see can be posted on any website or social media until AFTER you return to the states. Do you confirm that you understand this stipulation?

HIRSCHFELDER

Of course.

FRANKS

Good.

He pulls down a map of St. Poco.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

Our first priority is recon patrols of this mountain and the buildings at the top. Once we have gained sufficient data, we will decide on the next step. Hirschfelder, this process is on-going and we've already done most of the recon. The president will make the final decision, as this mission is diplomatically sensitive.

Hirschfelder nods. The troops are mostly bored. They know this stuff already.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

Hirschfelder, can you please step outside?

Franks nods towards Buttermaker.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

Make sure we have full security, Buttermaker.

BUTTERMAKER

Yes, sir.

Buttermaker escorts Hirschfelder outside. Franks pulls a pointer from his pocket and extends it.

FRANKS

We only have a few more recon patrols, just to confirm a few more details. The president has already made his decision, barring any new data. Our job is to take the Royal Palace here.

He loudly hits the map with the pointer.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

So we can obtain the high ground, looking down on the capital, Pearl City, so we can free the proud people of St. Poco. On direct orders from the President of the United States of America.

RANDALL

Sounds easy enough.

Murmurs of assent.

FRANKS

One hitch in the giddy-up is the fact that the Royal Palace is NOT empty.

He smacks the pointer on a large building at the center of an elevated plateau.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

The enemy is headquartered in the Royal Palace at the top of Zaki Hill. And we have to take it.

No one is excited at the prospect.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

We WILL be receiving reinforcements before we go in.

Justin is relieved, the others not so much.

INT. MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

The restaurant is closed and locked up, but Alligood conducts a group interview around some pushed-together tables.

Working tonight are Mickey, Sasha, Julie, Chick and BEVERLY DEUTCH, a white woman about 20 in age, red hair, average size. Wiley sits next to Beverly and they hold hands.

ALLIGOOD

Thank you all for sitting down with me.

MICKEY

It's not every day we get a big city reporter in our humble little town.

She's half sarcastic, half serious.

ALLIGOOD

I understand you lost both your parents?

No one answers.

Alligood frowns. Did she get that wrong?

WILEY

My mother, Zoey, is deceased. She died from COVID. Right at the very beginning.

Alligood gives him a sympathetic look.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Richard Kramer, who I do NOT claim as my father, is currently in federal prison and I expect he'll be getting out around the time I'm eligible for the NFL Hall of Fame, at a minimum.

Scattered laughs.

MICKEY

And that's all we're going to say about our parents, right?

Wiley nods wearily.

ALLIGOOD

And what about your brother, Randall? You guys are twins?

WILEY

Yes, but we are not identical.

MICKEY
They couldn't be more different.

ALLIGOOD
How so?

MICKEY
You'd never see this one off to war. And I was surprised that the little one...

Alligood is puzzled.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Randall. I was surprised Randall was ever a football player.

WILEY
He had the aggressiveness, if not the size.

ALLIGOOD
What did he play?

WILEY
He was a linebacker. A SAVAGE tackler. Like dad.

Mickey shoots him an angry look.

WILEY (CONT'D)
Randall wasn't like Richard. Richard never did anything to help anyone. Randall on the other hand--

MICKEY
What about Sammy?

Wiley bites his lip. But he can't hold back.

WILEY
That was an accident. He didn't mean to--

MICKEY
You know a lot less than you think you do.

Wiley is getting angry.

WILEY
Randall's fucked up, but dad was a tyrant. I don't--

MICKEY

Hey!

Loud enough to startle several people before everyone turns to look at her.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

We are NOT talking about this here.
In front of a reporter. Shut it
down.

They do. No one even considers defying Mickey.

Alligood turns off her tape recorder and awkwardly fiddles with the buttons.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 3rd & 2, Larson 10-Yard Line

Everyone is set. To Wiley's left is Roper.

WILEY

Hut. Hut!

Kerr snaps the ball cleanly. Wiley immediately hands off to Roper who bolts towards the line.

Marks blitzes and he and O'Bannion overwhelm Plummer. They push him back and he bumps into Roper. Roper bounces outside, but O'Bannion grabs him and pulls him down. No gain.

Wiley calls time out and the REFEREE blows the whistle. Plummer makes a beeline to Wiley. He's out of breath.

PLUMMER

These guys are just bigger and
stronger than me. I need some help.

WILEY

Stick with it man, it's only a few
more minutes.

Plummer takes a deep breath and joins the huddle.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

There is time left on the clock,
but the Larson Lions are running
short on downs. With 3 and a half
minutes left, it's unlikely Larson
will get another shot at the ball
if they don't get this first down.

3:34 is left on the clock.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

In the press box, Wooderson recaps the game up to this point.

WOODERSON

Let's recap the game while we have this TV timeout. The Gamecocks struck first, early in the game.

While Wooderson recaps the game, show a series of images:

-The opening kickoff, the Lions receiving.

WOODERSON (CONT'D)

Coach Newhouse had his team really prepared for today's game. They came out hot.

-QB GREG BULLOCK, #9, hits TE JEFFREY LEAK, #88, on a three-yard touchdown pass.

SUPER: 7-0

WOODERSON (V.O.)

They scored twice in the first 5 minutes of the game, although they missed the second extra point.

-RB RIDGE WHITEWOOD, #30, scores from 3 yards out. A crushing block from an SLG LINEMAN opens the hole for Whitewood.

SUPER: 13-0

WOODERSON (V.O.)

An errant pass from Greg Bullock was returned for six as the Lions got on the board early in the second half.

-A LIONS CORNERBACK intercepts a pass at the South Leonardo 27-yard line and takes it back for a score.

SUPER: 13-6

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Early on, Larson had little success with a depleted offense.

(MORE)

WOODERSON (V.O.) (CONT'D)

They played from the shotgun, used an extra tight end, play fakes, short passes and while they had some success, it didn't lead to many points.

-RB Roper comes up just short on a 4th and 1 play.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

That lack of productivity helped fuel the Gamecocks on another scoring drive.

-Bullock connects with WR BRANDON ENGELBERG, #82, for a 14-yard touchdown.

SUPER: 20-6

WOODERSON

Frustrated at their lack of offense on the first half, the Lions dug deep in their bag of tricks in the second.

-Floyd takes a reverse 23 yards for a touchdown.

WOODERSON (CONT'D)

The Gamecocks did NOT expect the trickeration and it cost them.

SUPER: 20-14

WOODERSON (V.O.)

After an exchange of time-gobbling, but fruitless drives, Jason Floyd struck again.

-South Leonardo punts on 4th and 13. Floyd receives the ball at his own 31. He runs towards the right and gets hit by one DEFENDER, but the Gamecock didn't wrap him up and Floyd bounces free and reverses course. He goes backwards for a couple of yards, but he gets two blocks and he's gone. He scurries past all of the defenders.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

He's only got the punter to beat...

Floyd does a stutter step that makes the PUNTER trip over his own feet. Floyd walks into the end zone.

SUPER: 20-20

WOODERSON (V.O.)

After the Lions made their second 2-point conversion of the day, SLG went on a 12-play drive that ate up half the fourth quarter and ended with a score.

-Bullock connects with Leak again, this time for a 13-yard touchdown.

SUPER: 26-20

Back in the press box, Wooderson talks directly to the CAMERA.

WOODERSON

With the Gamecocks ALSO failing on their 2-point conversion, the Lions can win with a touchdown and ANY kind of conversion. This is as exciting a 3A state championship as I've seen in years. With 3:34 left in the game, this is gonna be a barnburner, for sure!

Big old grin.

INT. U.S. ARMY TENT, ST. POCO - NIGHT

The soldiers and Hirschfelder loudly play Crazy Eights in the center of the room. Except Randall, who eyes his phone nervously.

The game erupts into a loud but friendly argument. Randall frowns at them as he gets up and walks outside. Things are much quieter and he has privacy.

He dials Sasha. It rings once... twice... three times.

SASHA (O.S.)

(sleepy)

Hello...

RANDALL

Hey, babe. You awake?

Silence.

SASHA (O.S.)

Do you know what time it is here?

RANDALL
(sheepish)
Nah, I'm not that good at math, so--

SASHA (O.S.)
Don't worry about it, I'm up.

Her voice softens.

SASHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
How are you?

He takes a deep breath.

RANDALL
Lonely.

SASHA (O.S.)
Then why don't you call more?

RANDALL
I--

SASHA (O.S.)
Hell, JUSTIN calls me more than you
do. I ask him about you every time.
He always covers for you.

Randall frowns.

SASHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why do you make him lie?

He doesn't answer.

SASHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Why are you lying to me?

RANDALL
What are you--

SASHA (O.S.)
Stop. I found out. They sent
letters.

RANDALL
I--

SASHA (O.S.)
You didn't have to go.

Silence.

SASHA (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Why would you want to leave me?

He hesitates.

RANDALL
 I can't talk about it.

She sighs.

SASHA (O.S.)
 You ever gonna get past whatever
 this is?

RANDALL
 I don't know. Some day...

Silence.

SASHA (O.S.)
 Life is short, Justin, you gotta
 grab it while you can you can.

He grips the phone tightly, his knuckles go white.

RANDALL
 What if I can't?

SASHA (O.S.)
 You weren't there. This isn't about
 you. Literally all you have to do
 is not be a dick.

RANDALL
 What if I can't?

He hangs up.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
 What if I WAS there?

INT. CITY HALL, SOUTH LEONARDO - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

The meeting room at City Hall seats about 200 and it is
 packed. Standing room only.

Name placards sit in front of each of the panelists on the
 dais. The panel includes MAYOR VERÓNICA IGLESIAS, a Mexican-
 American woman in her 40s; Principal Faulkner, Berke,
 Pickford and School Board Chair MARISSA DUNN, a white woman
 in her 50s. Dunn stands at the podium. The crowd is riled up.

DUNN

Okay, okay, let's calm down and let the Mayor speak. I understand she has another engagement...

Rumbles and grumbles.

DUNN (CONT'D)

But she has time to make a statement and... answer a few questions?

Dunn looks to the Mayor, who nods in approval.

DUNN (CONT'D)

Thank you for your generosity at this town hall meeting. That is being livecast on cityofsouthleonardo.comgov or whatever...

She pauses and looks questioningly at the mayor. The mayor nods.

DUNN (CONT'D)

Okay, everyone, welcome Mayor Verónica Iglesias.

A few scattered claps.

IGLESIAS

I know how busy I am, so I can only imagine how busy the rest of you are. I won't waste your time, because time is money.

Alligood asks the first question. Her cameraman films the event.

ALLIGOOD

Ms. Mayor, could you answer my previous inquiries as to where you were on the night of January 15 of last year?

Like a punch to the mayor's face.

IGLESIAS

I... uh... apologies, but that is VERY off topic for THIS meeting and we really shouldn't waste anyone's time with a non-issue. If you'll submit your questions, IN WRITING--

ALLIGOOD
I already DID submit my questions,
in writing. Twice.

Iglesias forces a smile.

IGLESIAS
Good. You should expect the answers
any day now.

ALLIGOOD
Why don't--

IGLESIAS
Next question.

Hands go up around the room. The audience's curiosity has
been aroused.

Iglesias signals her AIDE, who is a white woman with blonde
hair in her early 20s.

The aide waits a few seconds and then approaches the stage
with a phone in her hand. The aide leans in and speaks into
Iglesias' ear where everyone can hear.

AIDE
Apologies, but you have an
emergency call. Code red.

The Mayor gives an Oscar-winning fake look of concern.

IGLESIAS
I'm sorry folks, but my aide tells
me I have a top level emergency to
deal with. I'm sorry I'll have to
leave early. But I was so glad that
I had this opportunity to talk to
you today.

Iglesias doesn't even try to hide her contempt for them. She
heads towards the exit, pulling Faulkner with her. The aide
stays behind.

DUNN
Let's once again go over the
procedure for asking questions. If
you look towards..

As they head outside, Iglesias rages.

IGLESIAS
Un-fucking-believable.

Her mic is still hot and everyone inside hears Iglesias' epithet over the speakers. They hear EVERYTHING she says.

Iglesias drops Faulkner's arm and spins to face the principal. Iglesias is furious.

IGLESIAS (CONT'D)
What the fuck was that?

FAULKNER
Your--

IGLESIAS
Fucking bullshit fiasco! You'd better get ahold of this shit before the end of the year. It had BETTER not bleed into election season. You understand?

Her aide rushes outside, frantic.

AIDE
Ma'am, your mic is still hot!

Iglesias rips the mic from her chest and throws it to the ground. She stomps on it for effect.

IGLESIAS
Get this fucking thing...

She turns and walks away.

CUT TO:

Faulkner is back and seated. Alligood has the first question for the principal:

ALLIGOOD
How well do you think you've handled this scandal? As you can see, not everyone is happy.

An understatement, the crowd is roiling with anger.

FAULKNER
Sharon, I REALLY don't appreciate the fact that you are bringing your... your WITCH HUNT to my meeting.

The crowd expresses disapproval LOUDLY. Faulkner throws her hands up in exasperation.

FAULKNER (CONT'D)
Next question!

A series of images:

-A WHITE WOMAN asks:

WHITE WOMAN
How are we gonna pay for this? With
the school budget running over?
Huh?

-A BLACK WOMAN says:

BLACK WOMAN
...we've got these unqualified
people coaching our kids we're
missing most of our big players.
What chance do we have of not being
embarrassed on Friday night?

Nods and murmurs of assent.

FAULKNER
The coaches assure me that we have
the players and plans to win the
game.

-A WHITE MAN, from the back of the room:

WHITE MAN
Bullshit!

The room erupts in shouts. Faulkner starts banging a gavel on
the table.

FAULKNER
Get the kids out of here! This has
become an unsafe space.

WHITE MAN
'Bout time!

FAULKNER
Get them out!

She gestures to the lone SECURITY GUARD, an older Black man.
He's never had to do this before and she has to motion to him
several times before he awkwardly starts hurrying the
children out of the room.

-An OLDER WHITE WOMAN stands at the mic:

OLDER WHITE WOMAN

Really, this is YOUR fault. You're wasting OUR taxpayer dollars and I, for one...

-A WHITE MAN with red, raging cheeks:

WHITE MAN

You have no authority... you are tyrants... coercion is not consent!

-ANOTHER WHITE MAN, pasty and pudgy:

ANOTHER WHITE MAN

...your children and your children's children will be subjugated. Hope you're a happy, you Nazi!

-YET ANOTHER WHITE MAN, dressed in sports gear:

Y.A.W.M.

This is conscientious stupidity. These are our children. And when you don't give them a chance to win, you stunt the team's growth and the individual players' growth. I would expect you not to know this, being a coach of WOMEN'S sports..

-A KAREN, wearing sunglasses and a baseball cap:

KAREN

That other gentleman was right. These are our kids. And taking the coach of the basketball team away before a potential championship season really is malpractice. I say we fire the principal and move Berke back to basketball, so my daughter gets the coaching she needs before college. I've paid this school...

It never ends.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 4th & 2, Larson 10-Yard Line

Wiley breaks the huddle and the team gets set in the shotgun.

WILEY

Set...

Floyd and Roper switch places, with Roper lining up at WR.

Wiley lifts his foot off the ground and sets it back down. The other wide receiver, MARK HOUSTON, #80, shifts and moves to a RB spot opposite from Floyd. South Leonardo looks a little confused, but they quickly get set.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Larson pulling out the trick
formation... doesn't look like
South Leonardo is biting...

Kerr snaps the ball. Floyd circles behind Wiley into the flat, while Houston stands still for a count of one.

Wiley fakes a throw to Floyd and several defenders break towards that direction. Wiley holds the ball up and expertly executes the Statue of Liberty exchange with Houston who goes the opposite way from Floyd.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

No! It's a Statue of Liberty
play... Floyd has one man to beat
for the first--

O'Bannion seems to have an angle on Houston that would drop him for a loss. Houston jukes, but O'Bannion doesn't bite.

Instead, Plummer hits O'Bannion (legally) from the blind side and levels the defensive end. Houston squirts between the prostate O'Bannion and Marks for a two yard gain.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

OH MY! Plummer lays the block of
the year on O'Bannion! First down
Lions! First down Lions!

Floyd pops up and waves first down.

As everybody heads back towards the huddle, Wiley runs to greet Plummer.

WILEY

That's how you do it!

He slaps him on the back.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Give me three more minutes and I'll
give you a state championship.

Plummer hustles back to the huddle, where he is greeted by a helmet slap from Floyd.

WILEY (CONT'D)
 Alright, now we're cooking with
 fire.

3:13 left in the game.

INT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Wiley and Floyd walk through the Larson hallway and into the cafeteria. Sitting at a table are Sapolu, Olson and Finnegan. Once they're seated, Wiley speaks up.

WILEY
 We came here today...

SAPOLU
 Are we in church? I didn't bring
 any cash.

Laughter.

WILEY
 Cute. We came here to ask you to
 join us on the football team.

Laughter and not the supportive kind.

WILEY (CONT'D)
 I'm serious. After... what
 happened... we're short-handed.

OLSON
 We didn't have anything to do with
 THAT.

WILEY
 Neither did we. Neither did the
 rest of the team. They worked hard
 to get here and shouldn't lose out
 because of what some other scumbags
 did.

Silence.

WILEY (CONT'D)
 C'mon, you guys played when we were
 younger.

OLSON
(smiling)
We DID play for hours and hours.

SAPOLU
That was before they started
hitting people really, really hard.

FINNEGAN
Yeah, I played pee wee for one day.
Then I got hit in the chest by this
dude named Nate Gaines and I was
winded. I walked in the next day,
handed them my helmet and told them
my mom said I had to quit.

FLOYD
Did she?

FINNEGAN
She didn't even know I was playing
in the first place.

Laughter.

OLSON
It's just for one game?

WILEY
Yep.

FINNEGAN
We win, we get a ring?

Wiley nods.

FLOYD
Yep.

SAPOLU
And one of those varsity jackets?

WILEY
You can keep it for lifetime.

SAPOLU
Nice, I'm going to wear it to class
every day when I get to college!

FINNEGAN
Man, that's a good idea.

Wiley and Floyd exchange a look of WTF?

WILEY
C'mon, man?

Beat.

WILEY (CONT'D)
Nerd Squad?

Some excitement and growing energy starts to bubble up.

FLOYD
Nerd Squad with a damned state
championship trophy? For life?

SAPOLU
Was it over when Bin Laden blew up
the pyramids?

Floyd shoots a quizzical look at Wiley.

FLOYD
(under his breath)
The pyramids?

WILEY
Forget it, he's rolling.

SAPOLU
A big fat hell naw. Let's go get
these gizmos.

FLOYD
Is that a bad thing? A 'gizmo'?

Sapolu shrugs.

SAPOLU
(laughing)
Who cares man!

Wiley puts his hand in the middle of the circle and looks
around expectantly.

Everybody's in. They put their hands on top of Wiley's.

Sammy Chen walks in and stops awkwardly when he sees all of
them.

SAMMY
Hey, there... oddly specific group
of my friends meeting secretly
without me.

Beat.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Is this an intervention?

WILEY
Hey, Sammy.

SAMMY
Wiley.

SAPOLU
Dude, we're all going to join the
football team!

FINNEGAN
We'll get state championship rings
when we win!

Sammy turns and walks out of the room, leaving everyone in shock.

EXT. ZAKI HILL - DAY

Sgt. Franklin leads the squad on recon patrol. He speaks to Roosevelt.

FRANKLIN
Per Franks, we shouldn't really be
engaging on this patrol. We just
need to pay attention to any troops
or armed locals in the area.

Roosevelt nods and turns to walk away.

FRANKLIN (CONT'D)
Be--

Franklin steps on a mine and it instantly explodes.

Once the smoke clears, Randall is the first to come into focus.

RANDALL
I'm hit. It's not that bad.

He pulls a small piece of shrapnel out of his cheek. It starts to bleed and he puts pressure on it.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
What the hell was that?

ROOSEVELT
Land mine.

RANDALL
I thought they were illegal under
international law?

JENNER
You think these bastards care about
international law?

JUSTIN
Is everybody okay?

RANDALL.
Not the fucking Sarge.

He points to the remains of Sgt. Franklin, which are in
several pieces.

DAVIS
Fuck!

BRECK
Jesus.

Breck turns and vomits.

GORDON
I'm hit.

Gordon looks down at the piece of shrapnel sticking out of
his thigh. Justin comes over and takes a look.

JUSTIN
It's no big deal. Let's get you
back to camp. LEAVE it in, you
don't want to start bleeding out.

RANDALL
What about Franklin?

Roosevelt looks towards the corpse.

ROOSEVELT
We'll have to come back for him.
Let's make sure THESE wounds aren't
worse.

Each of the soldiers casts a glance towards what's left of
Franklin as they head back towards camp.

EXT. TANNER BRUMLEY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

From the outside, the CAMERA focuses on the front door of TANNER BRUMLEY's house. For the rest of this sequence, which has no dialog, we are voyeurs, not invited inside. For this series of images, the camera is sped up.

-The front door opens and Tanner walks down the driveway to get the newspaper. Tanner is a white man in his early 20s. He's fit and looks like the type of guy would be in a fraternity.

-Tanner and another FRAT BOY leave the house. There is no other activity for awhile until Tanner backs a truck up to the front door. He hops out and runs inside. Seconds later he comes back out with four more FRAT BOYS. They unload three kegs of beer from the truck and bring them inside.

-Two frat boys put up a sign that says "Welcome Back, Charlie!"

-RENEE MONSOUR, is an attractive blonde woman, 21. Average size. She walks inside.

-A group of FOOTBALL PLAYERS go inside.

-More and more PARTY-GOERS arrive.

-People come and go throughout the night.

-Several Frat Boys bring the empty kegs out the front door and load them onto a truck.

-More comings and goings.

-The Frat Boys return with more kegs.

-More people arrive.

-Two POLICE OFFICERS arrive in a squad car. A few people run from the house in various directions. The cops knock on the door. Tyler Brumley comes outside and talks to the police. He's all smiles and nods. He hands them an envelope. The officer looks inside the envelope, smiles and they leave.

-It's later and people start to leave the party. Early on, it's mostly women who leave.

-Even later, more women leave/have left. At this point are there any women other than Renee still inside?

-For a while, there is no activity OUTSIDE the house. It's late, the neighbors are all asleep. The music is off and the party has died down.

-A car pulls up and parks across the street from the house. Justin sits inside. He re-reads a text from Renee on his phone: "Pick me up @Tanner's house. Pls. Quick. Wait outside. #911."

He types "here," hits send and waits.

-Justin looks up and sees Randall leave the house. Randall is sweaty, disheveled, distracted. He runs away. Justin watches him, baffled.

-Renee comes running out of the house. She's crying. Her make-up is smeared. Her clothes are torn in several places. Bruises bloom on the legs peaking from beneath her skirt.

She gets into the car and slams the door. She stops crying and looks up at Justin.

RENEE

Take me to the police station.

Justin doesn't ask any questions. He drives.

-Tanner and a dozen other football players come out of the house, laughing and rough-horsing. Tanner locks the door with a sweaty smile and they walk out of the shot.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, Larson 12-Yard Line

Kerr gets off another clean snap. Wiley hands the ball to Roper who heads straight for the sideline. Houston cuts behind him, Roper pitches the ball and the reverse is on.

The tackle on that side of the field, TYLER MCREYNOLDS, completely whiffs on an attempt to block O'Bannion. McReynolds wears #74 and he's only about 245 and 5'10".

Houston skirts around the edge, past O'Bannion, but the defensive tackle grabs ahold of enough of Houston's foot to make him stumble and fall for a three-yard gain.

Wiley pats McReynolds on the back.

WILEY

C'mon, man, you got this.

McReynolds is out of breath and doesn't reply.

WILEY (CONT'D)

You doing okay?

MCREYNOLDS

Nah, man. I hate playing tackle.
I'm a guard. I'm small. This sucks.

Wiley grabs him by the shoulders and goes helmet-to-helmet.

WILEY

Dude, what is wrong with you? There are minutes left in a state championship game and you're giving up?

MCREYNOLDS

I'm not giv--

WILEY

Keep that nonsense out of my huddle. Shut it up or go sit on the bench.

Wiley turns and jogs to the huddle. McReynolds plods back.

There is 2:59 left in the game.

EXT. SOUTH LEONARDO HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Sharon Alligood stands outside South Leonardo High School. It's a much more utilitarian cinderblock school three times the size of Larson.

Alligood stands on the sidewalk in front of the school, holding a microphone. She talks to the camera, held by a CAMERAWOMAN.

ALLIGOOD

Without question, Adam Newhouse is one of the most controversial coaches in the southeastern United States. The once-rising star and local boy done good had risen to the head coach position at South Leonardo State University, often to smaller crowds than South Leonardo High School, who plays on the same field.

The screen switches to stock footage of Newhouse stalking up and down the sidelines as South Leonardo State University (SLSU) scores a touchdown.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

While coaching SLSU, Newhouse won three conference championships, but the problems were OFF the field. Widespread reports of underage drinking, ignoring failed drug tests, offering bounties for injuring key players on the other teams and numerous other allegations. While nothing personally stuck to Newhouse, SLSU decided the scandals were too much and he was fired.

Show the press conference of SLSU SCHOOL OFFICIALS announcing the firing. The room is packed and flashbulbs go off.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

Rumors have continued since Newhouse took the South Leonardo High School gig...

Show Newhouse coaching the Gamecocks from the sideline. He's very animated and angry at the REFEREE.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

With several former players claiming that Newhouse offered bounties to HIGH SCHOOL PLAYERS.

Show a O'Bannion getting a particularly brutal hit on an opposing QUARTERBACK. The signal caller writhes in pain while O'Bannion and Marks celebrate.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

But he hasn't lost a game in two years and the parents LOVE him. School boosters are protecting him like HE'S their star player.

Show Slater and Marks dumping Gatorade on Newhouse.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

A lawsuit has been filed against the school, seeking to have Newhouse fired for abusing players. More on that as it develops.

EXT./INT. U.S. ARMY TENT, ST. POCO - NIGHT

Randall walks around outside the tent, exaggeratedly trying to find a signal. Breck and Davis walk by him and give him a nod as they go inside.

Hirschfelder steps outside as Randall puts his phone away. He lights up a cigarette.

HIRSCHFELDER
What you up to?

RANDALL
Trying to get in touch with the
wife and family.

HIRSCHFELDER
I'm jealous.

Randall cocks an eyebrow.

HIRSCHFELDER (CONT'D)
They took away my phone while I'm
here.

Randall nods.

Justin comes to the door of the tent, but he overhears them talking and doesn't come outside. He stays to listen.

RANDALL
You aren't missing anything. I
never get a signal on this damned
island.

Justin frowns. He pulls out his phone and checks it.

Four bars.

Justin casts one last glance at Randall and goes back inside.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Just figured I'd give it another
shot.

Beat.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Nothing.

Hirschfelder writes notes in his pad.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 2nd & 7, Larson 15-Yard Line

In the press box, Wooderson talks directly to the CAMERA.

WOODERSON

We have another TV time out. I would be remiss today if I didn't talk about the primary reason this game is so tight. After a sexual assault scandal, Larson fired their coaching staff and expelled eight starters. Another quit the team to join the U.S. Army. Undoubtedly, this has affected them today.

Montage of standard in-uniform football player introductions in a generic studio. Each player appears alone and stands still and solemn as they speak to the camera. This is intercut with images of various parts of one single play.

J.J. Douglas in the studio.

DOUGLAS

I'm J.J. Douglas and I made a choice to do the wrong thing and anything that happens to me because of my actions is my fault and the fault of my teammates.

CUT TO:

Juston Niles in the studio.

NILES

I'm Juston Niles and I did the wrong thing.

CUT TO:

Niles snaps the ball perfectly to Wiley, who is under center. Wiley hands the ball off to O'Donnell who goes around the end of the line.

CUT TO:

Tanner Brumley in the studio.

BRUMLEY

I'm Tanner Brumley and anything that happens to me because of my actions is my fault.

CUT TO:

O'Bannion breaks through the line, but Nesbit hits him and levels him. O'Bannion falls backward.

CUT TO:

Austin Nesbit in the studio.

NESBIT
I'm Austin Nesbit and it's my
fault.

CUT TO:

Nesbitt takes on two smaller South Leonard DEFENDERS and pushes both of them back. O'Donnell crosses the South Leonardo 40 yard line.

CUT TO:

Jonathan Gordon in the studio.

GORDON
I'm Jonathan Gordon and it's my
fault.

CUT TO:

At the South Leonardo 30-yard line, Gordon gets a huge block to give O'Donnell a lane to the end zone.

CUT TO:

Autrey Brittain in the studio.

BRITTAIN
I'm Autrey Brittain and I made a
choice.

CUT TO:

Slater comes across the field. He's got the angle on O'Donnell. But out of nowhere, Brittain comes across to level Slater.

CUT TO:

Cole O'Donnell in the studio.

O'DONNELL
I'm Cole O'Donnell and it's my
fault.

CUT TO:

O'Donnell cruises into the end zone for a touchdown.

CUT TO:

Randall Kramer in the studio.

RANDALL
I'm Randall Kramer and I did it.

CUT TO:

Justin Monsour in the studio.

JUSTIN
I'm Justin Monsour and I failed to
protect my sister.

CUT TO:

COACH NICKY BRUNO in the studio. He wears an immaculate
tailored suit and has his hair slicked back.

BRUNO
I'm Head Coach Nicky Bruno and you
ain't stickin' NONE of this crap on
me...

He turns and walks out of the studio.

CUT TO:

Freeze on the team at the line BEFORE the play with the
suspended players.

Fade into the real play, with the suspended players
dissolving into the replacements, who are noticeably smaller.
Bruno dissolves into Berke.

Wiley gets set in the shotgun. Kerr snaps the ball, but it's
a bit wobbly.

There is no fullback, he's been replaced by a second tight
end.

Roper runs out into the flat. Wiley is going to pass without
O'Donnell in the lineup.

Nesbit isn't in the game and his replacement, Plummer can't
handle O'Bannion on this play. The defensive end flushes
Wiley out of the pocket.

He scrambles away from O'Bannion. Gordon isn't in the game
and his replacement, McReynolds, misses a block. Wiley leaps
over the diving Marks and lands on his feet.

He keeps running, but Slater has the angle on him. Floyd runs
across the field and throws himself at Slater, but Slater is
MUCH bigger than the tiny receiver.

Slater busts through the block and shoves Wiley out of bounds for an 11-yard gain.

Wiley pulls McReynolds and Plummer aside. Plummer immediately apologizes.

PLUMMER

Sorry, that one's on me. I'll get him next time.

McReynolds shrugs and walks towards the huddle. Wiley and Plummer exchange a worried glance.

There is 2:37 left.

INT. RENEE'S APARTMENT - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Renee sits in her dark apartment. No TV, no music, no pets, no sounds. She's on the couch, drinking directly from a bottle of red wine. She's clearly been crying, her makeup is smeared, and it has been that way for a while.

She finishes her wine. Disappointed, she gets up, walks to the kitchen and opens another bottle. She carries it, sipping as she goes, to her desk. She boots up her laptop.

Renee types in "strategies for recovery" and heads down the Google rabbit hole. She finds her way to YouTube, where there are a surprising number of on-topic videos.

A series of images from those videos, a WOMAN's voice over crude, friendly animation:

-Woman: "For weeks, months or years, the survivor may experience feelings that are reminders of the assault: rapid breathing, rapid heartbeat, panic attacks or worse.

Renee clicks on the next video.

-Woman: "It may be difficult, but reach out to someone you trust. You have to challenge that sense of isolation. Look in your local community, they might have a support group that you can join." CLICK.

-Woman: "Try to ground yourself in the present..." NEXT.

-Woman: "If you can't reconnect with old friends, try making some new friends. Try a new location if that might help..."

Renee straightens up. She's paying serious attention now.

-Woman: "You have to restore your balance..." CLICK.

Renee opens a new tab and searches for "jobs Los Angeles."

She starts reading the first result.

The SCORE ends with a needle drop.

Then she stops and her head drops to her chest. She takes a deep breath and turns and looks into the CAMERA, breaking the fourth wall.

RENEE

Were you REALLY not going to let me speak with my own voice? What kinda savior complex bullshit is that?

Beat.

RENEE (CONT'D)

This shit doesn't define me. This isn't my origin story. This didn't turn me into a victim or a survivor. I'm a person. A human being. This is a bad thing that some bad boys did to me. But it doesn't define me. I define me... Who am I?

She takes a deep breath.

RENEE (CONT'D)

I'm from a small town, but I don't belong there. I'm too big for these small-minded people and their small-minded goals. I am a singer. A dancer. A movie STAR.

She flips her hair dramatically.

RENEE (CONT'D)

I have a plan. I know what I want. I know how to get it. I have friends, family and acquaintances and they support me and believe in me. I have dreams. I have passion. I am a woman.

She finally breathes again.

RENEE (CONT'D)

Now go back to telling your little stories about your little boys playing little games and maybe invest some of the money used to show more explosions and football games, like we haven't seen that bullshit already, and let some women tell their stories with HALF the budget this Oscar-Bait melodrama gets.

Beat.

RENEE (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

She turns and walks away.

INT. U.S. ARMY BRIEFING TENT, ST. POCO - DAY

This tent bears the signs of being a mess hall and recreation area. Food supplies in one corner. Games and footballs and soccer balls in another.

The entire squad is present. Hirschfelder is present. Franks stands at the front, speaking:

FRANKS

We're going to have to go in alone.

RANDALL

Alone?

FRANKS

We're taking the Royal Palace tonight.

The men are shocked.

ROOSEVELT

Aren't we getting a replacement sergeant? Additional forces?

FRANKS

No.

The men start to get restless and angry.

RANDALL

Bullshit.

FRANKS

McKinney says that there are problems elsewhere and we are tasked with this mission by ourselves.

HIRSCHFELDER

Why would they send you on this mission? This doesn't make a lot of sense.

FRANKS

I can neither confirm nor deny, to the media, that this mission is in search of a high profile target.

Randall chuckles.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

I can neither confirm nor deny that the target we are seeking is suspected of planning a terrorist attack on U.S. soil.

HIRSCHFELDER

Are you talking about Rossovich? He's here?

FRANKS

I can neither confirm nor deny the name of the target. Nor the fact that the Mall of North America was this terrorist's target.

Hirschfelder nods.

HIRSCHFELDER

Definitely Rossovich.

FRANKS

I can neither confirm--

HIRSCHFELDER

Or deny... Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Hirschfelder scribbles in his notepad.

EXT. U.S. ARMY BRIEFING TENT - MOMENTS LATER

Randall and Justin stand outside, talking to Hirschfelder.

JUSTIN

You heading back to base camp?

HIRSCHFELDER

Yeah, they don't exactly trust me to report on this BEFORE the operation, so I'm hanging out there for a bit.

RANDALL

It was nice to meet you. I look forward to the article.

They shake hands.

HIRSCHFELDER

I'll send you a copy once it's published.

RANDALL

Thanks.

JUSTIN

Sweet.

Hirschfelder waves and walks away.

EXT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOUSE - DAY

Wiley and Alligood walk outside. He carries her bags and sets them next to a yellow cab.

WILEY

Well, I hope you liked our little town, Ms. Alligood.

ALLIGOOD

I'm not really here to write about the town, I'm here to write about you.

WILEY

Hard to separate me and this town, you know?

ALLIGOOD

I could see it happening.

Wiley laughs.

WILEY

I look forward to seeing your article.

ALLIGOOD

'Our' article.

Wiley cocks an eyebrow.

ALLIGOOD (CONT'D)

My colleague spent some time with
your brother. We're co-writing the
article.

Wiley nods.

WILEY

Oh, yeah? Nice. Get back to Atlanta
safely.

ALLIGOOD

I will.

She gets into the cab.

INT. MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

Wiley sits across a booth from Beverly. They've finished
their meals and await desert.

BEVERLY

That was pretty good, but what I'm
REALLY looking forward to is this
pie!

Wiley chuckles.

WILEY

The best in town.

BEVERLY

You should've been at the SGA
meeting the other day.

WILEY

(playfully)
Ugh!

She takes offense.

BEVERLY

Can't you take ANYTHING serious?
SGA is important. I listen to you
go on and on about football...

Wiley takes offense. Half-joking.

WILEY
What's wrong with football?

BEVERLY
It's a waste of money.

WILEY
Then why are you a cheerleader?

She sips her soda.

BEVERLY
Why are you playing a sport that
gave your brother CTE?

WILEY
We don't know...

BEVERLY
You can't even finish that
sentence, because you know better.

Wiley chugs from his glass of water.

WILEY
Then why are you dating a
quarterback?

She shrugs.

BEVERLY
I can't believe it.

WILEY
I can't believe it, either.

He can't hide his sarcasm.

BEVERLY
I just don't want you to get hurt.

She reaches up and caresses his cheek.

WILEY
I won't. I play safely.

Beverly laughs.

BEVERLY
That's what they all say.

WILEY
And most of us ARE safe.

BEVERLY

Most?

He shrugs.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)

You comfortable with most?

He doesn't answer. He doesn't have to. The pie has arrived. They both grin at Mickey.

MICKEY

You need anything else?

WILEY

I think--

MICKEY

Good.

She walks away. Beverly laughs.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, Larson 26-Yard Line

In the huddle, Plummer catches up with McReynolds.

PLUMMER

Hey man, can you switch sides with me? I can't get my footwork right coming from this side.

McReynolds laughs.

MCREYNOLDS

Screw you.

Wiley steps to the referee.

WILEY

Time out.

The ref blows the whistle.

Wiley walks over to McReynolds grabs him by the face mask and yanks him toward the sideline.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Get the hell off my field!

Both teams, the refs and the sideline all stare at Wiley with no idea what's going on.

Once they get close to the sideline, Wiley shoves McReynolds towards the bench. McReynolds doesn't resist and he just walks past everybody and sits down.

Berke pulls Wiley aside.

BERKE
What's happening?

WILEY
He's gonna cost us the game. He's a distraction.

BERKE
You sure?

He nods his head.

WILEY
We can win this.

She nods her head.

BERKE
Okay, I trust you.

He pulls Pickford into their huddle.

WILEY
Gimme the Nerd Squad.

Berke and Pickford exchange a concerned look.

PICKFORD
You sure?

BERKE
Now?

WILEY
Trust me.

Pickford shrugs.

BERKE
Do it.

Wiley runs towards the bench where the Nerd Squad football players are sitting. Most of them haven't played much or at all.

WILEY
Let's go guys. It's time for Circus
Circus.

The nerds are excited. They jump up and follow him onto the field.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 What is this? After two Larson
 players get in some kind of fight,
 we now have wholesale
 substitutions. Coming in for this
 play are running back Anthony
 Olson...

Olson wears #24.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 Fullback Jason Spivey...

JASON SPIVEY wears #44, he's a Black teen 5'9", 240 lbs.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 Glen Finnegan who is playing...
 wide receiver. Almost couldn't find
 him in my notes.

Finnegan wears #84.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 And Dwayne Sapolu, coming in for
 McReynolds who had some kind of
 heated interaction with his
 quarterback.

Sapolu wears #69.

The huddle breaks and the new team gets into the I formation.
 Wiley hasn't been under center all game.

Kerr snaps the ball cleanly, Slater blitzes, but is picked up
 by Spivey. O'Bannion tries to bulldoze Sapolu, but he bounces
 off as if Sapolu was an immovable object.

Wiley hands off to Olsen, who runs for the line. There's no
 hole, but Kerr holds off two defenders. Olsen turns around
 and tosses the ball back to Wiley. Wiley quickly throws a
 dart near midfield and Finnegan catches it for a first down.

WOODERSON
 Wow! What a play! The good old flea
 flicker to the backup... uhh...
 Finnegan, with his FIRST catch on
 the year. Good for 22 yards.

There is 2:13 left in the game.

EXT. ZAKI HILL - NIGHT

Zaki Hill sits at the center of the island of St. Poco. The island and the hill are covered with thick tropical rainforest. The forest thins out heading up the hill. A paved road circles the mountain.

FRANKS

We're going to avoid the road. We may have additional cover...

He gestures towards a thick fog bank moving across the island and up the mountain.

ROOSEVELT

If we go slowly enough, that'll completely cover us.

DAVIS

Won't WE be blind, too?

No one answers him.

FRANKS

Buttermaker. You're on point.

Buttermaker moves to the front of the squad.

BUTTERMAKER

I'm on it.

He heads out. The others fall into formation.

CUT TO:

The squad has moved most of the way up the mountain with no incident. The fog is starting to cover the top of the mountain and the squad can only be partially seen by the CAMERA.

A sniper rifle shot rings out. The squad scramble to find cover. There isn't much at this elevation, just trees. All but the skinniest of the soldiers have body parts sticking out. The cover isn't good. But the fog is moving in. Cover is on its' way.

A few more shots ring out. The squad don't return fire. They hide as best they can.

Silence reigns for a while. Men shiver in fear. No one does anything to respond.

RANDALL

Buttermaker?!

Bullets fly.

Buttermaker tries to speak, but coughs instead. It takes him a second to clear his throat.

BUTTERMAKER
I'm hit. It hurts. A lot.

He coughs again.

Randall leans from behind the tree to see Buttermaker and a sniper bullet rips through his right hand.

RANDALL
Stay where you are! We're pinned
down.

He pulls a cloth from his backpack and wraps his bloody hand.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Sargent!

No response.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Roosevelt!

Nothing.

BRECK
I don't think he's going to answer.

Roosevelt has taken a bullet to the face. He's dead on the ground behind the tree that was too small to cover him.

RANDALL
What? I can't see anything in this
fog!

BRECK
He's been hit. He's dead.

Randall starts to panic.

Bullets fly.

Randall takes a deep breath and closes his eyes.

The sound drops away.

He can think.

He opens his eyes. The sound comes back. Bullets fly.

RANDALL

Stay where you are. The fog is getting thicker. Wait it out.

Bullets fly.

The men wait.

INT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOUSE - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

Berke sits in the football coach's office. Across from her sits Pickford, here for his job interview. He's dressed in a cheap suit and tie, things he'll never wear again. Berke flips through the last few pages of Pickford's resume.

BERKE

Better than I thought. You're good with stats, right?

PICKFORD

Like... I play a lot of games and stuff, so like, uh, D&D, AD&D, D&D Fifth Edition, Gamma World--

Berke raises an eyebrow.

BERKE

Why wouldn't you have led with your math classes?

PICKFORD

Nobody wants to hear about that boring sh... Sorry.

BERKE

I'm going to need you to do some homework.

PICKFORD

What kind of homework?

She's exasperated. He nods as he gets it.

PICKFORD (CONT'D)

Football... you're talking about football. Got it.

A series of shots of him studying, set to "Win," by Jay Rock, that comes from the radio sitting on the desk in his home office.

A series of shots of Pickford:

-Watching film of previous Larson games, with Wiley at QB.

-Reading over the Larson playbook. He throws it in the trash can.

-Reading "Football for Dummies."

-Reading or surrounded by a ton of books: "Belichick," by Ian O'Connor, "Football Made Easy," by Ace McCloud, "Football for Players and Coaches," by Glenn S. Warner, "The Football Coaching Bible," "It's Better to Be Feared," by Seth Wickersham, "Lessons From Legends," by Scott Bedgood, "Coaching Youth Football," by Biagio "Joe" Riina and "Chasing Perfection," by Bob Ladouceur & Neil Hayes.

-Reading "Moneyball," by Michael Lewis.

-Watching the movie version of "Moneyball."

-Watching or surrounded by various football Blue Rays: "Undefeated," "Little Giants," "Necessary Roughness," "North Dallas Forty," "The Waterboy," "All the Right Moves," "The Replacements," "The Longest Yard," "Varsity Blues," "We Are Marshall," "Friday Night Lights" and "Air Bud: Golden Receiver."

-Sitting at his desk, a weary Pickford reads from "Scorecasting," by Tobias J. Moskowitz & L. Jon Wertheim. He leans back in his chair as he reads. He yawns and almost puts the book down.

But something catches his eye and he sits up. He grabs a spiral notebook and starts taking notes. He reads some more and starts furiously writing.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, Larson 48-Yard Line

The starters are back in EXCEPT McReynolds. Sapolu stays in for him. Kerr gets off a pretty good snap.

Wiley bounces in place for a few seconds. His protection is good. Guard ESTEBAN BURNETT, wearing #72, manages to hold off two defenders.

Houston does a 5-yard down and in and Wiley delivers the pass to Houston. Marks closes on him, but...

Floyd swoops around and Houston pitches him the ball. Houston is leveled, but Floyd scoots past Marks.

WOODERSON

Oh my! Larson is pulling out ALL
the tricks.

Slater drives Floyd out of bounds.

WOODERSON (CONT'D)

A hook and latter involving Mark
Houston and Jason Floyd nets the
Lions 12 yards. Another first down!

There are two minutes left in the game.

EXT. ZAKI HILL - NIGHT

The fog is so thick now that the shooting has stopped. It's
impossible to see anyone more than a few feet away. No one
moves from behind the trees that cover them.

FRANKS

Everyone stay where you are, I'm
going to contact McKinney.

They settle in and relax.

RANDALL

I am so hungry.

JUSTIN

I have an extra ration. You want?

RANDALL

Nah, I'm not hungry for that shit.
I want some REAL food.

DAVIS

I could eat a horse.

RANDALL

You know what I want?

JUSTIN

Something from back home?

RANDALL

You know it.

JUSTIN

Yeah.

RANDALL

No, you KNOW it... Franny's Fudge!

JUSTIN

Oh, yeah! I love that place!

Randall licks his lips.

RANDALL

They always come up with crazy new flavors. My favorite was this gingerbread cranberry fudge they had for Christmas one year.

JUSTIN

I'll bet we could get them to send us some.

He pulls out his phone and takes a note.

RANDALL

Put that away before Franks sees you.

He does.

DAVIS

Me? Deep dish meatlovers, extra meat. And that little thing of garlic sauce to dip it in. But it's GOTTA be warm. Otherwise that shit looks like jizz.

Widespread groans of disgust.

JUSTIN

My favorite thing EVER, is bacon-wrapped shrimp. Man, I could eat that at every meal.

Buttermaker eagerly nods in agreement.

BRECK

Mom's cornbread, smothered in butter. Not that store-bought crap, my uncle had a farm, so we got fresh eggs and milk and cheese and butter. Man, I can taste that cornbread right now.

DAVIS

Damn, I want some of that.

GORDON

I'll take an order as well. Extra butter.

JENNER

No question. What-A-Burger. Double meat, double cheese, extra jalapenos; extra large fry, big-ass malted chocolate shake.

GORDON

That does sound good, but I love FISH.

JUSTIN

Like filet-o-fish.

Laughter.

GORDON

No, no, no, my friend. Fresh fish. Prefer to catch it myself, it's GOTTA be fresh.

BRECK

I could throw down on that.

GORDON

I LOVE fish. Catfish. Trout. Bass. Walleye. Red snapper. Cod. Salmon. Dolphin. Pretty much ANYTHING.

BUTTERMAKER

I don't know. Hadn't really thought about it.

Beat.

BUTTERMAKER (CONT'D)

I guess I'm just a steak and potatoes guy. Well done on the grill, I ain't trying to have my dinner moo at me.

JUSTIN

What about you, Sarge?

He chuckles.

FRANKS

Nothing I love more on God's Green Earth than a big old honkin' salad bar.

Laughter.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

Keep it down.

GORDON

Yeah, I'm not trying to get shot
over a salad bar.

Quieter chuckles.

FRANKS

I'm not talking about no punk-ass
Wendy's salad bar, either, I'm
talking about Sizzler. Or Golden
Corral. Or, if you really want the
best, you gotta hit up one of the
salad bar chains like--

JUSTIN

Chop't?

FRANKS

Watch your mouth, son. I ain't
eating no frou-frou bougie crap
like that. I need a salad BAR. With
big greasy cubes of ham and turkey
sitting right next to the Jell-O.

Franks takes a deep breath.

FRANKS (CONT'D)

Lettuce. Hopefully they got
something stronger than iceberg. It
has no vitamins and no value.
Onions, preferably red and raw.
Radishes. Cucumbers, but only if
they're fresh. None of that mushy
stuff. A mound of sprouts.
Chickpeas. Celery. Carrots. Bacon
bits. Lots of fucking bacon bits.
Croutons, the bigger and crunchier
the better. Every available kind of
cheese. Twice. Boiled egg if they
got it, chopped in slices.
Cauliflower and broccoli.

RANDALL

You forget anything?

JUSTIN

No tomatoes?

GORDON

My heart hurts.

FRANKS

All of it smothered in as much
Ranch Dressing as is humanly
possible.

DAVIS

My head hurts.

Laughter.

Franks looks out from behind the tree, peering up the now-dark hill.

A single sniper shot hits Franks in the head and he falls to the ground. The other soldiers scramble for cover, but there are no further shots. The only sound is the blood gurgling from Franks' throat as he bleeds out.

INT. MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS RESTAURANT - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Sasha pulls into the parking lot at Mothers and Truckers. She shuts the car off and Julie immediately starts knocking on the passenger window.

Sasha starts to roll the window down.

JULIE

Keep it up! Let me in. We need to
talk.

Sasha reverses the window and unlocks the door. Julie jumps in and slams the car door.

Julie turns sideways to look at Sasha. Her face is deadly serious.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You know how we've been best
friends forever?

Sasha is skeptical.

SASHA

Yeah?

JULIE

I was visiting my father down at
the station... sitting in his
office... my dad had to step out
and... I heard him talking...

She gulps.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 He saw me and slammed the door...
 They walked away... While they were
 gone... I looked at the files on
 his desk and I... I couldn't help
 but see it.

SASHA
 Renee?

Julie nods.

JULIE
 There were pictures...

Julie starts crying. Sasha grabs her hands and holds them
 tight.

JULIE (CONT'D)
 There was a list of names...

SASHA
 Who? NOT Wiley?

Sasha doesn't believe it as she says it.

Julie shakes her head.

JULIE
 Randall.

SASHA
 No.

She shakes her head back and forth violently.

SASHA (CONT'D)
 No! No! No!

Julie nods.

Sasha bursts into tears. Julie pulls her close and squeezes
 as hard as she can.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, South Leonardo 40-Yard Line

Kerr snaps the ball and Wiley looks to throw to Houston, but
 O'Bannion pulls a swim move on Sapolu and almost gets to
 Wiley.

Wiley wisely throws the ball out of bounds. 1:53 remains in the game.

EXT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL PRACTICE FIELDS - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Berke and Pickford watch practice. Wiley leads the first team offense against the first team defense in a scrimmage.

QUINT LINKLATER walks up to the coaches, wearing a jersey #00 and jeans. He's a 5'9", 160-pound white guy. His left ankle is in an air cast. He barely limps, though.

BERKE

Quint? You doing okay?

He waves off her concern.

QUINT

I'm fine. This is just a precaution.

BERKE

What kind of precaution?

QUINT

Oh, nothing. Doc just said to take it easy.

PICKFORD

Or what?

QUINT

There's a tiny, tiny, TINY chance I could aggravate it and an even tinier chance I could hurt it pretty bad.

PICKFORD

How bad?

QUINT

Lie it's only like a 1% chance.

BERKE

Quit playing around.

QUINT

It could be career-ending. Theoretically, I could walk with a limp for the rest of my life.

BERKE
You're out.

QUINT
No, really, I can play.

PICKFORD
You planning on doing this for the
rest of your life? Or you gonna use
that D-1 soccer scholarship.

QUINT
I've started calling it futbol.

BERKE
He's out.

PICKFORD
You're out.

Quint frowns.

QUINT
But you don't have another kicker.

BERKE
Tell him.

PICKFORD
We... uh... weren't going to be
kicking much anyway.

Quint chuckles.

QUINT
Scorecasting?

Pickford turns to Berke.

PICKFORD
I told you!

QUINT
Why do you think I'm sticking with
soccer?

They both turn and look at Berke.

BERKE
Don't look at me, I'm a basketball
coach.

PICKFORD
We gotta kick off, though. You
think maybe Wiley?

Quint shakes his head.

QUINT
No, no, no. I have the PERFECT
kicker for you.

Berke and Pickford exchange a grin.

CUT TO:

Quint leads Pickford to the soccer field, where the girls team is currently engaged in a scrimmage. One of the PLAYERS lines up and blasts a wicked shot towards the corner of the goal.

MILLA LINKLATER, #19, dives and catches the ball easily. She's quite a bit shorter than Quint, but resembles him in every other way. She's about 5'4" and about 120 pounds.

PICKFORD
Sure, she's got one hell of a leg,
but the shot didn't even go in.

Quint laughs.

QUINT
Not that one... HER.

He points towards the goalie.

QUINT (CONT'D)
The goalie. My sister, Milla.

Pickford stares at Quint.

CUT TO:

Wiley and the rest of the team practice on one of the school's fields. Milla leads Pickford, Quint and Berke to the second field.

A series of images:

-Milla takes a warm-up kick off of a tee into a net. She misses the net and the ball flies over the fence.

MILLA
Sorry!

-Milla misses the net again, hitting Sapolu in the back. He turns and looks, but doesn't know who hit him.

-Finally, she kicks one into the net. Berke crosses her arms and raises an eyebrow.

-Milla sets up to practice kickoffs. Her first attempt is long enough to go through the end zone, if it didn't drift out of bounds at the 10-yard line and land in the stands to her left.

-Another long kick is just as far, this time landing in the stands on the right.

PICKFORD

I mean, you'll never see anybody else kick the ball into the stands on BOTH sides of the stadium. That's gotta count for something?

Berke is less impressed.

-Milla hits three straight kickoffs that go through the end zone. In bounds.

BERKE

We can definitely work with this.

PICKFORD

You seen enough?

Berke shakes her head.

BERKE

Walk her through onside kicks. Let's see what she can do.

Pickford jogs over to Milla.

CUT TO:

Pickford steps away as Milla nods. Pickford blows a whistle.

PICKFORD

Full teams. Onside kick attempts. Let's go.

The players rush to get ready. Some leave the field, others get into position, more run onto the field from the sidelines.

The kicking and return teams are lined up and ready. Pickford blows the whistle.

Milla starts her run-up to the ball. She hits the kick perfectly and it starts bouncing high and moving down the field.

Milla is FAST and she runs down the field quickly enough to BEAT the ball 10 yards downfield. She gets in position between the defenders and the ball and easily recovers her own kick. The other players look on in surprise.

BERKE

Okay, that's gonna work. Make sure she practices that A LOT.

PICKFORD

On it.

He blows the whistle again.

CUT TO:

SUPER: First Quarter

With the score 13-6 in favor of South Leonardo. Milla gets ready to kick the extra point. As Kerr gets ready to snap the ball, the South Leonardo defense is champing at the bit to get to Milla.

Kerr snaps the ball to a kneeling Wiley. Wiley catches the ball and sets it down.

Marks blitzes, but is blocked by Kerr.

MARKS

You'd better miss it, little girl!
Get off the field.

Milla steps to kick the ball, but she hears Marks and stutter-steps. She drives the ball wide right.

Disappointed, Milla goes to the sideline, where Pickford and Berke are waiting to comfort her.

PICKFORD

Don't worry about it, it's smarter to go for two anyway.

BERKE

I need you to practice your onside kicks.

Beat.

BERKE (CONT'D)

We need you to be ready.

MILLA

I will be.

Everyone turns to watch the game. Milla is worried.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Second Quarter

In the huddle, Wiley is more focused and brief than usual.

WILEY

I formation. Fake wham right.

KERR

Fake?

WILEY

Don't exert yourself too much on
this play.

Everyone's skeptical.

WILEY (CONT'D)

This is going to be an incomplete
pass.

Everyone stares at him.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Trust me.

Beat.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Break!

The huddle breaks and Wiley stands under center. He checks the sideline and sees Marks standing with his back to the field, talking to another PLAYER. He immediately calls for the snap.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Hike.

Kerr snaps the ball. Wiley drops three steps, turns towards the sideline and rifles the ball over Houston's hands and directly into the back of Marks' head.

Wiley turns towards his sideline and finds Milla. He salutes her and she smiles. He heads back to the huddle.

EXT. ZAKI HILL - NIGHT

The fog starts to clear and the moon appears bright above the hill. Randall finishes a conversation on a sat phone. He takes a deep breath and walks over to the rest of the squad.

RANDALL

We're going up. Tonight.

Groans and moans.

JUSTIN

Shouldn't we have air support on this?

RANDALL

They are deployed elsewhere. We have been told that only minimal forces are stationed at the top of the hill.

DAVIS

Tell that to Roosevelt. And Franklin. And Franks.

RANDALL

That's where the target is, that's where we go.

Silence.

EXT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL PRACTICE FIELDS - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

The Nerd Squad plays two-hand touch football on the Larson practice fields. The SHIRTS team consists of Wiley, Floyd, Sapolu and three TEENS. The SKINS team consists of Randall, Olson, Finnegan and three other TEENS.

A series of images:

-Wiley and Floyd pull off a reverse for a TD.

-Randall and Olson do a double pass, with Finnegan catching it for a TD.

-Wiley and Floyd reply with a reverse pass. It doesn't score, but they get close.

-Randall hits Finnegan for a short pass, Olson comes around for the hook and ladder play and scores.

-Wiley hands off to Floyd, who stops and throws a TD pass.

-Olson takes a direct snap and blasts his way up the middle for a score.

-Wiley and Floyd perfectly execute a statue of liberty play for a TD.

Pickford has been watching the whole time and he's thoroughly enjoying the game. He's laughing and clapping as the boys get more creative.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 2nd & 10, South Leonardo 40-Yard Line

Kerr snaps the ball. Wiley checks his receivers but no one is open.

O'Bannion dives and gets a low hit on Sapolu, who crashes to the ground. Wiley sees the penalty, but the referee doesn't throw the flag.

Wiley spins to get away from the crawling O'Bannion and runs smack into Marks, who plants him at the 48.

Unfazed, Wiley jumps up and immediately signals for a time out. He rushes towards the REF on the Larson sideline.

WILEY

How could you not call that, he almost broke Dwayne's leg?

The Ref walks away from him.

REF

I don't debate with players.

WILEY

What are you talking about? That was a cheap shot against a rookie!

REF

Walk away or I'll bounce you.

Wiley turns towards Berke.

WILEY

Coach?

She rushes over to the Ref.

BERKE

That was VERY clearly a penalty.
What are you doing?

REF

You're on the wrong court, Missy.

BERKE

Change the call or I'll have you
fired.

The Ref keeps walking.

BERKE (CONT'D)

Pickford, remind me to call my
college roommate after the game.

PICKFORD

Yes, ma'am.

BERKE

She's the god damned mayor. I know
one bastard who just got his ass
fired.

PICKFORD

I'll dial the number for you.

There is 1:42 left.

EXT./INT. ROYAL PALACE, ST. POCO - NIGHT

They arrive at the top of Zaki Hill. Surprisingly, there is
no resistance. No one else is on the plateau. Even the Palace
sits dark.

Randall motions for Justin to take his group around to the
back and the squad splits in two. Randall takes his guys
towards the front of the palace.

CUT TO:

Randall leads his team into the palace's throne room. Moments
later, Justin and his group arrive.

JUSTIN

Rossovich isn't here. No one's
here.

RANDALL

This place has been abandoned. Let
me contact McKinney for our next
orders.

Randall heads towards the glass doors opening to the balcony.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Find a secure spot inside and set
up a perimeter.

GORDON
And then what?

RANDALL
We wait.

Grumbles from the squad. Randall walks out.

CUT TO:

The squad (except Randall) sit around a massive living room with a really BIG screen TV tuned to the news. A clip of President Wright comes on.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT
...all I can say is that the palace
is secured. The enemy has conceded.
The Royal Palace of St. Poco is
fully under U.S. control and all
hostilities have ceased. And our
men will hold the Palace as long as
it takes to bring justice to our
friends, the St. Poco-co-ans.

No one sees him, but Randall comes in while the president is speaking.

RANDALL
Alright, you guys are off-duty.
We're gonna be here for a while.

JENNER
Can we get some food or something?

Randall shrugs.

RANDALL
I didn't take any inventory, did
you?

JENNER
No?

RANDALL
Then anything missing must've been
taken by the St. Poconese when they
left.

The squad cheers as they leap up from their seats and fan out to search the palace.

CUT TO:

Everybody is back in the TV room, showing off their spoils and sharing the food and alcohol they found.

Randall arrives last.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

What'd you guys find? Just so I'm not blindsided later.

JUSTIN

Ham, turkey, roast beef. Ciabatta. Grey Poupon. 'Bout to tear up this sandwich.

DAVIS

All kinds of fancy cheeses in here. Some I've never heard of. Like whatever caciocavallo podolico is? It's SOOOO good.

He takes another bite.

BRECK

Do they have any pâté de foie gras?

DAVIS

What's that?

BRECK

I don't know. It's something rich people eat. Always want to try it.

DAVIS

There was a LOT of shit in that fridge that I didn't recognize.

Jenner holds up a Mauser C96 pistol.

JENNER

I've been looking for one of these for years.

JUSTIN

(under his breath)
Isn't that a Nazi gun?

GORDON

Y'all are all caught in the past. I'm all about the future.

He opens up a bag and dumps it on the table. It's filled with bands of hundred dollar bills, a bunch of gold and platinum jewelry with various gems, and two actual bricks of gold.

GORDON (CONT'D)
I'm about to pay for my kids' college.

BRECK
You don't have any kids.

Gordon holds up a gold bar with a grin.

GORDON
I'm about to.

Buttermaker limps into the room holding several bottles of VERY expensive Pappy Van Winkle Scotch.

BUTTERMAKER
Time to get fucked up.

JUSTIN
Oh, that's good shit...

Justin grabs one of the bottles and opens it up. Takes a BIG gulp and burps. He passes it along to Randall.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Hey, guess what I've got?

Randall takes a mouthful of the Scotch and passes the bottle on to Gordon.

RANDALL
Hit me.

Justin pulls out the Mighty Mighty Lions flag.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Sweet! Put that shit up.

Justin hangs the flag over some fancy paintings on the wall.

CUT TO:

Everyone except Randall is rip-roaring drunk. Randall chugs from a bottle of sake to catch up.

BRECK
Hey, you guys like tattoos?

General murmurs of assent.

BRECK (CONT'D)
 This place has a full tattoo shop.
 Follow me...

They do. Breck leads them through several rooms and hallways until they arrive at what is, indeed, a full tattoo studio.

RANDALL
 Okay, but I ain't letting one of
 you fucks butcher me.

BRECK
 Dude, I'm a pro tattoo artist.

He pulls up his shirt to show that his ENTIRE torso is tattooed. The work is good.

GORDON
 Damn!

DAVIS
 YOU did this work? On yourself?

Davis leans in to get a closer look.

BRECK
 Indeed.

DAVIS
 Then sign me up.

Davis hops in the chair. Breck grins.

CUT TO:

Justin hops up from the chair and shows off his fresh tattoo. He holds it up and matches it with the other guys that already got the same one: Randall, Davis, Gordon and Buttermaker. The tattoo is the same on each man: a crude outline of a mountain with the word "ZAKI" beneath it.

BRECK
 Jenner. You're up.

JENNER
 I don't know man. Ruining my pure
 skin?

The rest of the guys look at him with disdain, but nobody says anything. They just stare. Jenner withers and sits in the seat.

BRECK
 There we go.

BUTTERMAKER
Now we're talking.

Gordon grabs Randall and pulls him onto the balcony.

RANDALL
What's up?

GORDON
I can't get it out of my head. I
was complaining about my head
hurting and then he got shot.

RANDALL
What?

GORDON
I jinxed him.

RANDALL
Who?

GORDON
You know.

RANDALL
Who, Franks? Why won't you say his
name?

GORDON
Because I jinxed him. He got shot.
And I'm not jinxing anyone else.

Randall looks at him like he's crazy.

RANDALL
Dude there's no fucking jinxes.
There's no fucking magic. There's
no fucking nothing. There's just a
world full of bad people doing bad
things to each other. We're bad
people, Davis, we're bad fucking
people.

Davis is too shocked to still freak out.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
Give me another tattoo before I
pass the fuck out.

He swigs from a bottle of fancy whiskey, walks inside and
plops in the tattoo chair.

INT. MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS RESTAURANT - DAY

SUPER: Earlier

Working tonight are Sasha, Chick, Julie and Beverly. Sasha looks around the front of the restaurant.

SASHA
Where's Mickey?

JULIE
She's in back.

SASHA
You got this?

JULIE
Unless a bus pulls up.

Mothers and Truckers is empty except for an OLDER COUPLE, both eating the early bird liver and onions.

Sasha walks into the back and finds Mickey sitting on a stack of soda syrup boxes. She is crying, but quickly covers up when she sees Sasha.

MICKEY
Hey... uh...

SASHA
You okay?

Mickey wipes her eyes as she nods.

MICKEY
Yeah... it's nothing...

Sasha sits on a chair facing Mickey.

SASHA
How long have we known each other?
I've NEVER seen you cry. It's NOT
nothing.

MICKEY
You really want to know?

SASHA
Yeah, we're family. You don't have
to do it all by yourself.

Mickey considers it.

MICKEY

I hate talking about this shit.

SASHA

We all do, but you gotta let it out. It'll eat you up if you don't.

Mickey takes a deep breath. The sound drops out around her.

MICKEY

I raised them, you know. And I run the family restaurant. I've done it all for this family since our parents, well... even before that, I raised them. Dad was, well, you know...

Sasha nods.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

He was just as bad to me as he was to the boys. I basically did it alone. I canceled my dreams to allow the twins to pursue theirs.

She wipes the tears from her eyes.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

I don't want much. I don't care about getting married or having kids or any of that stuff.

SASHA

What DO you want?

MICKEY

I want some gratitude. And I want some freedom. Finally.

SASHA

Freedom?

MICKEY

I have offers from several culinary schools. I really want to go.

SASHA

Then go.

MICKEY

Who would run this place?

Sasha looks at her incredulously.

SASHA
What are you talking about? I would
LOVE to do it.

MICKEY
Really?

SASHA
Yeah, I don't care about all those
fancy recipes and presentation and
all that. I just love people. These
people. And I love feeding them.

Mickey nods.

They sit in silence for a few moments.

MICKEY
How are YOU doing?

SASHA
I... uh... I don't know.

Beat.

SASHA (CONT'D)
I'm both shocked and not shocked.
It's going to take a while.

Mickey nods.

SASHA (CONT'D)
That's why I want to do this?
Please let me?

MICKEY
Okay. Even if I stay, I'll let you
manage this place. I'm sure you'll
be great.

Sasha gives Mickey a big hug.

SASHA
You should talk to your brother
before HE'S gone.

Beat.

SASHA (CONT'D)
Like Randall.

Mickey pulls out her phone.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 3rd & 18, South Leonardo 48-Yard Line

Wiley breaks from the huddle and gets the team set. Floyd sets up as a blocker, but he's behind Sapolu and Burnett. If you aren't looking for him, you wouldn't see him ducked down behind the line.

Kerr snaps the ball. Wiley covertly slips the ball through Floyd's legs and into his hands. Floyd pauses while Wiley rolls out towards the sideline.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
Wiley rolling out, he's got two
receivers in the area...

After it's clear the defense has surged to follow Wiley, Floyd takes off in the other direction.

At first, nobody sees him and he's 10 yards down the field before anyone notices he has the ball.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
No, wait! It's a fumble-rooskie!
Floyd goes for 10 yards... 15...
20...

Marks makes a beeline for Floyd, but Plummer blocks him.

Slater rides Floyd to the ground, but Floyd manages to get out of bounds and stop the clock after gaining 20 yards.

There is 1:27 left in the game.

EXT. THE WHITE HOUSE, WASHINGTON, D.C. - DAY

The White House has been recently renovated and looks pristine in the midday sun.

INT. THE OVAL OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

PRESIDENT RONALD WRIGHT sits with his feet on the desk. Wright is a large man in his late 60s with white hair and a fake tan.

JUNIOR WRIGHT is the president's son. He's an adult male, barely. Blonde hair, black chin stubble, vacant look, ill-fitting clothes, always speaks like Beavis and/or Butt-head.

Junior leans in to listen. The president holds the phone out a bit, so Junior can hear.

Switch back and forth between them and Randall.

RANDALL

Why, sir? Why are we holding this location?

PRESIDENT WRIGHT

It's... uh... for national security purposes... it's... strategic. We need it for strategic purposes and such.

Junior covers his mouth and snickers silently. The president throws him a grin.

RANDALL

Sir?

PRESIDENT WRIGHT

That's all I can really tell you... the rest is... uh...?

Junior mouths the words "top secret."

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (CONT'D)

It's classified.

Junior laughs out loud. The president smacks him in the back of the head. Junior keeps laughing.

RANDALL

Thank you sir.

He hangs up and walks inside. The squad are sitting around the living room, eating and drinking. The NBS News is on, the chyron reads "Heroic American Troops Capture Terrorist in Daring Nighttime Raid."

RANDALL (CONT'D)

President says we're to keep it.

Beat.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Says it's strategic.

Davis raises an eyebrow.

EXT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOUSE - DUSK

SUPER: Earlier

After a long day of school and practice, Wiley exits the Field House, tired. ARTHUR RAVENSCRAFT stands outside waiting for him. Ravenscraft is a team booster and looks like one: balding, well-fed, confident, dripping in wealth.

RAVENSCRAFT
Hey there, Wiley.

Wiley is startled.

WILEY
Uh... hello... Mr. Ravenscraft.

RAVENSCRAFT
Just wanted to check in on you.
About the big game.

Wiley nods like a quarterback talking to a booster.

WILEY
Yessir. I am ready. No QB has ever
studied more film than I have.

Ravenscraft takes a puff from a cigar.

RAVENSCRAFT
Good. You gotta have your brain on
straight...

Wiley stares him down.

RAVENSCRAFT (CONT'D)
Wouldn't want you to... lose
control.

WILEY
I'm sure I don't know what you're
talking about, sir.

Another puff.

RAVENSCRAFT
Be bad for a lot of people if
Larson didn't win that game.

WILEY
Agreed. The team won't lose because
of me. I'm prepared, I'm ready. You
have a good--

Ravenscraft grabs Wiley's forearm.

Wiley stares at the booster's hand. He does not look up.

RAVENS-CRAFT

Look at me boy...

He doesn't.

RAVENS-CRAFT (CONT'D)

Tell me where you're going next year? I got money riding on it.

WILEY

I haven't made up my mind yet.

RAVENS-CRAFT

Don't let that... coach... put any ideas in your head.

Ravenscraft drones on, but Wiley zones out. He's no longer in the present...

FLASHBACK TO:

The Kramer household is perfectly clean, but it is a dark place. Very little color, very little light, very little personality.

RICHARD KRAMER, 60s, bald, overweight, nobody's example of supremacy. He's watching TV, where Sports Central shows a Black woman assistant coach on the sidelines during a basketball game.

RICHARD

Change the channel.

Wiley sits at the far end of the couch. The remote is on the coffee table, much closer to Richard.

WILEY

You have it.

Richard angrily looks around and finds it on the coffee table. He grabs it and flips the channel.

RICHARD

I ain't watching no affirmative action ball in my house.

WILEY

It's basketball. Most of the players are Black.

Richard grabs his beer and chugs it.

RICHARD

You need to stop playing that shit anyway. Focus on football. Your prospects are lighter... I mean brighter there...

He laughs at his own joke.

WILEY

Nah, I'm gonna keep playing both.

Richard grumbles.

RICHARD

God-damned waste of time.

Richard finishes his beer. He stares at Wiley long enough that Wiley gets nervous and looks over at him.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

I want you to come to Washington with me.

Wiley looks away. Richard crumples his empty beer can.

RICHARD (CONT'D)

For inauguration. We're gonna stop the st--

WILEY

Not "no," but HELL NO.

Wiley gets up to walk out of the room. Richard throws the beer can and it hits Wiley on the side of the head. It doesn't do serious damage, but it draws a little blood.

Wiley takes two steps towards his father. Richard sits up in the recliner, but doesn't stand.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Get up.

He doesn't.

WILEY (CONT'D)

You're chickenshit.

Richard doesn't bite. He knows he's nowhere near the athlete his son is.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Your stupid fucking politics are why she's sick.

RICHARD

Bullshit.

WILEY

Say one more word and I'll yank you
out of that chair and beat the
living shit out of you.

Richard is frozen in his place.

WILEY (CONT'D)

That's what I thought.

Wiley storms out of the room. Richard stares after him, half
in hate, half in admiration.

END FLASHBACK.

Wiley rips his arm from Ravenscraft's grip and steps towards
the older man. They'd be face-to-face if Ravenscraft weren't
so short.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Check the stat sheet, old man. I've
done more for this school than you
ever will. You never have and you
never will score a touchdown. No
matter how much money you pile up.

RAVENS-CRAFT

You're just like your brother,
aren't you?

WILEY

Nah, my brother picked on weaker
people. You're definitely the
weaker one here, but you brought
this fight to me.

RAVENS-CRAFT

A fight, eh?

WILEY

If that's what you're asking for.

RAVENS-CRAFT

Nah, not me.

Beat.

RAVENS-CRAFT (CONT'D)

Not today.

There is a gleam in Ravenscraft's eyes and a smirk on his face.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, South Leonardo 28-Yard Line

Wiley has the team set. Kerr snaps the ball.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Wiley from the shotgun... he has
lots of time... getting good
protection... somebody's gotta get
open...

Wiley spots tight end WYATT WILLOUGHBY, #88, eight yards downfield, seemingly open. He rockets the ball to Willoughby. As the tight end reaches to grab it, Slater lays a heavy hit on him and the ball falls to the ground, incomplete.

Slater jumps up and wags his finger like Dikembe Mutombo after blocking a shot.

WOODERSON (V.O.)

Rory Slater dropping the hammer.
Incomplete. Second down.

There is 1:19 left in the game.

INT. ROYAL PALACE, ST. POCO - NIGHT

Davis brings Randall and Justin outside to talk. He walks them along a long balcony overlooking the lights of the city below. Way, way below.

DAVIS

You see that?

RANDALL

Yeah.

DAVIS

You see any guns or tanks or shit
down there?

Randall exchanges a look of bafflement with Justin.

RANDALL

Of course not.

DAVIS

Exactly. We're too high up.

JUSTIN

For what?

DAVIS

For this to be a "strategic"
location.

He uses air quotes.

JUSTIN

What's that mean?

Randall gets it.

RANDALL

That's why they didn't give us any
air support?

DAVIS

You drop bombs up here, you destroy
the fancy palace. You take over the
fancy palace without much damage...

JUSTIN

Isn't the president in real estate?

RANDALL

That motherfu--

Gunfire goes off.

A small squad of masked ST. POCO REBELS enters the room,
firing AK-47's indiscriminately. Breck, Jenner and Gordon
easily find cover. Even Buttermaker has time to get out of
the way, despite his injuries. He thuds to the ground behind
a couch with a grimace on his face.

Randall, Davis and Justin see this from outside and pull
their pistols. The doors are open and the Americans easily
slip inside behind the five Rebels.

The Americans open fire.

The Rebels fall to the ground. Dead.

None of the Americans is even wounded in the exchange.

RANDALL (CONT'D)

Everyone okay in here?

Breck, Jenner and Gordon sound off.

JUSTIN

Buttermaker?

Nothing at first. Then groans.

BUTTERMAKER
Can somebody help me up?

Randall and Justin unmask several of the Rebels, who are white. Jenner frowns and pulls the masks from the other Rebels. They are all white.

JENNER
I didn't sign up to kill no white people.

Gordon takes a step toward Jenner.

GORDON
What was that?

Randall steps between them.

RANDALL
Shut it down. Now's not the time.

They stare each other down.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
I'm not trying to die here, are you?

They hold for a second then stand down.

INT./EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: Halftime

A STUDENT TRAINER walks into the locker room and up to Wiley. Notably, Wiley's fingers are NOT taped together yet.

STUDENT TRAINER
Mr. Kramer, sir.

WILEY
It's Wiley.

STUDENT TRAINER
Mr. Wiley, sir. A police officer said he needs to see you at the entrance of the staff parking lot.

WILEY
Now? Halftime just started?

STUDENT TRAINER
He said it was urgent.

Wiley turns towards Pickford.

WILEY
You hear that, coach?

Pickford is skeptical.

PICKFORD
Five minutes.

Wiley sets his helmet down and goes outside.

CUT TO:

Wiley stands at the entrance to the staff parking lot. He's still in full uniform except for his helmet. He waits impatiently, shifting from foot to foot, but there are no police officers.

ROGER (O.S.)
Hey!

Wiley looks back to see a group of six DRUNKEN MEN. ROGER RAVENSCRAFT leads the group. He's 6', 260 pounds and thick enough to do some damage. The other guys are smaller, but only slightly less intimidating.

WILEY
What the fuck do YOU want?

ROGER
Maybe we're tired of you and your scumbag family ruining our school's reputation.

WILEY
Didn't you drop out?

One of Roger's goons chuckles. Roger ignores it.

ROGER
You should be more careful about what you say. And who you say it about. You could get yourself in trouble.

WILEY
I'm not worried about it.

The six men rush him. He's bigger than one or two of them, but these are college guys. The first two guys tackle Wiley.

He knees one of them in the groin. That guy falls to the ground. With his free hand, Wiley punches the other guy in the face. He pulls his left hand free as well. Roger kicks him in the ribs and he crumples.

ROGER

Hold him.

It takes all five of them, but they get it done.

ROGER (CONT'D)

Hold out his throwing hand.

GOON

Which one is it?

Roger panics. He doesn't know.

ROGER

That one.

He points at Wiley's left hand.

WILEY

NO!!!!

Roger grins. Roger brings his sneaker-clad foot knee height and brings it down on the last two fingers on Roger's left hand. It's not a clean stomp, but bones crunch.

Wiley screams.

ROGER

How 'bout NOW, fucker? You worried yet?

PICKFORD (O.S.)

Hey! What the hell are you doing!

Roger and his goons run for the exit, easily slipping away before Pickford can get a look at them. As he leaves, Roger turns back for a second.

ROGER

My dad says hi.

They laugh as they turn the corner. Pickford runs over and kneels next to Wiley.

PICKFORD

You okay?

Wiley holds up the hand.

WILEY

Nah. They broke it.

Pickford recoils in fear and sympathy pain.

PICKFORD

God damn!

WILEY

Is it bad?

Pickford shakes his head.

PICKFORD

I'm gonna let the doctor answer that question. Let's go.

He helps Wiley up.

CUT TO:

In the trainer's office inside the Larson Field House, Wiley sits on a table while a DOCTOR looks at an x-ray of Wiley's hand.

DOCTOR

Ring finger is broken. Pinky is fractured. This should get you through the game.

WILEY

Lucky it's not the other hand.

DOCTOR

I wouldn't actually call that luck, son. You'll need to talk to an ACTUAL police officer after the game.

WILEY

Is that necessary?

DOCTOR

What if they jump someone who ISN'T an D-One quarterback?

Beat.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)

You decide where you're going yet?

WILEY

Maybe ask me that AFTER the painkillers kick in?

Embarrassed, the doctor laughs.

DOCTOR
Of course. You're good to go.

Wiley hops up off the bench.

PICKFORD
If there were ANYBODY else on the roster who could play QB...

WILEY
There isn't.

PICKFORD
Not against these guys.

WILEY
It's safer for everyone if I go in.

PICKFORD
I want it on the record that YOU said that, not me.

DOCTOR
Noted.

PICKFORD
He cleared to play?

DOCTOR
Be careful with that hand. That tape good?

Wiley tries to flex the hand, but it's mostly immobilized. He nods.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
Go. But I'm watching. Play safe.

Beat.

DOCTOR (CONT'D)
WIN, of course. But play safe.

WILEY
Of course.

He grabs his helmet and heads towards the field.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 2nd & 10, South Leonardo 28-Yard Line

From the shotgun, Wiley receives the snap. Again, the line gives him solid protection. Sapolu is starting to neutralize O'Bannion on every play.

Marks blitzes through a running lane and bears down on Wiley, but the quarterback hits Houston over the middle, 10 yards downfield.

Marks follows through and cleanly smashes Wiley to the ground.

Houston runs for another four yards before being driven out of bounds by Slater and another DEFENSIVE BACK.

As he gets up, Marks purposefully steps on the taped fingers on Wiley's left hand. Wiley holds in the scream. No one else sees what Marks did, as all eyes are on Houston and Slater.

MARKS

That's for that "bad pass" you threw earlier.

WILEY

Still another first down.

Wiley gets up.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Now watch me get this touchdown and end your high school career with an "L."

Wiley turns and walks towards the huddle, his back to Marks. Marks stares in shock.

There is 1:10 left in the game.

INT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

The FULL Nerd Squad of Wiley, Floyd, Sapolu, Olson, Finnegan, Sammy and Randall sit around a large table. The table is covered in figurines and maps and books a pencils and dice and whatnot. The game is Warhammer.

Sammy measures the distance between two figurines on the table with a measuring tape. He writes down the number.

RANDALL

How's your head, Olson.

Olson rubs a sore spot.

OLSON
Better than I should be.

RANDALL
It was a legal hit.

OLSON
Dude, it was practice.

RANDALL
It was football.

Randall laughs a little harder than Olson does.

SAMMY
We've got REAL war right here in front of us and you guys can't stop talking about FAKE war.

Randall is offended.

RANDALL
Fake war?

SAMMY
Football. That's all it is. Men pretending to be soldiers...

He lines up Warhammer figurines in opposing football formations.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Playing a fake land acquisition game...

He moves the "quarterback," a giant, through the defensive line for a "first down."

RANDALL
That's stupid.

Randall swats the giant out of Sammy's hand. Sammy jumps back and stands up to get away from Randall.

Randall leans across the table to grab for Sammy, but Wiley and Sapolu pull him back.

WILEY
Hey! Cut that shit out. Friends don't fight.

RANDALL
Maybe we aren't friends.

SAMMY
We definitely are NOT.

Randall walks away in a huff.

INT. ROYAL PALACE, ST. POCO - DAY

Randall stands on the first floor balcony of the Royal Palace. He stands almost at attention as he talks on the phone.

RANDALL
Yes, Mr. President.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.)
You have to hold this hill. It is of vital national security interest.

RANDALL
Yes, sir.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.)
You know why holding onto the Royal Palace is vital, don't you? It's the highest place in the whole country. And once you have the high ground, you can't lose.

Randall cocks an eyebrow.

RANDALL
Sir?

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.)
You know they have the... Priffy down there?

RANDALL
Sir?

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.)
The Perd... the Prifa... you know what I mean...

RANDALL
I'm sorry, sir, I don't.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.)
C'mon, you know... Can someone on the line... I don't know... the FBI... or CIA... NSA... DIAA...

(MORE)

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 M.I.6... can whoever is listening
 look that up for me...?

The line is silent.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Hello...?

CIA OPERATIVE (O.S.)
 Sir... It's the People's Rebellion
 Force, also known as the P.R.F.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (O.S.)
 That's what I said.

RANDALL
 Sir? The height of the plateau
 we're on... it sure seems like a
 target for airstrikes...

Beat.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
 Good thing the local military
 doesn't have air capabilities,
 right.

Silence.

RANDALL (CONT'D)
 Right?

The line goes dead.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, South Leonardo 14-Yard Line

Kerr snaps the ball. Floyd runs to the right. Wiley follows him, but stays at shotgun depth.

O'Bannion breaks through a tackle and forces Wiley to throw quickly. The ball is a bit behind Floyd and he juggles it. Slater hits him a split-second later and knocks the ball out of Floyd's hands. Incomplete pass.

There are 57 seconds left in the game.

INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM - DAY

President Wright leads a press conference. He points to a REPORTER in the second row.

REPORTER

How do you respond to people who say that you sent our troops to take a hill that is neither strategic nor holdable?

WRIGHT

I'd say that's a horrible question. And you're a terrible person for asking it.

REPORTER

That doesn't BEGIN to answer my question.

WRIGHT

And I shouldn't even dignify such a horrible, terrible person with such a terrible, horrible question. But my advisers...

He turns and looks at his advisers, who don't respond. They're no help.

WRIGHT (CONT'D)

My advisers tell me that I should answer the question on behalf of my constituents, the American people.

REPORTER

Right.

Chuckles.

WRIGHT

Well, the real answer is that those questioners are wrong. They don't know what I know and I know that they are wrong. We can not only easily take the mountain--we did that without firing a shot--we can easily keep it.

Various REPORTERS strain to ask follow-up questions.

WRIGHT (CONT'D)

Neither the royals... royalists... NOR the Pirfy... PRF will take that mountain. Not while I'm president. Not while brave American soldiers have boots on that soil.

CUT TO:

Back at the St. Poco Royal Palace, Randall and the squad watch the press conference on TV.

RANDALL
Well now we've GOTTA keep it.

GORDON
Why?

RANDALL
Because the President isn't gonna be embarrassed. He said that shit on TV. Everybody saw it. We aren't going anywhere.

The situation starts to dawn upon them.

BRECK
Fuck.

JUSTIN
Why would he say that?

RANDALL
He's an ass.

GORDON
What does it mean?

Nobody answers.

INT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

The Nerd Squad are playing Warhammer again. Randall is there. It's his turn, but he doesn't remember. Everyone stares at him. Sammy can't handle it.

SAMMY
Could you please go?

Randall is kinda in a daze. He doesn't answer.

SAMMY (CONT'D)
Hello? McFly?

RANDALL
Me?

Sammy nods exaggeratedly.

SAMMY

I'm going to start calling you
"speed bump."

Randall doesn't get it.

SAMMY (CONT'D)

Every time the conversation gets to
you it slows down. Like you're a
speed bump.

Laughter.

Randall stands up and heads for the door.

RANDALL

Smoke break.

He doesn't look back. But he doesn't shut the door all the
way either.

WILEY

C'mon guys, cut it out.

Right outside the cracked door, Randall lights up a
cigarette. He can hear them.

Most of the guys respond that they'll chill out. Except
Sammy.

SAMMY

Your brother's an asshole. We
shouldn't let him play with us.

Randall throws his cigarette to the ground and rushes back
inside. He goes straight for Sammy and punches him in the
face. The smaller boy falls to the ground and Randall
continues punching him. The other boys struggle to pull
Randall away.

CUT TO:

Randall stands outside his parents' bedroom, listening to
them fight inside.

ZOEY (O.S.)

He hospitalized that Sammy Chen
kid. It's not major, but he needed
surgery.

RICHARD (O.S.)

What was it?

ZOEY (O.S.)
Broken cheek bone.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Damn.

He's almost impressed. Randall notices and smiles a little.

ZOEY (O.S.)
At least this will give us an
excuse to why he's going into the
military.

Randall's smile fades quickly.

RICHARD (O.S.)
Yeah, don't think anyone'll buy
that he got drafted.

ZOEY (O.S.)
Not at his age.

Randall walks down the hallway, into his room and slams the door behind him.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 2nd & 10, South Leonardo 14-Yard Line

As Wiley breaks the huddle, he glances towards the stands and sees that Sammy Chen has joined them. He raises a hand to wave to Sammy, but he's too far away.

Wiley gets set. Kerr snaps the ball.

A blitzing Marks makes it into the backfield untouched, forcing Wiley to run.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
Pressure flushes Wiley out of the
pocket... he rushes towards the
sideline...

Sapolu knocks Marks off his stride. He doesn't fall, but he can't keep up with Wiley.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
Wiley's in trouble... O'Bannion has
his sights set...

Wiley rushes past the line of scrimmage when he sees O'Bannion barreling down on him. Wiley runs even faster and gets out of bounds with a 5-yard gain.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
 ...and chases Wiley out of bound.
 Another 5 yards and the clock
 stops.

There are 42 seconds left in the game.

EXT. SINGA BEACH - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

Tonight is the annual Senior Night Bonfire Beach Party for Larson students. No adults are there, although most of the town is familiar with the tradition.

Wiley makes his way to the keg.

WILEY
 Fill me up.

SAPOLU
 Here you go, QB1.

Sapolu hands Wiley a fresh beer and he chugs it.

WILEY
 Another.

A PARTY-GOER finishes filling up another beer and hands it to Sapolu who passes it on.

SLATER (O.S.)
 Look at this sad group of losers.

The Larson students turn to see the South Leonardo High School football players and OTHER STUDENTS walking towards them.

KERR
 What the hell are YOU doing here?

O'BANNION
 You guys think you're the only ones
 to have a senior beach bonfire?

Some laughter. Beverly walks towards Slater and O'Bannion.

BEVERLY
 Come with me, guys. I'll show you
 where the keg is.

They are eager to follow her. Wiley watches them go. He's not happy.

CUT TO:

Later, most of the party has cleared out. Beverly and Wiley stand a bit away from the group, arms around each other. They kiss.

WILEY

You sure you have to go?

BEVERLY

Absolutely. This beauty doesn't come from nowhere. Need my rest.

Wiley chuckles. They kiss again. Beverly walks through the sand dunes and out of sight.

Closer to the fire, Marks gets up and heads that same direction.

MARKS

Gotta hit the head.

O'BANNION

Just pee in the ocean. Everybody does it.

WILEY

(under his breath)
Speak for yourself.

Marks jogs through the dunes. Almost as if he's trying to catch up with Beverly.

Wiley is suspect, so he gets up and follows. The rest of the partiers continue to drink and chat.

Wiley walks through the dunes and stops when he sees Beverly and Marks talking. He freezes and watches them. They're familiar, but nothing crosses a line.

Beverly gets in her car and drives away. Wiley stares after her in a daze. He forgets about Marks.

Until Marks walks through the dunes and nearly bumps into Wiley in the dark.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Hey.

Silence.

MARKS

Hey.

Wiley takes a step towards Marks. Closer.

Marks looks up at him.

They don't break the eye contact.

Wiley smiles. Just a little bit.

Marks' face drops.

Wiley steps away, stops smiling.

MARKS (CONT'D)

Stay away from me!

He turns and stomps away. As much as you can stomp barefoot in the sand.

CUT TO:

SUPER: Pre-Game

Just outside the visitor locker room, Wiley waits as the South Leonardo players arrive.

He sees Marks and Slater and he steps forward.

WILEY

Hey.

Marks looks up. He recognizes Wiley and he stiffens.

Wiley reaches out to shake his hand.

Marks swats his hand away and brushes past him.

MARKS

Punk.

He and Slater laugh as they head inside.

INT. ATLANTA STAR-COURIER BULLPEN - NIGHT

Hirschfelder sits at a computer, typing. Alligood stands over his shoulder, eating an apple. Much of the story is already written.

ALLIGOOD

Okay, that's good. Let's write the kicker...

She takes a bite from the apple.

HIRSCHFELDER
Alright... start it off...

ALLIGOOD
'It's a story of nature AND
nurture...'

HIRSCHFELDER
Yes... 'A story of family and
football and war.'

Alligood nods.

ALLIGOOD
'A story of choices. And
consequences.'

HIRSCHFELDER
'An all-American story.'

ALLIGOOD
That's good.

Alligood nods and takes another bite from her apple.

INT. ROYAL PALACE, ST. POCO - NIGHT

Everyone is asleep. Some in bedrooms, some on couches and floors. Everyone except Justin.

Justin sits at a desk in the Royal Study. The walls are lined with books, but he ignores them to surf the Internet on a laptop at a desk in the center of the room.

He pulls up an article from the South Leonardo Reporter-Statesman. The title says "Last of alleged participants in group assault turns 18; identity revealed."

Justin scans the article.

He sees it.

The name.

Randall Kramer.

It hits him like a ton of bricks.

He flashes back to the day he picked up Renee after her assault. He remembers that he saw Randall leaving Tanner Brumley's house.

Justin gets up and walks into the TV room. Randall is passed out on the couch. Justin grabs him by the arm and YANKS him onto the floor.

Randall wakes up, but he's disoriented. Justin drags him towards the door. Randall makes it to his feet, but Justin keeps pulling.

Several of the other soldiers walk into the room, woken by the ruckus. Justin stares them down with eyes of rage.

JUSTIN
Stay RIGHT THERE!

The look on his face convinces them. He drags Randall outside.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 3rd & 1, South Leonardo 5-Yard Line

Wiley lines up center, with Floyd and Roper as split backs behind him.

Wiley lifts his foot and puts it back down. Floyd goes in motion and sets at receiver.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
Changing up the formation... the
South Leonardo defense is a little
confused...

Down near the Larson end of the field, the crowd gets loud.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
The crowd breaking that noise
pollution ordinance at the
moment...

WILEY
Hut.

Kerr snaps the ball. Roper cuts behind him for the handoff and heads towards the end.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
Roper headed for the short side of
the field, doesn't look like much
room...

Instead of going downfield, Floyd has reversed course and circles BEHIND Roper. Roper pitches him the ball and Floyd catches it cleanly racing for wide open grass.

WOODERSON (V.O.)
Another reverse!

But just as quickly as the hole opens, O'Bannion, Slater and Marks close it. Floyd has nowhere to go. He stops on a dime twists his body back the other direction and launches a pass towards the corner of the end zone--

WOODERSON (V.O.)
A reverse pass! Oh my! The
Gamecocks fully bit on this bit of
trickeration!

The ball floats into Wiley's hands. He's standing all alone in the end zone, nary a Gamecock within 10 yards.

The Referee throws up his arms and one corner of the stadium erupts while the rest may never talk again.

The scoreboard reads 26-26.

INT. ROYAL PALACE, ST. POCO - NIGHT

Justin drags Randall to the edge of the balcony, and tosses him to the ground. Justin kicks Randall in the side.

The other members of the squad all watch from inside, but none makes a move to defend Randall. Randall makes no move to protect himself.

Justin punches Randall. Randall takes it.

Justin punches him again.

And again.

Randall doesn't respond and this saps Justin's rage quickly.

Justin turns and walks inside, leaving the door open. Randall sits on his ass, back to the railing.

RANDALL
I did it. I joined in.

Justin rushes back out, but doesn't get close.

JUSTIN
You destroyed my life! I HATE this
shit!

He waves his arms at the palace, the soldiers, the not-America of their location.

RANDALL
YOUR life?

JUSTIN
That's why I joined the Army.

RANDALL
I thought you were drafted?

JUSTIN
Nah, I lied about that. I
volunteered.

Randall chuckles.

JUSTIN (CONT'D)
Because of you. And now my life is
fu--

Then the bombs start falling.

The first one explicitly rips Randall apart.

Flames from the bombs engulf everything.

CUT TO:

Outside, nothing remains of the palace. It is completely leveled. Nothing moves.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: Extra Point Attempt

The teams are lined up to kick the extra point. Milla comes in for the first extra point attempt since she missed.

Kerr snaps the ball and immediately is met by O'Bannion's full strength. But Kerr holds.

Marks tries to rush the kicker on one side of O'Bannion, but he runs into Sapolu, who knocks him backwards.

Slater blitzes and tries to jump over the line, but Plummer is ready and hits him from below. Slater comes crashing down, well away from the kick.

Milla kicks the ball cleanly and the ball sails through the uprights. Her teammates mob her as the scoreboard now says 27-26 for Larson.

INT. OVAL OFFICE - DAY

President Wright sits in his office, talking on the phone. He nods along as a voice on the other end gives him a LOT of information.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT
Yeah... uh-huh... right.
Airstrikes... St. Poco Royal
Palace... sure. Got it.

He hangs up.

JUNIOR
What was that all about.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT
The St. Pekingese are bombing the
palace. We need to do a retaliatory
strike.

Junior doesn't begin to understand.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT (CONT'D)
You want to phone this one in?

Junior eagerly nods. The president picks up the phone and dials a four-digit number. It starts ringing. The president hands the phone to his son.

JUNIOR
Hey, this is Junior.

The phone continues to ring. Someone answers on the other end.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
Hey, this is Junior. Wright. The
president's son?

Beat.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
Exactly. He asked me to call you.
My password is Alpha Delta Niner.

Beat.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
That is too a real code. Anyway...

Beat.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
So dad says we need to do a
retaliatory strike. In St. Poco.
Against the royal palace.

Junior looks to his father for confirmation. The president
shrugs.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
Yeah, my dad just confirmed it.
Let's do a strike on the royal
palace.

Beat.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
Now.

Junior hangs up.

JUNIOR (CONT'D)
Mission accomplished, sir. Dad. Sir
dad.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT
Good job.

The president pats his adult son on the head.

CUT TO:

American jets fly towards the palace.

They bomb it again.

And again.

And again.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: Kickoff

With less than 30 seconds left, the Lions run onto the field
for the last kickoff. Milla follows the other players.

PICKFORD
Milla!

She runs over to him, still exuberant from hitting the extra
point.

MILLA
Yeah, coach?

PICKFORD
Get me my onside kick!

She grins.

MILLA
Done and done.

Milla runs out onto the field again and sets the ball on the tee sideways. South Leonardo's return team is surprised and they start yelling for an audible.

The entire Larson team except for Floyd moves to the right of the kicker. Two SLG defenders stay with the Floyd, but the others shift for the onside kick.

Milla gets a good, fast run going and kicks the top of the ball. But she doesn't hit it towards the mass of players to her right. Instead she kicks it towards the left-center portion of the field, where no SLG players are. She never slows down, following the ball as it bounces in a straight line.

The SLG players scramble to get to the ball, but no one ever gets closer to Milla. Instantly after the ball goes 10 yards, she falls on it.

Marks comes across the field, full speed, paying no attention to the whistle or downed ball. He's targeting Milla and she doesn't see him coming.

But Sapolu does. Slater doesn't see the bigger man move, but Sapolu gets in Slater's path and hits him so hard the defender flips in the air.

The referees don't care, they're ready to go home. There are only 11 seconds left in the game.

INT. MOTHERS AND TRUCKERS RESTAURANT - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

Sasha, Chick and Beverly are working. Beverly pretends to be busy so she doesn't have to talk to Wiley.

Mickey looks at Wiley's smiling face. She looks grim. Mickey turns to Sasha.

MICKEY
Watch things. Wiley's here.

SASHA

You okay?

MICKEY

Nope.

She walks with Wiley towards a booth that is separated pretty well from the rest of the restaurant.

WILEY

I'm hungry.

MICKEY

You can order in a second. I have some... bad news.

This catches Wiley's attention and he looks her in the eyes. She can't hold the gaze and looks down.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

You remember that... Do you remember what happened to Renee?

Wiley goes ashen-faced.

WILEY

How could I forget?

MICKEY

You know how they didn't release all the names of the perpetrators at the time?

WILEY

Yeah, they were too young?

Mickey nods. Grimly.

MICKEY

Randall.

Wiley instantly rejects the concept.

WILEY

Randall what? He's coming home.

Mickey looks away.

MICKEY

We were talking about Renee, Wiley.

It takes him a second. Then he starts shaking his head. More and more vigorously.

WILEY
Nah. No. No. No.

MICKEY
Wiley. Yes.

WILEY
No. How would you know? How could
you find out?

MICKEY
I've known all along.

Wiley's not buying it.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Quit being obtuse. I was his legal
guardian. The police told me.

WILEY
Then why didn't you tell anybody
else.

MICKEY
You weren't 18 and Randall's life
is Randall's life. After mom and
dad, I didn't want to pile anything
else on you.

WILEY
No, no, no. He wouldn't have done
anything like THAT.

MICKEY
What about Sammy?

Wiley flinches.

WILEY
That was an accident.

MICKEY
Was it?

Wiley knows it wasn't.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
What kind of football player was
he?

WILEY
What?

MICKEY
How did he play the game? Was he
weak? A wimp?

Wiley laughs.

WILEY
Hell no, he was savage. You
should've seen--

She stares at him.

WILEY (CONT'D)
But HE said he was drafted?

MICKEY
That was the lie we agreed we would
tell everyone.

Beat.

WILEY
Have you ever told me the truth
about anything?

He turns and walks away.

WILEY (CONT'D)
What? Am I like some... some kid
you're babysitting?

Beat.

WILEY (CONT'D)
Is that how you see me?

She starts to cry. He's already crying.

MICKEY
Wiley... he's dead.

Randall shakes his head. More tears come.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Randall died.

Wiley walks away. Mickey tries to stop her tears. She fails.

Wiley comes back.

WILEY
How'd he die?

MICKEY

Enemy bombs? Our bombs? It's a little unclear.

Silence.

WILEY

Tell me something you never told me before. Something important.

She takes a deep breath. The sound drops out.

MICKEY

I wanted to play football. I could've played. The desire was beaten out of me.

Wiley raises an eyebrow.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

Literally.

Beat.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

I wanted to be a soldier. I would've kicked ass at it. But I had to run the restaurant. I had to stay.

WILEY

Dad?

She nods.

MICKEY

Like I said, he beat it out of me.

Silence.

WILEY

You know it was me, right?

Mickey sips her drink.

WILEY (CONT'D)

That turned in Richard...

MICKEY

You mean 'dad'?

WILEY

He's not my father. It's his fault mom died. It's his fault Randall...

She takes another sip.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Also, I was raised, by you, to love America. That shit dad did on January 6? That was some evil shit.

Mickey shrugs.

WILEY (CONT'D)

What are you gonna do?

MICKEY

I'm leaving. Culinary Institute. They have a campus in Texas.

WILEY

The restaurant?

MICKEY

Sasha.

Wiley nods.

WILEY

That makes a lot of sense.

Mickey watches him as Wiley walks over to the counter and gets a soda refill from Sasha. He gives her a congrats and a big smile. He sits back down.

MICKEY

What about you?

WILEY

First, I'm gonna win this game.

MICKEY

Obviously.

Beat.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

For Randall?

Wiley shakes his head without hesitation.

WILEY

When I win, it won't be for him. It'll be for me. And those other kids out on the field. And you.

Beat.

WILEY (CONT'D)
But you lied to me.

MICKEY
I knew you couldn't take it.

WILEY
I can take anything.

He starts crying again.

MICKEY
I know you can.

Beat.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
I was there, too.

They hug.

WILEY
Can't we just leave?

MICKEY
Yes.

Beat.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
But not yet.

WILEY
Why not?

MICKEY
If you quit today or quit tomorrow,
you're still a quitter, right? In
their eyes.

WILEY
Sure.

MICKEY
But if you quit AFTER the game, you
get to do it on your own terms. The
only people who will think you're a
quitter are the losers in this
town.

A look tells him that she's leaving. There's a suitcase.

WILEY
Are you leaving?

MICKEY
And miss the big game?

He looks at her expectantly.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Not on your life.

WILEY
I was worried. I don't want to do
this alone.

MICKEY
You aren't alone.

They hug. Long and hard.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
But like, the second that clock
hits zero...

She breaks the hug and claps her hands in a motion that says
she's outta there. Wiley laughs.

WILEY
Okay.

Mickey stares out the window.

MICKEY
Oh shit.

Wiley looks up to see Sasha has arrived.

WILEY
I can tell her...

Mickey shakes her head.

MICKEY
Nah, this one's on me.

WILEY
Everything isn't on your shoulders.

She laughs.

MICKEY
Sasha! Join me outside. Beverly,
you're in charge.

BEVERLY
'Bout fucking time.

Nobody laughs. Sasha joins Mickey and they walk outside. The CAMERA stays inside with Wiley as he watches.

Mickey catches Julie before she goes inside. Sasha catches up to them.

Mickey takes a deep breath and just comes out and says it.

Julie instantly breaks down in hysterics.

Sasha doesn't believe it at first. Then she starts shaking her head no. Then she accepts it and starts crying.

Mickey hugs them both. The tears flow.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - DAY

SUPER: 1st & 10, South Leonardo 47-Yard Line

The mood in the huddle is joyous. Wiley puts his arms around Kerr and Sapolu.

WILEY

We did it guys. All that's left is the kneel down. I gotta say, you guys made this happen. We did this as a team and I thank you.

He literally shakes the hand of every person in the huddle.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Break!

The get to the line and get set. Wiley is under center. He waits while the clock ticks down to one second.

WILEY (CONT'D)

Hike!

Kerr snaps him the ball. Wiley shuffles backwards until he sees the clock hit 0:00. Then he throws the ball straight up in the air and his teammates and the fans mob him.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - NIGHT

SUPER: Earlier

The stadium lights are on as the Larson team runs through non-contact drills. In the stands Beverly sits facing Wiley. She bounces her knees nervously.

BEVERLY
So what was that? At the beach,
with Parker?

WILEY
I'm bisexual.

BEVERLY
Oh.

Beat.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)
Gross.

Wiley frowns.

WILEY
I'm monogamous.

BEVERLY
So? You can cheat in your heart you
know?

Wiley shakes his head.

WILEY
Nah, that's bullshit.

BEVERLY
I'm offended as a Christian.

He stares at her. He's done with her.

WILEY
That's your problem, not mine.

Beat.

BEVERLY
So I guess we're done?

WILEY
Yeah. We never had much of a future
did we?

They meditate on the thought in silence for a moment.

BEVERLY
Can we get a breakup selfie?

WILEY
Uh, sure.

He's a bit put off. She smiles slyly as she snaps the pic.

BEVERLY

Can you give me the exclusive?
Where you going? My money's on
Miami.

He walks away.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - NIGHT

Several POLICE OFFICERS escort Roger Ravenscraft and several of his thug friends towards a waiting police van. They are put inside with several DRUNKS and CRIMINALS.

INT. WHITE HOUSE BRIEFING ROOM - NIGHT

The president talks to a packed press room. He's surrounded by several ADVISERS.

PRESIDENT WRIGHT

I can confirm that there are no survivors. But rest assured, we will NOT rest until we burn those evildoers from the face of the Earth.

REPORTER

And what do you say about reports that American soldiers were among those killed in the bombings.

An Adviser leans in and whispers into Wright's ear. Wright nods and he and his staff walk out of the room as the reporters keep asking questions.

Music Cue: "It's A Mistake," by Men at Work

INT. LARSON HIGH SCHOOL FIELD HOUSE - DAY

SUPER: Now

The team meeting room has been set up for a press conference. The room is packed with reporters. Wiley sits at the front table, surrounded by microphones and digital recorders. Mickey sits next to him.

MICKEY

Hello, everyone. I'm Mickey...
Kramer. I'm... Uhh... Wiley's big
sister...

She squints her eyes.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Am I on Sports Central? Uh... shout
out to everyone down at Mothers and
Truckers. Near the Interstate.

Everyone stares at her. Wiley acts like this is how all these
press conferences go. He actually twiddles his thumbs.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
Oh... uh... you're probably
wondering why I'M here.

REPORTER (O.S.)
The thought crossed our minds.

TOO MUCH laughter. Mickey is embarrassed.

MICKEY
So... uh... Wiley wants the offer
letter from the school he has
chosen to speak for itself.

The REPORTERS have never seen anything like this.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
And he wants me to read it.

Beat.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
So here goes... Dear Wiley...

She smiles at him.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
We would love to offer you a full
scholarship and every opportunity
to earn the starting job.

Cameras click. Fingers burn up keyboards.

MICKEY (CONT'D)
As you know, we lost two seniors
and a junior (to injury) this
offseason. So we have ZERO
experienced players at your
position.

Wiley nods along.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

And, of course, we agree that we ONLY want you as a point guard. That's why we're recruiting you. If you can run the point as well as we think you can, we have a legit shot at the Elite 8. Welcome to the Patriot Conference.

The crowd is stunned into silence.

MICKEY (CONT'D)

It's signed by Trenton Forrest, Head Coach of the American Eagles. The address says Washington, D.C.

Volcanic eruption from the room.

REPORTER

Does American even have a football team?

A DIFFERENT REPORTER

Not one with a point guard.

Mickey and Wiley walk out without looking back.

INT. ALI BERKE'S OFFICE - LATER

Berke sits behind her desk. Pickford sits across from her. He hands her a phone that is already ringing.

BERKE

Verónica?

VERÓNICA (O.S.)

Ali?

BERKE

Hey lady. How are you?

VERÓNICA (O.S.)

It's politics. The good days are a fiasco.

BERKE

Same over here. As you know.

Pickford laughs.

BERKE (CONT'D)

Let me tell you a story about this little MAGA-ass referee today...

VERÓNICA (O.S.)
Text my assistant. The pissant is
already fired.

BERKE
This twit looked me in the eye and
said...

Pickford is impressed.

INT. CITY OF ANGELS KARAOKE BAR, LOS ANGELES - NIGHT

A busy night at a busy karaoke bar in L.A. The KJ picks up the mic as background music plays. The room is crackling with energy.

KJ
Next up to the stage is Renee!
Renee!

Renee steps away from the bar. She's calm but confident. She makes her way on stage and grabs the mic. The music kicks in.

She sings "Bad Romance" by Lady Gaga.

RENEE
Ra-ra-ah-ah-ah/Roma, Roma-ma/Gaga,
Ooh la-la/Want your bad romance!

PATRONS rush toward the dance floor and cheer.

CUT TO:

Renee walks off the stage to thunderous applause. She heads straight to the bar. The BARTENDER smiles.

BARTENDER
What can I get you?

RENEE
Whiskey sour.

The bartender nods.

MCKINNON (O.S.)
Put it on my tab.

Renee turns to see ELLEN BAKER MCKINNON, a white woman in her early 50s. Well-dressed. In charge.

RENEE
Thanks. Uh...

MCKINNON

Ellen.

RENEE

Thanks, Ellen.

MCKINNON

You were good up there.

RENEE

That's not even my best song, I just pull that out for the big crowds.

She waves towards the packed bar.

MCKINNON

You know the show Crazy Ex-Boyfriend?

RENEE

Oh my god, that's my favorite show. The song about circle jerks? Who knew?

They laugh.

Ellen pulls out her card and hands it to Renee.

MCKINNON

Let's have dinner.

Renee nods.

RENEE

I'd love to.

McKinnon's smile is bigger than Renee's.

EXT. BLAKE BRADFORD STADIUM - NIGHT

The game is over, but the players and fans won't leave the field. They celebrate with song:

ALL

(simultaneously)

We are the Lions/The Mighty, Mighty
Lions/Everywhere we go/People wanna
know/Who we are/And why we score...
SO MUCH!

SUPER: We are the Lions, the Mighty Mighty Lions!

SUPER: Forever

FADE OUT.