

SWISH

screenplay by

Micah Cox

Micah Cox

P: (770)865-5551

E: finaldraft25@gmail.com

"Don't measure yourself by what you have accomplished, but by what you should accomplish with your ability."

- JOHN WOODEN

INT. BEDFORD COMMUNITY GYM - BROOKLYN, NY - NIGHT

THROUGH A VIDEO CAMERA FEED

SUBTITLED/BOTTOM OF SCREEN: SPORTS UPDATE. BEDFORD COMMUNITY GYM. NY1 NEWS. CRAIG'S LITTLE HEROES.

MICHAEL SWISH, 11, black, undersized for his age yet strikingly handsome, gives a cool-aide smile to the camera.

He's holding a basketball. We hear the voice of a REPORTER.

REPORTER (V.O.)

Michael Swish. Sixth grader.
Basketball player. Looks like your
average kid right...wrong.

MONTAGE/DRILLS: Swish hits jump shots. Dribbles between his legs rapidly. Behind his back. Big bounces. Baby bounces.

He dribbles two balls while running. Two balls around his body. Two balls between his legs while moving.

REPORTER

Michael swish is anything but
average. From five to nine every
night Michael works out with his
father...

RON SWISH, 30's, tall, feeble, tosses Swish tennis balls while he dribbles a basketball with one hand.

TV CUTS TO: Ron talking into the camera.

RON

He amazes me every single day. I
mean I push him, but he does allot
of it on his own.

BACK TO: Swish in a wife beater flexing his ripped muscles.

REPORTER

Did we forget to mention how cut
this kid is. Maybe the two hundred
pushups, sit-ups, and squats he
does every night before bed has
something to do with it. Oh yeah,
and his first words...

CLOSE UP OF RON:

RON

Basketball.

INT. WILLIAMSBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL - NIGHT

SCOREBOARD: JAYHAWKS 79 HORNETS 78. CLOCK READS: 6.0.

SUPERIMPOSE: BROOKLYN, 1999

Parents dot a half empty gymnasium. Clapping. Rooting. Shouting. CHEERLEADERS strike sprightly poses.

SIDELINES -- Hornets coach VICTOR COLLAZO, a shlubby, earnest, beer-bellied Cuban in his 40's addresses his team.

VICTOR

...Okay high screen and roll. Mike if Jason's open you hit him on the wing. Let's go gentlemen, six seconds. Bring it in.

The players slap their hands on top of each other. Swish locks eyes with JASON CRISP, a stocky chiselled guard with a King Kong sized ego.

TEAM

WIN!

BLEACHERS -- Ron stands amongst the hornets parents clapping. TOM ROGA, 30's, leans over and hands Ron his business card.

ROGA

Tom Roga. I'm a recruiter with the AAU basketball league.

They shake.

ROGA

Your kids talented.

RON

Thanks.

ON COURT -- A WHISTLE. A Hornets PLAYER inbounds the ball to Swish. He dribbles past defenders with lightning quickness.

AL DAVIS, a brawny hot headed power forward sets the pick and rolls to the basket calling for the ball.

Jason flanks the three point line. WIDE OPEN.

Two DEFENDERS collapse on Swish as he shoots an impossible fade away jump shot. The ball sinks through net. BUZZER.

BLEACHERS -- Parents cheer. Ron scowls, shaking his head.

INT. WILLIAMSBURG MIDDLE SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - NEXT DAY

Swish stands in front of his classmates nervously reading from a piece of paper.

SWISH

Kobe B-b-bean Bryant was born
August twenty third in Ph-ph-
Philadelphia. His p-parents...

Classmates SNICKER. Swish looks over at the TEACHER nodding her head with encouragement. He takes a breath, continues.

SWISH

His parents named him after the
famous beef of K-k-kobe Japan...

EXT. HALLWAY - MINUTES LATER

SCHOOL BELL RINGS. Kids leak into the hallway.

INT. BATHROOM - STALL - MINUTES LATER

Al has his arm wrapped around Swish's neck as he squirms. Jason stands in the stall's entrance, snarling.

JASON

Pass the rock next time bitch!

Jason slams the stall door on Swish's hand. Swish releases an earsplitting SCREAM.

INT. RON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Ron and Swish sit at a table eating dinner in silence. Swish has a CAST on his right hand. Ron gives him a salty look.

SWISH

What?

Ron wipes his mouth with a napkin. Stands.

RON

Do your homework.

INT. SWISH'S ROOM - LATER

Posters of the comic book character WOLVERINE decorate Swish's wall. Swish cranks out push-ups staring up at the KNICKS GAME on a small TV monitor.

His school books sit off to the side.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NEXT DAY

Ron watches as Swish struggles with a series of basketball drills using his left hand. The CAST on his right.

RON

We been out here four hours and
you're still dribbling like
Laimbeer.

SWISH

I got one hand.

RON

Well use it.

Ron grabs the ball.

RON

Guard me.

Swish crouches into a defensive stance. Ron runs through him on his way to basket. Swish falls on his back, disheartened.

RON

No wonder those kids call you
pussy. You got no heart. Anytime
someone knocks you down son, you
stand right back up. Now Get up!

EXT. SKYLINE - SYRACAUSE UNIVERSITY - DAY

A bright clear blue sky high above the carrier dome.

SUPER GRAPHIC: 8 YEARS LATER

INT. CARRIER DOME - DAY

A teeming mass of 45,000 rowdy fighting "Orangemen" students BOO loudly. A banner reads: SWISH'S SECTION.

JIMMY BOEHEIM the legendary Syracuse coach paces, exhorting.

ON COURT -- Swish, 19, handsome, lies on his back.

Jason Crisp, 20's, the kid that slammed his hand, wearing a Villanova uniform towers over him.

JASON

Get your pussy ass up.

Swish quickly rises to his feet. The two alpha males stand chest to chest. The REF steps between them. Signaling.

REF

I gota a technical foul on blue
number five!

JASON

That's bullshit!

The ref thrusts his fist into the air, motioning for an ejection. Jason lunges at the ref as his teammates push him off court. He curses wildly, taunting Syracuse fans.

MONTAGE/LATER -- Swish darts past Villanova players. Scoring at will. Trash talking opponents, he's cocky. Selfish.

The Syracuse forward, Al Davis, 20's, powerfully built, throws his hands up in frustration barking out complaints.

Swish ignores him playing to the crowd. Every basket Swish makes, the crowd surges. CHEERING loudly.

CROWD

SWISH! SWISH! SWISH!

EXT. SYRACAUSE UNIVERSITY - DAY

An impeccably well groomed campus basks under radiant sunlight. Pristine buildings. Well manicured lawns.

STUDENTS toss frisbee's back and forth. A bell TOLLS.

Emblazoned on a marble symbol attached to the Women's building we see: SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY--FOUNDED A.D. 1870.

GROUNDS

Swish walks with his back pack slung over his shoulder, flocked by a group of adoring female fans.

He looks back, smiles, waves. Then runs head on into a sexy, mouthy Newyorican, JANET SANTIAGO, 20's. She drops her books.

JANET

Watch it asshole.

SWISH

Sorry.

Swish helps her pick up the books. He stares a beat, she's gorgeous. He gives her his trademark lady killer smile.

SWISH

You alright?

She rolls her eyes and moves on, unfazed.

INT. WOMEN'S BUILDING - HALL - DAY

Swish stops in front of a dorm room. He knocks. A ravishing caramel skinned BEAUTY opens dressed only in a T-shirt.

GIRL
You're late.

SWISH
Study hall.

She grabs his shirt, pulls him in the room.

INT. CARRIER DOME - LATER

Swish stands on court in a dapper two piece suit behind a podium addressing the media. He's composed. Confident.

CAMERA FLASHES.

SWISH
After discussing it with my family.
I've decided to take my talent to
the NBA. I'd like to thank the
University of Syracuse...

INT. MICKEY'S PUB - SOMEWHERE IN BROOKLYN - NIGHT

A seedy bar. Victor downs a beer at the bar staring up at the television. ON TV -- A NEWS REPORTER speaks with a small cropped photo of Swish in the corner of the screen.

NEWS REPORTER
In other news earlier today the top
college player in the country,
Michael Swish announced that he
will he will be declaring for the
NBA draft...

EXT. STREET - CURB SIDE - ESTABLISHING

A souped up CUTLASS CIERA idles curb side.

CUTLASS

A vicious rap beat emanates from speakers. Two MASKED MEN bob their heads as they load bullets into their shotguns, .45's.

The smaller of the two pumps the for-end along the gun barrel of his sawed off shotgun. He shakes his head, grinning.

MASKED MAN 1
Old school nigga...

He turns up the radio. Over the radio we hear the lyrics of a RAP SONG. The voice of a RAPPER belts out...

RAPPER
"When I cock my nine, it's time to
shine. I press rewind, with blood
on my mind. Eight slugs to yo
chest, you fuckin' wit da best..."

He looks out the window towards the basketball court.

EXT. RUCKER PARK - NIGHT

A large crowd full of urbanites BOO loudly. Swish lies on his back. Queens native NATE JACKSON, a looker, stands over him.

NATE
I run Brooklyn.

Swish rises to his feet. The REF steps between them.

The balls inbounded. Swish moves down court, puts a killer crossover on Nate, fade away jump shot. SWISH.

He smirks confidently. The vibrant voice of the ANNOUNCER blares over the PA system.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Brooklyn's in the house! Watch your
ankles baby, courtesy of my main
man Mike Swish!

SIDELINES -- Money exchanges hands.

ANTHONY "BIG GIP" JACKSON, a hefty street hustler with an intimidating presence, stands with his thuggish crew members.

Gip looks pissed. One his crew members whispers in his ear.

THUG
I told you not to bet against him.

ON COURT -- Swish weaves through players, clowning opponents with flashy moves. He scores, looks up into the bleachers.

BLEACHERS -- Ron sits next to Victor shaking his head with disapproval. Victor puffs on his cigarette, nodding.

VICTOR
Should've let me have him for a
year.

RON
I'll leave the coaching to Boenheim.

Suddenly two masked men hustle toward the court, guns drawn.
The gunmen UNLOAD on Gip's crew. People scramble.

Gip's crew pulls out .9mm's returning fire. As Swish runs
bullets rip into his back. He falls to his knees -- Ron darts
across court.

One of the gunmen collapses, dead. The other continues the
assault. Ron jumps in front of Swish taking several shots to
the chest. Gip's crew backs off court, FIRING. POP! POP! POP!

Ron slumps over the concrete, lifeless. The lone gunman, shot
in the arm, begins to take off. He notices Swish dragging
himself off court.

The gunman limps over. Lifts his .45. Swish looks up at him,
shaken. A quick flash of light--BAM!

Swish's body jerks. The gunman limps off into darkness...

SFX: POLICE SIRENS.

INT. BROOKLYN HOSPITAL CENTER - NEXT DAY

Swish lies in bed, his face heavily bandaged. Victor enters
carrying a small paper bag full of comic books.

VICTOR
Hey champ.

Swish turns his head away, ashamed.

VICTOR
Brought you some comic books.
Hulk's my personal favorite but-

SWISH
I'm nineteen.

Victor waits a beat before responding.

VICTOR
You got a favorite?

Swish sighs, bothered.

VICTOR
Mike if there's anything I can do-

SWISH
Get out.

Uncomfortable silence.

VICTOR
I'll just leave these on the bed.
Take it easy buddy.

Victor rests the comics on the bed, heads for the door.

SWISH
Wolvawine.

Swish's speech is slurred, voiced nasalized. Victor hesitates, turns around.

VICTOR
Wolverine's cool. Retracting bone
claws. Animal Keen senses.

SWISH
A healing *factow dat* allows him to
recova fom virtually any wound.

VICTOR
Right...well your like wolverine.
Remember that when your rehabbing.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

Swish sits in the wheel chair staring out the window at a basketball game. The bandages have been removed.

The skin on the right side of his face is badly scarred. His nose twisted and pushed in. There is a severe cleft in his upper lip. He looks dejected, broken.

INT. SKILLED NURSING UNIT - SERIES OF IMAGES - DAYS LATER

A THERAPIST helps Swish take steps on parallel bars. He lifts weights. Runs up training stairs. Pulls a rickshaw.

INT. BROOKLYN BOYS CLUB - DAY

SUPER: 3 YEARS LATER

Swish paces in front of a small group of inner city kids sitting on the gym floor. His face still hard on the eyes.

SWISH
Wha we say to gangs?

KIDS
 NO!

SWISH
Wha we say to drugs?

KIDS
 NO!

SWISH
Wha we say to guns?

KIDS
 NO!

Swish looks up and notices Victor watching through the gym's entrance doors. He ignores him, continues...

INT. HALLWAY - AFTER CLASS

A TROPHIE CASE. Victor stares at a picture of Swish standing next to playground legend RAFER "Skip To My Lou" Alston.

SWISH (O.S.)
 I don't ball no more.

Victor spins, strolls over to him.

VICTOR
 If I wanted to recruit a ball player I'd go down to the Rucker.

SWISH
 So what do you want?

VICTOR
 Heard you were working at a meat market up in Marcy?

SWISH
 Yeah, and?

VICTOR
 You like it?

SWISH
Pays da bills.

VICTOR
 But do you like it?

SWISH
Why you *sweaten* me?

VICTOR
I'm not sweating you. I just-

Swish looks at his watch.

SWISH
Look I gotta *anova* class to teach.

He begins to walk off.

VICTOR
Shame.

SWISH
What?

VICTOR
All that talent gone to waste.

SWISH
You got a *probem*?

Victor pulls out his wallet, hands Swish his business card.
Swish stares at it.

VICTOR
I'm coaching a BAA team. I want you
to come play for me.

SWISH
I told you, I don't ball no more.

Swish turns, storms down the hall.

VICTOR
Is that what your father would have
wanted?

SWISH
Puck you!

VICTOR
Get in the game Swish.

SWISH (O.S.)
I don't ball no more!

INT. SMITHY'S MEAT MARKET - FREEZER - NIGHT

Rows of wooden pallets full of grocery items. Swish and his co-worker LARRY BROWN stack milk cartons onto shelves.

LARRY

...Shorty looks just like Kim Kardashian, and she went out with Duby in receiving.

SWISH

Duby? He looks like *Cwaig Mack* with a Strahan gap.

LARRY

I'm tellin' you these Persian girls got a thing for for brotha's. Think about it? Kobe, Reggie, Lamar.

SWISH

Kobe's girl isn't *Pusian*, she's Mexican *Iwish*. And Kim Kadashian's *Amenian*.

LARRY

Whateva, point is shorty's a freak and she got paper.

SWISH

She know about my face?

LARRY

She ain't gonna care. What you a think a girl from the Hamptons is doin' messin' with brotha's from Brooklyn?

Swish stops, glares at him.

SWISH

Set it up.

The NIGHT CREW MANAGER sticks his head into the freezer.

NIGHT CREW MANAGER

Hey Mike, need you in my office.

Swish and Larry exchange a concerned look.

LARRY

Good luck.

INT. MANAGERS OFFICE - NIGHT

Swish sits in front of the managers desk.

NIGHT CREW MANAGER
Cuts are kickin' my ass. Sorry
Mike.

Swish stands. They shake.

INT. EMPIRE STATE COLLEGE - NEXT DAY

Swish is hyperventilating in front of a packed auditorium full of chattering college kids. He bolts for the exit doors.

INT. RIVER CAFE - NIGHT

Swish sits at a corner table, restless. An exotic, opulent "Kim Kardashian" look alike saunters in his direction.

Swish stands to greet her. As she grows closer the smile on her face disappears.

SWISH
Lacy?

She turns, walks away.

INT. SWISH'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Swish sits on his bed turning the pages of a worn photo album. Swish with family. Friends. Team high school pictures.

Newspaper clippings read:

Brooklyn's next prodigy. Mike Swish, why he's better than Lebron. Born to play. Basketball star gunned down at Rucker Park. NBA Dreams SHATTERED.

He stares up at a framed photo on the wall of him and his father slapping hands on a basketball court...

EXT./INT. BASKETBALL COURTS - GROCERY STORES - DAY/NIGHT

Swish dribbles, loses the ball. He shoots a free throw, air ball. Swish picks up the ball, hurls it.

GROCERY STORE -- Swish bags groceries, depressed.

ON COURT -- Swish practices. ALL DAY. ALL NIGHT. For months. Slowly, his shot improves. His crossover. His footwork.

Swish competes in basketball competitions around the city. The Rucker. Blacktop. And One. He's winning, collecting cash.

Gip and Swish make eye contact as Swish counts money, but Swish breaks it quickly.

INT. SWISH'S APARTMENT - KITCHEN - NIGHT

Swish sits at the kitchen table flipping through the newspaper, he stops on a small photo of a basketball game. In the picture, Jason shoots a jump shot.

Cap reads: NEW YORK KNIGHTS HOLD THREE DAY TRYOUTS.

INT. J TRAIN - DAY

A cuddly 6 year old GIRL stares hard at Swish. He smiles at her, slides on his sunglasses, looks out the window.

INT. SWISH'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Gip and several crew members are standing in Swish's ransacked living room. A CREW MEMBER walks out of Swish's bedroom holding up a small stack of wrapped dollar bills.

GIP

How much?

CREW MEMBER

Eleven hundred.

Gip takes the money.

GIP

Light it.

A crew MEMBER holds a lighter to a cloth stuffed into a bottle. He throws the lit bottle on the couch.

BIG GIP

Teach this nigga a lesson.

INT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - HALL - DAY

Players fill out paper work at the registration desk. Swish walks in, receives a couple nods.

Standing off to the side Isiah "SPEEDY" Williams, a pudgy, slick talking womanizer, all hood, is being worked over by his X-GIRLFRIEND. She's got a crying baby in her arms.

X-GIRLDFRIEND

...No you need to take of your responsibilities, that's what you need to do.

SPEEDY

Why you bugin' ma?

X-GIRLDFRIEND

Nigga fuck you and your tired ass excuses.

Swish bumps into her.

SWISH

Sowy

SPEEDY

Oh snap. The stickiest crossover in Brooklyn. What it do fam.

Speedy sticks out his hand, they give each other dap.

SPEEDY

Hey yo Oscar. Mike Swish.

Speedy waives over his boy OSCAR MORENO, a stringy Rican with a nasty tic dressed in tube socks and "Kurt Rambis" goggles.

SPEEDY

Names Isiah but everybody calls me Speedy. This is my boy Oscar.

Oscar approaches. His head jerks back violently, ticking. He sticks out his fist, Swish gives him a reluctant pound.

SWISH

Damn son. You stuck in 88?

SPEEDY

Don't sweat the style though. My man's got crazy hops.

OSCAR

(Ticking)

Weren't you averaging like--f-f-forty a game.

SWISH

Someting like dat.

Swish stares at him.

OSCAR
Something wrong?

SWISH
No.

OSCAR
Then what you s-s-starin' at?

SWISH
Noting.

Speedy sucks deeply from his asthma inhaler. He rests his hand on Oscar's shoulder.

SPEEDY
My man's a little sensitive that's all. But we gone see you inside though.

SWISH
Ai'ght.

SPEEDY
Bet.

Swish walks toward the registration desk. Speedy's X-GIRLFRIEND lays into him, waiving her finger in his face.

X-GIRLDFRIEND
Anyways like I was saying, I need that child support money-

SPEEDY
Why you all up in my ear drums right now...

INT. KNIGHTS GYMNASIUM - TRY OUTS - DAY

A scrimmage game. Al Davis dribbles at the free throw line. He touches the TATOO on his arm. Shoots. Air ball.

SIDELINES...Victor stands off the side with his loathsome assistant coach NICK FEMA, 40's. Nick rubs his eyes, pained.

NICK
Christ. He's worse than Chuck Hayes.

Al shoots his second, the ball CLANKS off the backboard.

BLAKE EDWARDS, an ungainly, seven foot, pale skinned center, fumbles the rebound.

DEMARCUS ROBINSON, a brawny, clean cut ivy league brotha with authority issues, rips the ball from Blake's hands. Blake falls to his back as Robinson throws it down.

ROBINSON

Get your sorry ass off the court.

MARVIN THORTON, a slim, black, short fused "Georgia Boy" with a stylish DR. J fro grabs the ball. He slams it between his hands angrily, glaring down at Blake.

MARVIN

Damn dawg. Stand your ground.

Blake peels himself off the floor, runs up court. Marvin inbounds the ball to -- TYLER BASKINS A.K.A "Vanilla", a scrawny, blond haired, vigorous point guard from Oklahoma.

Tyler streaks down court, hits a silky smooth jumper over Blake with ease, shaking his head with satisfaction.

SIDELINES...Nick notices Swish enter the gym.

NICK

What the hell is he doin' here?

VICTOR

Don't get your tits in a knot.

Victor walks over to meet him. They shake.

VICTOR

Mike.

SWISH

You still a lousy *recooter*.

Swish nods toward the court.

SWISH

So who's *ankews* I gotta *bwake*?

VICTOR

Crisp is our starting point. You'll be competing with Baskins for the backup job.

SWISH

I don't *pay* backup.

VICTOR

You don't play defense either.

Swish cuts his eyes at him.

SWISH
Let's do *dis*.

SERIES OF SHOTS - LATER

Swish is all razzle dazzle, scoring with flashy street ball moves--On the opposite end Jason takes Swish to the basket with ease while dishing out assists.

Swish continues to score without passing.

SIDELINES -- Victor stands with Nick.

NICK
Kid's a selfish prick.

ON COURT -- Swish dribbles up the court, Al flashes Jason a look. Swish spins on Jason, Al sets a pick and rolls to the basket, WIDE OPEN. Swish ignores him, heads for the paint.

As he's about to score Al's diesel arm cracks Swish across the throat. Swish's ankle buckles awkwardly as he lands.

He falls to the floor in pain. Speedy shoves Al from behind, teammates break up the ruckus. Victor runs on court, livid.

VICTOR
Mike you alright!

Swish gasps for air. Victor gets in Al's face.

VICTOR
You got a problem Davis?

AL
He's playin' Starberry ball coach.

VICTOR
Pull a stunt like that again and you can forget about a contract. You play by my rules. We clear?

Victor stares up at him, not the least bit intimidated.

AL
Yeah coach.

Victor turns to Swish.

VICTOR
Take him to the trainers room.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Blake supports Swish as he limps up the hall.

BLAKE
Maybe you should consider passin'.

SWISH
Passin' is for *peple* that can't
shut.

Blake stops.

BLAKE
You really believe that don't you.

SWISH
Look man, in *Brooklyn* it's dog eat
dog. If you can't handle it take
your Bill Walton ass back to Utah
or *whateva whitebwead* town you came
fom.

Swish limps down the hall on his own. All of sudden he falls
to the ground, clutching his ankle in pain.

SWISH
Puck!

Blake strides up to him.

BLAKE
Walton's a hall of famer and I'm
from Chicago.

SWISH
Whateva.

BLAKE
Good luck making down the hall.

Blake turns to walk off.

SWISH
Hole up...My bad.

Swish sticks out his hand.

SWISH
Mike Swish.

Blake helps him to his feet.

BLAKE
Blake Edwards.

They move down the hall together.

BLAKE
You really think I look like Bill
Walton?

SWISH
Nah, you *ugier*. More like a white
Manute Bol.

BLAKE
Thanks.

INT. TRAINERS ROOM - DAY

Swish lies on a metal table. Athletic trainer JANET SANTIAGO,
early 20's, attractive, wraps his ankle with an ace bandage.

JANET
I'm going to recommend that you get
an MRI.

SWISH
For what?

JANET
Your ligaments may be torn.

SWISH
Yeah well...just tell *cuch* is a
light *stwayne* okay.

JANET
You want fries with your order?

SWISH
What?

JANET
You ever consider that fact that I
have a job to do?

SWISH
For you it's just a job. For me,
it's a *caweew*.

Janet tightens the bandage, extra tight. Swish squirms.

SWISH
Waps a little tight.

JANET
You don't remember me do you?

SWISH
No.

JANET
You ran into me at Syracuse. You were too busy staring at your fan club.

Swish stares at her.

SWISH
You called me an asshole.

JANET
I see nothing's changed.

She heads for the exit.

SWISH
You just gone leave me here?

SWISH
Yup.

SWISH
Can I keep the *cutches*?

JANET (O.S.)
No.

She's gone.

SWISH
Lesbian.

INT. SWISH'S APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY - DAY

Swish, stunned, stands in the doorway watching policemen remove burnt articles from his charred apartment.

INT. SWISH'S APARTMENT - DAY

Swish bends down, picks up the soot covered framed photo of him and his father on the basketball court.

IN THE PICTURE -- Half of Mike's face is burnt away. He flips it over, removes the backing. Slides out the photo.

INT. MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

Swish is arguing with his Iranian LANDLORD.

SWISH

You have to *povide* me-

LANDLORD

You don't have renters insurance.
There is nothing I can do. You go
now, please, or I call police...

EXT. RIVERSIDE PARK - BASKETBALL COURT - DAY

An all out brawl. STREET BALLERS and THUGS swap punches.

BLEACHERS -- Gip smiles as he counts a fat wad of money.
Swish limps toward him.

SWISH

Sup Gip.

BIG GIP

You got allot of balls comin' here.

SWISH

Somebody *bunt* down my *apatment*.

BIG GIP

Fuck that gotta do with me?

Gip stares up at him. Swish looks at the ground.

SWISH

I could use a *fava*.

BIG GIP

A what?

SWISH

A-a *fava*.

BIG GIP

Must of forgot about the three g's
you owe me.

SWISH

I make it up to you.

BIG GIP

And how you gone do that?

SWISH
I pay for you in *da Rucka*. I just
need a loan for my *surgy*.

BIG GIP
For what?

SWISH
My *surgy on my ankew*.

Swish sticks out his foot.

SWISH
Don't have *medcal benfits*.

Gip lights a cigar. Reaches into his waist, pulls out a
titanium gold plated DESERT EAGLE.

BIG GIP
Nigga I look like Obama to you.

He cocks the desert eagle, stands.

BIG GIP
Come up with my cash by the end of
the week. Or I'm gonna put a bullet
in the other side of your face.

Gip heads toward the court, yelling.

BIG GIP
Hey y'all chill out...

Swish notices a half open T-shirt on the bench. Inside, a
flashy gold bullet chain with a large diamond YANKEES
medallion on the end of it. He scans, picks it up.

INT. BRONSON'S PAWN SHOP - DAY

A rotund PAWN SHOP CLERK examines the chain through a
magnifying glass. He looks up at Swish.

CLERK
I'll give you a grand.

SWISH
Das woth thwee.

CLERK
You slow or somethin'. Grand's what
I'm offering. Take it or leave it.

EXT. TRAIN TRACKS - ESTABLISHING

The RUSH of a bullet train as it streaks over tracks.

INT. TRAIN STATION - DAY

A packed station. Swish stands amongst the large crowd. He looks around, frenzied, breathing heavily.

A PICK POCKET makes his way through the crowd bumping into unsuspecting passengers, stealing jewelry, wallets. He darts by Swish causing him to lose his crutches. Swish freaks.

SWISH

Watch out man!

PICK POCKET

Sorry.

INT. J TRAIN - MOVING

Swish sits stiffly in his seat. A mischievous group of coked up STREET KIDS heckle him from across the aisle.

STREET KID 1

Damn son, your face is fucked up.

They chuckle, wiping their noses, snorting. One of the kids squints, recognizing him.

STREET KID 2

Yo chill. I think that's Mike Swish.

STREET KID 3

That ain't him. That nigga look retarded.

EXT. STREETS OF BROOKLYN - ESTABLISHING - EVENING

Stuffy traffic. Old MEN sit in lawn chairs outside the local Bodega playing backgammon. A PROSTITUTE works her corner.

INT. MOTEL 6 - NIGHT

The PROPRIETOR stands at the front desk watching Swish dig his pockets frantically.

SWISH

I have it...I know I got it. I was the *twain*--

Swish realizes.

SWISH

Shit!

EXT. STOOP - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Swish stands in front of metal CALL BOX. He pushes a button.

INT. LARRY'S APARTMENT - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Deafening RAP MUSIC fills the room. A portable PHONE rings on a small coffee table.

Swish's co-worker, Larry, naked, stands behind Lacy the Kim Kardashian look alike. He pumps away rapidly as Lacy releases emphatic pleasure filled screams. The phone rings. And RINGS.

EXT. STOOP - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Swish presses the button repeatedly. After several tries he gives up and takes off down the sidewalk.

EXT. SIDEWALK/PAY PHONE - NIGHT

Swish on his cell phone, dialing. The cell phone BATTERY light blinks, ONE BAR. He stands at a pay phone, banging the receiver against the phone's housing. He's losing it.

INT. PROVIDENCE HOMELESS SHELTER - NIGHT

Swish stands amongst a never ending line of homeless people. The SHIFT LEADER steps outside.

SHIFT LEADER

All full folks.

GROANS.

EXT. GREEN HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

Swish stands on top of a rickety old school desk pounding his crutch against a small window. Glass SHATTERS.

INT. GREEN HIGH SCHOOL GYM - LATER

An open FUSE BOX. Swish flips a switch, one by one the overhead lights flicker to life, illuminating the court.

STORAGE ROOM - LATER

Swish pushes out a basketball rack.

BASKETBALL COURT - QUICK IMAGES

Swish at the free throw line. Shot after shot, the ball slithers through net. He stands at half court.

SWISH

...And now, *parting* at guard. A 5"9 point guard out a *Gween City* high *cool*, number 11, Michael Swish.

(Crowd noises)

SHOWERS

Swish soaks under the shower head. He holds the soap bar like a microphone, pretending to interview himself.

SWISH

...So Swish how does it feel to be *MBP*? Feels *gwate*. I just wanted to *dis* for my *tim* you know, it's not about me, it about *da tim*.

LOCKER ROOM

Swish curls up on a bench. He pulls out the picture of his father on the court, stares at it for a beat. He cries.

INT. J TRAIN - NIGHT

Swish stares at a TEENAGER in a KNICKS jersey dribbling a basketball rapidly under his legs.

EXT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - NEXT DAY

The players stand side by side. Victor paces, doing his best "Bobby Knight" impersonation. Speedy leans into Oscar.

SPEEDY

Here goes another PSA.

VICTOR

For the last hour I've watched you guys run up and down this court like a bunch of bickering old ladies.

His steely eyes bore into each of them.

VICTOR

Robinson in case you haven't noticed, I got the whistle around my neck not you. Williams lay off the god damn cheese burgers. Edwards you've got to hit the weight room asap.

(MORE)

VICTOR (cont'd)
 Davis this is basketball not WWF.
 Moreno your wandering around the
 perimeter like a god damn space
 cadet...I run a tight ship
 gentlemen.

OSCAR
 (Saluting)
 Aye aye c-c-coach.

Some of the players fight back laughs.

VICTOR
 You think that's funny. Anybody
 that wants to clown around can hit
 the streets.

Swish enters the gym, yelling.

SWISH
 I want you to pay for my *surgy!*

The players turn and stare. He limps toward Jason, pointing.

SWISH
 You *puckin* pay for my *surgy!*

JASON
 What? Yo somebody get this cripple
 off the court.

Swish snatches the ball out of Jason's hand.

NICK
 Get the fuck out a here.

SWISH
 I wanna *pay!*

Victor steps to him.

VICTOR
 I'm tryin' to run a practice Mike.
 You come back next year, and try
 again alright?

Swish and Nick share a fiery stare. Blake and some of the
 other players watch him trail off, shamefaced.

JASON
 Yeah, go home Rudy.

SWISH
 I be back like Arnold!

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Nick follows Swish, trying to keep up.

NICK
Hold on a second.

SWISH
What you want?

NICK
Listen Swish I think it's best you
stay away from the team.

SWISH
What?

NICK
We've got some good players this
year. We don't need selfish rejects
like you screwin' up chemistry.

SWISH
I ain't no reject.

NICK
Just do us all a favor and go away.
I see your ugly face around here
again I'm calling the cops.

Nick heads down the hall. Swish elevates his voice.

SWISH
You can't *stup* me!

EXT. GREEN WOOD CEMETARY - DAY

Swish stands in front of his fathers grave site with his head
bowed in payer. Engraved on MARBLE we see the words:

RON SWISH "1966-2007" R.I.P.

He looks up, wipes a tear from his face.

SWISH
I'm gonna do it dad. I'm gonna *pay*
in *da* NBA. I won't let you down.

VARIOUS LOCATIONS -- Swish asking for job applications.
Department stores. Fast food restaurant's. Gas stations. Same
results every time. EMPLOYERS shake their heads "No".

EXT. PROSPECT PARK - DAY

Swish sits on a park bench looking hopeless. He pulls out his cell phone. Stares at it.

EXT. BRONSON'S PAWN SHOP - DAY

Swish stands in front of the pawn shop owner. His cell phone on the glass counter.

PAWN SHOP OWNER

What the hell am I supposed to do with this?

SWISH

Das an eighty dola cell phone.

PAWN SHOP OWNER

Used. I'll give you twenty bucks.

EXT. STREET CORNER - HOT DOG STAND - DAY

The PROPRIETOR hands Swish a hot dog. He moves off to the side, wolfs it down quickly.

Swish looks up to notice a black Escalade pulling to the curb. Gip and two of his crew members hop out approaching the stand. Swish slides on his hoodie, hastily shuffles away.

EXT. STOOP - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Swish stands on the sidewalk looking up into an apartment window. He's yelling.

SWISH

Hey yo Larry! Larry!

Larry opens the window.

LARRY

You can stay here Mike. I'm gettin' evicted.

Larry shuts the window. Swish limps away.

EXT. SIDEWALK/GREEN HIGH SCHOOL GYM - NIGHT

THROUGH A METAL GATE -- Swish watches a SECURITY GUARD guard patrol the gym's entrance. He hobbles away.

EXT. UNDERPASS- NIGHT

Brooklyn's homeless congregate next to fire filled oil drums. Swish catches shut eye under a makeshift tent made of plywood and bed rolls. A limping HOMELESS MAN passes by, muttering.

The man stops, staring at Swish's crutches. He picks them up, scoots off.

DAYS GO BY -- We see Swish sleeping in parks, alleys, street corners, shelters.

EXT. STREET CORNER - DAY

A cardboard sign reads: "HOMELESS PLEASE HELP"

Coins drop into a rusty tin can. Swish sits slumped against the wall, half asleep. He's a mess.

A couple ON LOOKERS recognize him, snapping photos.

INT. CAESARS SHOPPING MALL - DAY

The mall's crawling with BLACK FRIDAY shoppers moving about busily on cell phones.

Swish dirty and disheveled is standing in front of a mirror in a pair of dark stylish sunglasses.

The SALES WOMAN involved with another CUSTOMER, glances over suspiciously. Swish removes the glasses from his face, places them back on the rack.

BLAKE (O.S.)
Those look good on you.

Swish spins. Blake stands behind him with a shopping bag decked out in a sporty jump suit.

SWISH
Yeah, well evybody can't ball like you.

Swish hobbles past him.

BLAKE
I'm headin' to this party tonight. It's kind of like a meet and greet for the players.

SWISH
Good for you.

BLAKE
What is it with you?

Swish stops, turns to him.

SWISH
What you mean?

BLAKE
You don't like party's. Clubs. You like girls?

SWISH
Punny.

BLAKE
You should come.

SWISH
Lata.

Swish limps away.

INT. MALL RESTROOMS - LATER

Swish stands at the sink splashing water on his face. Blake walks in, takes the sink next to him.

SWISH
What are you *sawking* me?

They wash their hands in silence.

BLAKE
All that talent gone to waste. Must suck.

SWISH
What?

BLAKE
Your father gets gunned down trying to protect you and this is how you repay him.

SWISH
Puck you!

Swish rushes him, pushing Blake into the wall. He delivers a swift knee to Blake's groin. Blake hunches over in pain. They tussle, falling to the floor.

Blake gains the upper hand, with his arm firmly wrapped around Swish's neck from behind. Swish gives in.

BLAKE

You tried to od on oxycontin after your father died.

SWISH

You don't know shit!

BLAKE

I know you were the best college player in the country.

SWISH

What do you want?

BLAKE

Let me help you.

SWISH

I don't need your *hep*!

BLAKE

Well I need yours.

SWISH

Get off me!

BLAKE

You got something to say. I knew it the moment I met you.

SWISH

You don't know how it feels. Girls want to vomit evy time dey see me. *Peple tink I'm retaded. Dey laugh and point like I'm some sort of fweak. I can't even get a job. I was a great ball paya. I was I was da best!*

He shakes his fist in the air as he begins to sob uncontrollably. Tears streak down his disfigured face.

SWISH

I was *da best!* I was *da best*...

Blake stares up at the ceiling teary eyed. Full of remorse.

BLAKE

I know Mike. I know...

Blake slowly releases his grip. They sit in silence, both emotionally spent. Sniffling. Panting.

BLAKE

You deserve to be on this team more than I do...My father's a plastic surgeon, he never got drafted...so now he's living through me. Only reason I made the cut is cause he sent coach Fema a fat check.

SWISH

Yeah well...You're lucky.

BLAKE

Why's that?

SWISH

Despite yo shitty post moves you can make it on size alone.

BLAKE

Doubt it.

SWISH

Payers over six six have a *fifty pucent* chance to make it to NBA. You a seven footer and *dis da* BAA. So stop *cwyng*.

Blake smirks as wipes a tear from his face.

BLAKE

You hungry?

INT. FOOD COURT - TABLE - LATER

Blake watches Swish stuff his face with french fries, sickened. Swish glances up.

SWISH

What about your *mova*?

BLAKE

She's a lawyer. According to her I'm throwing my life away playing a stupid game.

Swish looks him over.

SWISH

Maybe you are.

BLAKE
What do you mean?

SWISH
Fuget it. So was *da* deal?

Blake thinks, sipping his soda.

BLAKE
We get coach to put you on as a water boy. In return you help me with my game.

SWISH
Wata boy?

BLAKE
For now. Or at least until I can squeeze some money out of my dad for your surgery.

Swish shoots him a distrustful stare.

SWISH
I don't need any *hanouts*.

BLAKE
Yeah well, looks like you lost some weight. You smell like sour milk and pigeon shit. And you damn sure need a haircut.

SWISH
You seduce all *da* boys like *dis*?

Blake smirks.

BLAKE
You can crash at my place till you get things figured out.

INT. BLAKE'S APARTMENT - KNIGHTS TEAM HOUSING UNIT - EVENING

Swish sits on a bar stool as Speedy runs clippers through his hair. Oscar, ticking, sits on the couch next to Blake watching TV.

SPEEDY
...Soon as I make it to the league, I know Buffie's gone be sweatin' a playa.

SWISH

Buffie?

Speedy pauses as he reaches into his back pocket. He pulls out a magazine cut out of a voluptuous African American pin up model "BUFFIE THE BODY", and hands it to Swish.

SWISH

You *caw* her *picta* in *yur* back pocket?

SPEEDY

Met her on my man's video shoot the other day. That's gonna be wifey watch.

OSCAR

He's d-d-delusional.

SWISH

So what are my chances?

SPEEDY

Zero. Roids got Jason ballin' like a maniac right now.

SWISH

Roids?

SPEED

Him and Al both juiced up on that shit.

SWISH

How you know?

SPEEDY

I overheard them talkin' in the locker room.

ON TV...Blake flips the channel.

HARLIN DASH, a dapper "PAT RILEY" look alike with neatly slicked hair is sitting in a studio talking to a news ANCHOR.

DASH

...Well my loyalty is to my clients, and my job is to get them fair market value...

BACK IN THE ROOM

SWISH

Isn't *dat da* cat dat gets B *payers*
phat contracts in Europe?

BLAKE

Yup. Now he's reppin' Jason.

SPEEDY

He got a deal with greasy ass coach
Fema too. The more Jason's stats go
up, the more perks coach gets on
the side.

SWISH

Cuch Collazo know?

SPEEDY

Doubt it. Wouldn't matter anyways
cause three division one schools
are eyeing him for head coaching
jobs next year. As long we win,
coach is deaf and dumb.

Speedy turns Swish to a mirror on the wall. The letters SWISH
have been etched into his hair with expert craftsmanship.

SPEEDY

Damn I'm nice.

INT. THE LIGHTHOUSE - CHELSEA PIERS - EVENING

The restaurant's pleasingly old fashioned. Hard wood floors.
Period piece lanterns. A jazz band plays on a small stage.

Knights players intermingle with some of basketball's elite.
Blake stands next to Swish dressed to the nines.

SWISH

Dis ain't my kin of *potty*.

BLAKE

Relax. See that guy sitting next to
Al. He's a scout with the Miami
heat. The one talking to Marvin's
with the Atlanta Hawks. And the guy
next to Jason's Harlin Dash.

Swish watches Jason speak to Harlin. He also notices Janet
sitting between Victor and Tyler.

SWISH
What about the girl next to *cuch*?

BLAKE
What about her?

SWISH
Who is she?

BLAKE
His niece.

Nick approaches. He shoots Swish a cold stare.

BLAKE
Hey coach.

NICK
What's he doing here?

BLAKE
I was thinking he could work the
sidelines as a water boy.

NICK
This events for BAA players only.

BLAKE
Well Swish-

NICK
He's not part of the team.

Blake's tongue tied. Nick locks eyes with Swish.

NICK
Maybe next year buddy. Blake
there's somebody I want you to
meet.

Nick leads Blake away. Swish just stands there looking lost.

BLAKE
What about Swish?

NICK
He's a big boy, he'll get over it.

BLAKE
But-

NICK

Remember your not here cause of
your skills. Now shutup and smile.

They walk up to several middle aged men dressed in black tie talking amongst themselves.

NICK

Charles, somebody I'd like you to
meet...

AT THE TABLE -- Janet excuses herself and walks up to Swish.

JANET

How's the ankle?

Swish gives her a sour look.

SWISH

What do you care.

He limps away.

INT. BLAKE'S APARTMENT - LATER

Swish stands in front of the flat screen with a remote.

ON TV--LEBRON JAMES drives to the hole. The action
backtracks.

BACK IN THE APARTMENT -- Swish mimics Lebron's moves shaking
his head. He stops, putting his hand on his hips.

SWISH

Hell *wit* her...

INT. BLAKE'S APARTMENT - BATHROOM - LATER

Swish is covered in soap suds singing loudly in the shower.

SWISH

...You cut me open and I, keep
beedin, keep keep *beedin*, and I,
keep *beedin*, keep-

He shuts off the water as if he hears something. There's a
loud KNOCKING sound coming from the living room.

LIVING ROOM

Swish opens the door shirtless, dressed in jeans, blotting
himself with a towel. Janet stands in the doorway in a tight
fitting outfit looking ravishing. She's peeved.

JANET
What's your problem?

Swish stares at the floor.

SWISH
I don't have a *probem*.

JANET
You want to blame me for ruining
your dream then fine. You wouldn't
have made it anyway.

SWISH
Oh yeah. Why's *dat*?

JANET
Your selfish, your defense sucks,
and your crossovers weak.

SWISH
Anyting else?

JANET
You got no heart.

Janet storms down the hall. Swish sticks his head out the doorway, offended.

SWISH
I got *penty* of heart!

JANET
Whateva.

SWISH
Where you going?

JANET
To get trashed.

SWISH
Want some company?

JANET
No!

BLAKE'S APARTMENT

Swish bounds into his bedroom. He reappears seconds later wiggling into his shirt, shoes half on his feet. He scrambles through the front door.

EXT. SIDEWALK - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - NIGHT

Janet stands on the sidewalk trying to flag down a cab as Swish approaches. She looks at him rolling her eyes.

JANET
Are you deaf?

SWISH
No I'm *retaded*.

She gives him a fake smile continuing to flag down the cabs.

JANET
I thought I ruined your dreams.

SWISH
You did. But I like *da* way you walk.

JANET
My walk?

SWISH
Your ass swings back and *futh* like a-

JANET
Classy. Real classy.

A cab pulls up to the curb. Janet opens the door. Swish quickly scoots around the other side.

JANET
What are you doing?

SWISH
Being *pusistant*.

JANET
I didn't ask you to be.

SWISH
I know.

Swish climbs in the cab. Janet shakes her head, irritated.

INT. THE PEANUCKLE - NIGHT

A drunken MAN performs a bad karaoke rendition of a 70's classic on stage. Swish and Janet sit at a small corner table munching on peanuts. Swish looks around, he's sketchy.

JANET
Something wrong?

SWISH
I hate *kaweoki*.

JANET
Then you should have stayed home.

SWISH
You don't date much do you?

JANET
This isn't a date.

Swish nervously fiddles with his beer.

SWISH
So, your *cuch's* niece huh?

JANET
Are you implying something?

Swish raises a brow.

SWISH
No. Why you gettin' all *defesive*?

JANET
I'm not.

A WAITRESS sets down a plate full of chicken wings and a pitcher of beer.

JANET
Thank you. My father married his sister.

SWISH
What made you want to become a *twaina*?

JANET
I love the healing process. Makes me feel good if I can help an athlete get back on his feet.

SWISH
Any *bova's* and *sista's*?

JANET
Two brothers. One's an engineer. The others a police officer. You?

SWISH

No.

JANET

What about your parents?

Swish looks off.

SWISH

Their dead.

She stares at him intensely, feeling a sense of sorrow.

JANET

I'm sorry. What happened?

SWISH

My *mova* was killed by a *dwunk*
driva. And my *fava* died in a shoot
out.

JANET

Shoot out?

Janet thinks, realizes.

JANET

Oh my god...Rucker Park. That was
you?

SWISH

Yeah.

JANET

I read an article in the paper.
It's just-it's been so long I
forgot-

SWISH

Is okay.

JANET

Must be hard for you.

SWISH

I do *alwight*.

They sit in silence for a while watching the drunk on stage.
Swish catches her peeking at his face out of the corner of
her eye. He looks at her, agitated.

SWISH

What?

JANET
Can I ask you something?

SWISH
Go head.

JANET
Why are you so ashamed of the way
you look?

SWISH
I'm not.

JANET
Then why do you look at the ground
when people talk to you?

SWISH
You always *dis bunt*?

JANET
Bunt?

Swish stares at the floor, embarrassed. She's pushing it.

SWISH
Fuget it.

JANET
Just kidding. Yes I've always been
this *bunt*. Does it bother you?

SWISH
No.

She can tell he's uncomfortable. Janet pours the beer into
her mug, holds it up.

JANET
Friends?

Swish slowly lifts his beer mug.

SWISH
Fwends.

They toast, drink.

ON STAGE - LATER

Janet finishes her set, walks off stage. The MODERATOR takes
over the mike.

MODERATOR
Give it up for Janet y'all.

APPLAUSE

TABLE...Swish laughs it up, tipsy. Janet trudges over and slumps into her chair. Trashed. He smiles at her.

SWISH
Good job.

JANET
Panks.

SWISH
You got jokes.

MODERATOR (O.S.)
Alright folks we need one last volunteer for tonight. This is the last call. Who's gonna come up and give it a shot?

ON STAGE...The moderator scans. No one volunteers. All of a sudden Janet points over to Swish.

JANET
Right here!

SWISH
What you *doin'*!

MODERATOR
Okay, we got a volunteer. Come on up here buddy.

All eyes on Swish. He's frozen stiff. AT THE TABLE -- Swish turns to her, scared out of his mind.

SWISH
You *cwazy*!

JANET
You scared?

Swish glances around the club, people stare. He reaches for his beer, slurps it down quickly.

MODERATOR (O.S.)
Don't make me come down there and get you.

Swish looks at Janet full of disdain. He stands, slowly treks toward the stage. He's breathing heavily, petrified.

The moderator greets him as he steps on stage.

MODERATOR

All your lyrics are right there on that screen. Knock em' dead buddy.

The moderator hops off stage. Swish stares at small flat screen. Music starts to play.

The lyrics scroll up the screen. Swish lifts the mike to his mouth as he peers out into the crowd.

Everything becomes blurry, peoples faces distorted. He struggles to find the words.

SWISH

I-I should have...no go...just *tun* *awound...*

Swish stops, glances around the club. Deer in headlights. He runs off stage towards the exit.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NIGHT

Swish limps up the sidewalk, he's on fire. Janet catches up.

JANET

Hold on a second.

SWISH

Leave me alone!

JANET

Is that how you deal with all of your problems? You just run away from everything?

SWISH

You don't know *anyfing*.

JANET

So why don't you tell me?

SWISH

Look at you, you're *bewtiful*. All you have to do is shake *yo* ass and you can get *anyfing* you want. It don't work like *dat* for me.

Janet grabs his arm, turns him towards her.

JANET

You think I'm some type of two dollar ho?

SWISH

I didn't say *dat*.

JANET

Let me tell you something Swish. In high school when other girls were shaking their ass in front of the boys. You know what I was doing?

Swish stares at the ground.

JANET

I was taking care of my two brothas. You know why?

Janet lifts his face to her. He pulls away.

JANET

Look at--Look at me. Cause my mother was too busy trickin' and my father was too strung out to notice. So who are you to judge me?

SWISH

I ain't judgin'. All I'm sayin' is we're *diffwent*.

JANET

Everybody's different. So what?

SWISH

(Screaming)

Yo not *diffwent* like me! Look at my face! Look at it!

JANET

I'm lookin'! And it ain't that bad.

Swish looks her dead in the eyes.

SWISH

How come you didn't do *dat* wit' my *ankew*?

JANET

Do what?

SWISH

Lie.

Janet thinks about it.

JANET
Fuck you Swish.

Janet storms away, now she's on fire.

SWISH
Whateva.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NEXT DAY

SUPER: NEW YORK KNIGHTS VS. RALEIGH ROCKETS

Knights fans lightly speckle the bleachers. Swish is sitting in the stands behind the knights bench.

He glances up at the scoreboard: ROCKETS 45, KNIGHTS 26.

ON THE COURT...The knights are taking a royal beating. Speedy bodies up his DEFENDER. Something catches his attention.

IN THE STANDS--"BUFFIE THE BODY" moves through the crowd. Her ass is the reason men study adult magazines.

Tyler passes to him but the ball hits Speedy in the face, falling out of bounds.

SIDELINES...Victor sits with his head in his hands on the bench. Exasperated.

ON COURT...The Rockets massive center "SKYWALKER" jams the ball over Blake sending Blake crashing to the ground.

SKYWALKER
Sorry ass white boy.

KNIGHTS fans **BOO**. Blake stands, embarrassed.

SIDELINES -- Robinson turns to Victor on the bench.

ROBINSON
Coach we should be runnin' our flex
against their man to man.

VICTOR
Can it Robinson.

ROBINSON
Blake's gettin' rocked. I can
handle-

Victor stands, walks away.

BLEACHERS...Swish watches as Jason reaches behind his chair, picks up a black WATER BOTTLE. Jason notices him staring.

JASON
Problem bitch?

Halftime BUZZER.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - HALFTIME - LATER

Victor stands in the middle of the room addressing his team. He's more mechanical than inspirational.

VICTOR
What the hell are you guys doin'
out there. Edwards, catch the
freakin' ball with two hands.
Moreno you gotta learn the plays.
Thorton, you building a house? Your
one for nine. Speedy you might want
to concentrate on the ball rather
than vagina's.

The locker rooms quiet. All of a sudden Swish storms in, enthusiastically clapping it up.

SWISH
Is okay guys. Is okay. Pick up your
engy. We still have a *nover* half to
go.

AL
Man shut your retarded ass up.

BLAKE
Don't tell him to shut up.

Al looks at Blake with intimidating self-assurance.

AL
What?

Blake looks away, not wanting a piece.

MARVIN
He said don't tell him to shut up.

Al steps to Marvin. But Marvin's not so quick to back down.

AL
Got a problem bama?

MARVIN

I ain't wit all that talkin'
homeboy.

VICTOR

Both of you sit your asses down or
I'll bench you the second half.

Victor steps between them. The two hot heads separate.

VICTOR

Swish you got a go buddy. This is a
team meeting.

Swish turns, slowly limps outside. Nick follows.

HALLWAY -- Nick steps into the hallway.

NICK

Hey Mike.

Swish turns.

NICK

I thought I told you to stay away
from the team.

SWISH

Cuch said is okay for me to watch
da games.

NICK

Really because he didn't tell me
that.

SWISH

Well maybe you should go *bover* him.

NICK

Swish let me break it down for you.
You, are not a part of this team.
Now you wanna be a little fagoty
cheerleader on the sidelines fine.
But don't ever step foot in our
locker room again. Understand?

SWISH

What are you *da Godfaver*.

Nick shoots him a condescending smile.

NICK

I know all the scouts, agents, and GM's that you need to get to back to the top. Fuck with me and I'll bury you.

Swish glances at Nick's thousand dollar wrist watch.

SWISH

Nice watch.

NICK

What?

Swish hobbles off. Nick stares down at his gold plated stainless steel "Roberto Cavalli".

NICK

Try me Swish.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - NIGHT

Jason is curling dumb bells in front of a mirror like a mad man. Swish walks in, eyes him, heads to the weight bench.

He leans back, pumps the bar up and down. In an instant, Jason's over him. He holds the bar down on Swish's chest.

JASON

What up son.

Swish coughs, struggling for air.

SWISH

What--you--doin?

JASON

That little stunt you pulled don't fly wit' me.

SWISH

I--don't know--

JASON

Shutup. Now pay attention. Me and Al makin' moves. Last thing we need is a bitch nigga like yourself screwin' things up. So what you gone do is play your position. If I tell you to sniff my ass, you gone sniff my ass. Got me?

SWISH

Got you.

Jason releases the bar. Swish sits up, gasping for air.

JASON

Why's your sorry ass even here?

SWISH

Same weason--you are.

JASON

Nigga the NBA don't want you.

SWISH

I got more game *den* you.

JASON

It ain't about game. You ain't marketable. Not with a face like that.

Jason smirks as he heads out of the room.

JASON

Just remember what I said pussy.

INT./EXT. SERIES OF IMAGES - VARIOUS ARENAS - DAY/NIGHT

ON COURT -- Jason and Al are hooping way beyond their capabilities. They play a two man game, ignoring teammates.

Oscar wanders around the perimeter looking disoriented. Marvin misses shots. Speedy sucks air, struggling to keep up. Blake's bullied in the post. Al commits dirty fouls.

SCOREBOARDS -- KNIGHTS LOSING GAME AFTER GAME.

ON THE BENCH -- Teammates sit on the bench with bleak facial expressions. Frustrated.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - HALLWAY - POST GAME

Swish slaps hands with several knights players as they head off court, defeated. Jason throws a towel in his face.

JASON

Come clean up the locker room retard.

SWISH

Puck you.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Swish pushes a cart full of dirty uniforms through the locker room singing to the music on an ipod.

SWISH
 ...In New York, *concwete* jungle
 where *dweams* are made of. *Dere's*
noting you can't do...

He notices Oscar sitting on the bench studying the knights playbook, head jerking uncontrollably. He limps over to him.

SWISH
 What you up to?

OSCAR
 Trying to m-m-memorize the plays.

Swish sits.

SWISH
 Is it *had* for you?

Oscar shuts the playbook.

OSCAR
 Why would you think it's hard for
 me?

SWISH
 No offense. It's just...you seem a
 little lost out *dere*.

OSCAR
 I'm not lost alright!

SWISH
Alwight. Calm down.

Oscar stares at him, contemplating.

OSCAR
 I got H-h-huntington's disease. Doc
 said--I may be experiencing early
 signs of d-d-dementia.

Swish shake his head, shocked.

SWISH
Sowy man.

OSCAR
Don't be. I hate when people say
that.

SWISH
You mind if I ask you *sometin'*?

OSCAR
I started s-s-stuttering when I was
fifteen. Me and my older b-brotha
was comin' from a party in
flatbush. He h-had too much to
drink and crashed into a light
pole. I m-m-made it. He didn't. So
fuck off.

They sit silence for a good while.

SWISH
You know you talk funny.

OSCAR
S-so do you.

SWISH
Guess we both got screwed huh?

OSCAR
Guess so.

Swish sticks out his fist.

SWISH
I used to *studa* too. I know how it
feels.

Oscar looks at him. They pound.

SWISH
Let me see *dat*.

Oscar hands him the playbook. Swish studies it for a beat. He
leans over, pointing at the book with his finger.

SWISH
Alwight. So Iso 2...

INT. BAY RIDGE SPORTS BAR - NIGHT

Swish and his teammates sit around a table downing shots,
talking smack, buzzed.

ROBINSON
He's runnin' three two motion plays
like we're a JV team.

MARVIN
Why you always haten' playa?

ROBINSON
I'm not haten'. All I'm saying is
that Jason and Al get all the glory
while we play Hoosier ball.

BLAKE
I like playing Hoosier ball.

ROBINSON
Figures. Look we ain't gonna make
the playoffs like that.

SPEEDY
Ain't nobody care 'bout the
playoffs. They taken away our
shine.

OSCAR
True. We ain't never gone get c-c-
called up playin' with them.

Speedy notices a group of fashionable females standing at the
bar talking amongst themselves.

SPEEDY
I say we get some ass.

MARVIN
Hell yeah.

SPEEDY
See them dime's at bar.

The players turn their heads.

SPEEDY
Watch a professional go to work.
Y'all take notes.

They watch Speedy strut up to the bar.

ROBINSON
Here comes a diss.

Speedy runs his game. They girls smile, laugh. He's charming.

ROBINSON

You gotta be kiddin' me. He looks like Randy Jackson with down syndrome.

MARVIN

Didn't stop Biggie.

The ladies look over and wave at the players. Speedy notices Swish staring at the floor. He walks back over to the table.

SPEEDY

We bout to hit up this club. You down?

SWISH

Nah I'm coo. I'ma call it a night.

SPEEDY

A'ight check it. See the red head.

Swish glances at the cute RED HEAD. She oozes sex dressed in a hot red mini skirt, with six inch "DO ME" me pumps.

SPEEDY

Shorty is ripe. And she loves ball players.

SWISH

Not my type.

SPEEDY

What is your type?

SWISH

Don't worry bout a'ight.

SPEEDY

My bad nigga damn.

Swish stares at the floor. Speedy puts his arm around him.

SPEEDY

Look man, as for me I don't really care what you do. But some of the cats are startin' to think you like gettin' poked in the ass, na' mean?

Swish looks over at the girls, back to the fellas.

SWISH

Let's roll.

INT. CLUB EXIT - NIGHT

The clubs live. Iced out play boys spit game to dolled up women in scanty mini skirts. People dancing, drinking.

A couple B-Boys battle it out in the center of the dance floor to a mean old school RAP BEAT.

DJ (O.S.)
Milky. Tear it up baby.

Swish stands next to Speedy and the rest of the crew. He notices Jason and Al enter the club with a group of rough looking street cats.

They're slapping hands with people, obviously well known. Speedy nudges him, taking note.

SPEEDY
Forget them. Let's hit up vip.

ACROSS THE CLUB -- Jason approaches a RAUNCHY FEMALE with the body of a pin-up super model.

JASON
What up Stacy. You lookin' real healthy.

She looks him over, somewhat interested.

RAUNCHY FEMALE
You in the league yet?

JASON
I'm workin' on it.

She rolls her eyes and walks away. A couple THUGS cackle at the bar.

JASON
Fuck y'all lookin' at?

INT. VIP SECTION - MOMENTS LATER

The players sit around red velvet couches with the girls. Blake and Oscar are making out.

Marvin and Robinson watch Speedy sandwiched on the floor between two shapely women in tight fitting "booty" shorts.

Robinson shakes his head, bewildered.

ROBINSON
What's he got that I don't?

MARVIN
Game dumb ass. It's called game.

ON THE COUCH -- The cute RED HEAD sits next to Swish. He's uncomfortable. She talks loudly over the music.

RED HEAD
So Speedy said your really good.

SWISH
I'm awight.

RED HEAD
What position do you play?

SWISH
Point god.

RED HEAD
What?

SWISH
Neva mind.

The Red head gives him a seductive once over sipping from her tropical daiquiri. She leans in close, whispers in his ear.

RED HEAD
I'll bet your better than alright.

She places her hand in Swish's crotch area.

RED HEAD
Wanna go somewhere?

He brushes her hand away.

SWISH
How much he pay you?

RED HEAD
What?

Swish gets up and limps away. The red head's confused.

STAIRS - Swish hobbles down the stairs. He looks up to notice Janet on the dance floor with Jason. They're grinding hard.

BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Swish, enraged, splashes water on his face. He slams his fist against the wall.

Jason walks in, the two share a hostile look. Jason moves to the urinal, shaking his head.

JASON
Feel sorry for you.

SWISH
Why's dat?

JASON
I'll be pushin' a lam in a couple years while your retarded ass is flipin' burgers.

SWISH
I ain't *retaded*.

JASON
Fact is I'm movin' up, you movin' down son. Everybody know I'm the best point in Brooklyn. Streets don't lie.

SWISH
You got *nufin'* on me.

Jason zips up, turns to him.

JASON
Don't you get it dumb ass. It ain't 'bout how you start the race. It's how paid you are at the finish. You Zab Judah, I'm Mayweather.

SWISH
I don't *pay* for *da* money. I *pay* to win.

JASON
Fuck outta here with all that Herm Edwards crap. Real niggas do real things. Cause in the end, we all tryin' to get dough.

Jason moves to the sink, washes his hands. He stares at himself in the mirror.

JASON
What you think of coach's niece?

SWISH
What about her?

JASON
Shorty got a fat ass. Tell you
what. You play your position like I
told you, I'll let you sniff my
fingers when I'm done.

Jason walks out, smirking. Swish balls his fist.

DANCE FLOOR - MINUTES LATER

Swish stands off to the side watching Jason dance with Janet.

ON THE FLOOR -- Jason's fingers caress Janet's curvaceous
thighs. She looks sweaty, sexy, turned on.

Swish heaves. Everything moves in slow motion. The sound of a
rapid HEARTBEAT. The music in the club becomes drowned out by
Swish's heavy breathing. He limps over to them.

SWISH
What are you doin'?

JANET
Swish?

SWISH
Why you *dacen wit dis lootha*.

JASON
Take your retarded ass home.

Swish punches Jason in the face hard, *WHACK!* Jason falls
back. He responds with a swift blow to Swish's head.

PEOPLE move out of the way as Al and his thuggish FRIENDS run
over to assist.

Blake, Marvin, Speedy, Tyler and Oscar join the fracas. The
two groups swing wildly exchanging punches. It's pandemonium.

INT. ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL - WAITING AREA - NEXT DAY

Blake and Speedy, faces bruised, sit in chairs reading the
Brooklyn paper.

Speedy tosses his newspaper on a small coffee table. One of
the articles reads: KNIGHT FIGHT AT CLUB EXIT.

There's a picture of Knights players in handcuffs being escorted out of the club by POLICEMEN.

SPEEDY

Coach is gonna have our ass for this.

BLAKE

My lungs are already burnin'.

SURGERY ROOM

Swish lies on an operating table knocked out under anesthesia. A SURGEON works on his ankle.

INT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - DAY

Knights players sprint up and down the court. Speedy lags behind, laboring, pained.

Victor and Nick stand off to the side watching, unimpressed.

VICTOR

You guys want to act hard. You gone run hard.

NICK

Five more. You can thank Speedy for that.

EXT. JANET'S APARTMENT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - NIGHT

Swish knocks on Janet's door. She opens looking sexy in short shorts and a wife beater.

JANET

Now's not a good time.

SWISH

(Staring at the ground)
I just um...I just wanted to *apogize* for *da* over night. I know how I acted, and *das* not me--

All of a sudden Jason opens the door, shirtless.

He locks eyes with Swish for a brief moment. Slides on his shirt, scoots past him. Swish shoots daggers at Janet.

JANET

Wait-

He storms away.

INT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - DAY

SUPER: ONE MONTH LATER

Al, frustrated, stands at the free throw line taking instructions from Victor.

VICTOR

Bend your knees more. Snap your wrist.

Al shoots, the ball CLUNKS off the rim. Swish runs into the gym with a basketball. Streaks down court, shoots a lay up.

SWISH

I wanna *pay cuch*.

VICTOR

Rosters full.

SWISH

I can *hep* you get to *de payoffs*.

VICTOR

I don't doubt your abilities or your heart Mike. But on my team I need Steve Nash runnin' the point. Not Michael Jordan. Next year.

Victor turns to AL.

VICTOR

You're still not bending your-

SWISH

Ain't no *nex* year. I wanna make *da tim dis* year. *Memba* you came to me.

AL

Take your *corny* ass outside man.

Swish glares at Victor, nostrils flaring.

VICTOR

We're already thirty games into the season.

SWISH

Den I'll be your *wata* boy. Team *macot*. *Cheelead*a. I don't care *cuch*. Just me give a shot!

Victor shakes his head, annoyed, intrigued. He looks at AL.

VICTOR
 Damn it. Alright I want five
 freethrows in a row. You miss one,
 you wait till next year.

Swish moves to the free throw line.

AL
 Left handed.

Swish looks at Victor, he nods. Swish steadies himself.

Shoots left handed. The ball swish's through the net with
 each shot. Al shakes his head, pissed. Victor turns to Swish.

VICTOR
 We could use a water boy.

SWISH
Panks cuch.

VICTOR
 Now tell your buddy Blake to get
 off my back. Kids been breakin' my
 balls for weeks.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - DAY

Swish moves Oscar and Blake into position on a designed play.

SWISH
 So Blake sets *da* pick, you slash to
da baseline, and I hit him.

Swish passes to Blake, he shoots a hook shot. SWISH.

SWISH
Das it. Again...

INT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - DAY

Jason's pulling basketballs from a rack shooting jumpers.
 Nick enters, strolls over.

NICK
 Pacers pulled their offer.

JASON
 What?

NICK
Your little knight club fiasco
didn't go over well with the front
office.

Jason launches a ball against the wall.

JASON
Fuck!

NICK
Relax. I got everything set up at
the showcase.

Jason gets in Nick's face.

JASON
Why you always talkin' out your ass
man. This right here ain't gone cut
it! I need that league money.

NICK
Just do your job and you'll be
fine. Alright?

Jason backs off. Paces.

JASON
You got somethin' for me?

Nick scans, reaches into his pocket, pulls out a small bottle
of pills. Jason snatches it out of his hand, storms off.

NICK
Take it easy with those things.

THROUGH THE OFFICE WINDOW -- Victor stares down at them.

EXT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - LATER

Knights players file onto the team bus. Janet approaches
Swish standing in line.

JANET
Can I talk to you for a second?

SWISH
Say away *fom* me slut.

She stands there, mouth gaping, hurt. He steps onto the bus.

INT. TEAM BUS - ROLLING - DAY

Tyler sits next to Swish listening to music on his ipod.
Swish removes one of Tyler's ear pieces.

SWISH

Can I ask you *sometin'*?

TYLER

What's up?

SWISH

My boy like's *dis* girl *wight*. But
she played him *had*. And he wants to
cut her off, but *dere's* just
someting about her. What you *tink*
he should do?

Tyler shoots him a curious look.

TYLER

She worth it?

SWISH

Yeah...I mean he *tinks* so.

TYLER

Then I'd say he should go with his
gut.

Tyler shakes his head as he places the ear plugs in his ears.
Swish looks at him, snatches the ear piece again.

SWISH

I *tink* he's in love *wit* her man.

TYLER

Really?

SWISH

Yeah. Which is *cony*, cause love is
for *suckas*. You *eva* been in love?

TYLER

Once. Can I have my ear piece back.

Swish hands him the ear piece, stares out the window in deep
thought. He turns back to Tyler snatching his ipod.

TYLER

What are you doin'?

SWISH
What happened?

TYLER
We had a joint account. She cleaned
me out and moved back to Oklahoma
with my best bud. Ipod.

Swish stares at him, then breaks into laughter, doing his
best "Forrest Gump" impersonation. Tyler's not amused.

SWISH
"I'm not a *smat* man...but I know
what love is".

TYLER
Funny.

SWISH
"Why *dun't* you *luv* me, Jenny?"

TYLER
No really hilarious.

SWISH
Told you *luv* is *fo suckas*.

TYLER
Thanks for the advice Dr. Ruth.

INT. GAMPEL PAVILION ARENA - BAA SHOWCASE - CONNECTICUT - DAY

SUPER: New York Knights vs. Boston Broilers

A lively crowd packs the stadium.

ON THE FLOOR...NBA GM's, scouts, and coach's speak amongst
themselves. CHEERLEADERS bust dance moves. Team MASCOTS pump
up the crowd.

NBA TV announcers RICK KAMLA and MICHAEL COOPER stand in
front of cameras for the pre-game show.

KAMLA
This is Rick Kamla along with my
cohost former Laker great Michael
Cooper comin' to you live from
Gampel Pavilion arena where today
150 NBA hopefuls will have a chance
to show what they can do in front
of this spirited crowd...

ON THE FLOOR - LATER

SERIES OF IMAGES -- It's tight game. The knights play physical basketball, while the Broilers work their finesse game. Scoreboard: BROILERS 56 vs. KNIGHTS 51.

Blake streaks across the lane, shoots a flying hook. BUCKET.

BENCH -- Swish leaps out his chair, clapping excitedly. Players shoot him puzzled looks.

LATER: A WHISTLE. Jason's being tossed out of the game by the REFEREE. He curses wildly, sneering.

Al pushes him toward the bench as the crowd JEERS.

Tyler runs on court, he gives the Broilers POINT GUARD a nudge. The point guard looks him up and down, scoffs.

POINT GUARD

You can't guard me Vanilla.

TYLER

Barks worst than your bite.

Over the next six minutes Tyler plays spectacular basketball.

He's hitting shots from everywhere on the court. Playing lock down defense, igniting his team. The crowd eggs him on.

ON COURT -- Tyler drives to the basket, leaps in the air, suddenly he' bumped in mid-air by a Broilers DEFENDER.

He does a full flip, lands violently. Tyler's laying face down, motionless. The arena goes silent.

Janet and the opposing team's trainer run onto the court followed by Victor and Nick.

KAMLA (O.S.)

...And Tyler Baskins the scrappy backup point guard for the knights just took a nasty spill.

COOP (O.S.)

That's unfortunate, because he was really playing well...

INT. ARENA - HALLWAY - LATER

Two EMT's roll Tyler out of trainer's room into the hall on a gurney. He's wearing a brace around his neck.

As they pass Swish, Tyler gives him a thumbs up.

TYLER
It's your show now boss.

Victor exits the trainer's room with Nick. They're having a heated debate. Victor notices Swish and calls him over.

VICTOR
Hey Mike.

Swish approaches them.

VICTOR
Get dressed.

SWISH
What?

VICTOR
Did I studder? Your playing the second half. Don't dissappoint me.

Victor trails off. Nick scowls. Swish grins.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Swish is standing by a locker putting on his uniform. Al strolls up to him.

AL
You see angles when you were lyin' in that bed?

SWISH
What?

AL
Some see angels. Others see Satan. I ain't see shit.

SWISH
I'm out.

Al grabs Swish's shoulder.

AL
You can play Starberry ball and keep wonderin' where that next slugs comin' from. Or you can get me thirty a game. If I were you I'd pick door number two.

Al walks out rapping to himself. Swish watches him, shook.

AL
 "Eight slugs to your chest, you
 fuckin' wit da best."

INT. ARENA - LATER

SECOND HALF -- Jason drives to the basket, scores a layup. He runs down court, hunches over, out of breath.

SIDELINES -- Victor looks to the bench.

VICTOR
 Swish your in.

Swish doesn't budge. He looks down the bench at Al. Speedy elbows him.

SPEEDY
 That's you baby boy.

Swish hesitates, stands, slowly trots over to the scorer's table. He glances back at the bench. Al forms his hand in the shape of a gun, slyly points at him.

EXT. RUCKER PARK - FLASHBACK - NIGHT

Swish lies on the ground trembling. His face a bloody mess. He looks up out of the corner of his eye.

Al hovers over, .45 in his hands. He grins. BAM!

BACK TO THE GAME -- Swish snaps back into reality, steps onto the court. He's greeted by fans with a warm APPLAUSE.

KAMLA (O.S.)
 And it looks like Michael Swish is
 going to check into the game Coop.

COOP (O.S.)
 Well I'm curious to see if he's
 still got the skills he had back at
 Syracuse, cause I'm tellin' ya this
 kid could hoop.

ON THE COURT...Jason heads for the bench. He passes Swish.

JASON
 Behave yourself.

SERIES OF SHOTS -- Blake's open on numerous plays, Swish ignores him, electing to go to Al instead.

Al dominates the post on both ends of the court.

KAMALA (O.S.)

...And the one two punch of Mike Swish and Al Davis is really giving the Broilers some problems.

INT. SAUNA - LATER

A steam filled room. Swish sits on a bench covered with towels in deep thought. Al walks in, sits across from him.

The two share a long quiet stare.

Swish rushes him but Al's too much muscle. He cracks Swish across the face with his fist *SMACK!* Swish drops, grimacing.

AL

You see this tat on my arm. Gip killed my brother over a guap. I did what I had to do. Your father just got caught up.

SWISH

You wuined my life!

AL

Fuck your life bitch nigga. I would have got drafted if it wasn't for your selfish ass. So fuck you, and your sorry ass life.

Al walks out.

INT. TEAM BUS - NIGHT

Swish heads for the back of the bus, holding an ice pack to his jaw. Al sticks out his fist, smirking.

AL

Good game.

Swish looks at him fiercely, not returning the dap. He moves on, plops down in his seat.

ACROSS THE AISLE -- Blake bobs his to the music on his ipod, biting his nails. He glances over at Swish, rolls his eyes.

SWISH

What?

INT. REGENCY HOTEL - LOUNGE - NIGHT

Speedy, Oscar, Blake, and Marvin sit around a table littered with beer, chicken wings. They're watching a boxing match on television. Speedy dips his fork into his salad.

BLAKE

How's that working out for you?

SPEEDY

Shutup.

Swish approaches.

SWISH

Sup fellas.

The guys glance at each other in silence.

SWISH

Oh it's like *dat*?

BLAKE

Glad to see you and Al are getting along.

SWISH

Man you *twippin'*.

SPEEDY

Spade is a spade son. And from what I seen, Blake was wide open.

MARVIN

You didn't even look in my direction.

SWISH

Das cuz you been playin' like *gawbage*.

MARVIN

You talk to much bra'.

SWISH

Whateva man, kiss my ass.

Marvin gets in Swish's face.

SWISH

Back up off me.

Speedy separates the two.

SPEEDY
Y'all chill out. Look either you
with us, or you with them?

SWISH
I'm wit' myself. Bump y'all.

Swish walks off.

OSCAR
(Ticking)
Told you. He's a s-s-selfish
asshole.

INT. ELEVATOR - MINUTES LATER

Swish stands in the elevator alone. The doors open to reveal Janet, she hesitates before stepping inside. She presses a button, elevator moves upwards.

There's a quiet intensity.

JANET
Just so you know we didn't do
anything.

SWISH
Whateva.

JANET
We were fighting about his back.

Swish shakes his head, not believing a word.

SWISH
His back. You know he's getting a
contwact and you wanted a piece.
Girls like you always go for the
fava of *da* month.

JANET
His back had acne all over it. Side
effects of the roids asshole.

The elevator DINGS, doors open. Janet storms out as Victor walks in. He whistles, presses the elevator button.

VICTOR
Lovers quarrel?

INT. GAMPEL PAVILION ARENA - DAY

SUPER: NEW YORK KNIGHTS VS. SAN JOSE SHARKS

ON COURT...Swish takes a bad jump shot with a DEFENDER in his face. The ball clanks off the rim.

BLEACHERS...SCOUTS text, shaking their heads.

KAMLA (O.S.)

...Another missed field goal by Mike Swish, he's really struggling Coop.

SCORERS TABLE: Coop sits next to Kamla.

COOP

Well his jumpers been off all game, but he's done a great job getting the ball inside to Davis.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - HALF TIME

Swish sulks in a chair with headphones over his ears. Al walks by, gives him a friendly tap on the shoulder.

Some of the players notice. They mutter amongst each other.

INT. ARENA - LATER

SECOND HALF -- Swish continues to play half assed. He misses jump shots, allows defenders to blow by him.

Jason checks into the game as Swish heads to the bench, slapping Swish on the ass.

JASON

Good game baby.

ON COURT -- Marvin misses every shot he takes, arguing with refs, opponents, teammates.

Al makes a move to the basket, the opposing forward steps on his foot. Al grimaces as he falls to the ground, clutching his ankle. Crowd BOO's.

KAMLA (O.S.)

And now Davis is down. The injuries just seem to keep piling up for the Knights.

Janet runs on court with the coaches. Teammates help Al to his feet. He tries to put pressure on the ankle, bends over in pain. Two Knights players walk him off court.

Crowd APPLAUSE. Swish watches with a smirk on his face.

BENCH -- Victor eyes his bench.

VICTOR

Alright we're gonna have to play small ball. Swish your back in for Jason. Every time we get the rebound, run the break. Help each other guys, let's go.

As Swish stands, Victor stops him.

VICTOR

Either your a winner or a loser. Make a decision.

COURT...The two teams take the court. Swish looks out into the crowd. His breaths become heavy, heart THUMPS rapidly.

He closes his eyes for a moment. He opens them with a look of determination across his face, shaking his head. BUZZER.

FOURTH QUARTER -- Swish looks like a different player.

He's lighting up the Sharks on offense, hitting jumpers. Three pointers. Layups. Every shot sinks. FINAL BUZZER.

SCOREBOARD: KNIGHTS 87. SHARKS 65.

COOP (O.S.)

The scouts may have to think twice, because it looks like the Brooklyn phenom is back.

AFTER THE GAME -- Swish signs autographs for a few adoring FANS. Hot shot agent HARLIN DASH strolls up to him.

DASH

July 21st 2005. You drop fifty six on St. Joseph's despite having the flu. Breaking the school record for the most points scored by a single player in a game. Not only that, you did it with style. Very, very, impressive. Harlin Dash. I'm with Elite.

Harlin sticks out his hand. Swish shakes it apprehensively.

SWISH

I know who you are.

DASH

You want Childress money, I'm your guy.

SWISH

Yeah, well, I've *hurd* it all before.

Swish turns to walk away.

DASH

I can get you a six figure contract with an NBA team of your choice by the end of the month. Guaranteed.

Swish whips around.

DASH

Let's take a walk.

Dash strides over to him, drapes his arm over Swish's shoulder. They head off court together.

DASH

My plan for you...

ARENA'S AROUND THE COUNTRY -- The knights are winning games. Swish plays selfishly. He scores but teammates don't clap. He's approached by GIRLS after games. REPORTERS. SCOUTS.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - POST GAME

Players dress in silence. Swish places a diamond studded chain around his neck. Slaps on a colorful wrist watch. Speedy slams him up against the lockers from behind.

SWISH

What the hell--

SPEEDY

Pass the fuckin' ball!

Oscar pulls Speedy off him.

SPEEDY

You ain't nothin' bitch!

SWISH

You *jus* jealous.

Swish grabs his gym bag, storms out.

SWISH
All of you are jealous. Mark ass
niggas.

INT. BLAKE'S APARTMENT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - DAY

Swish is on the couch watching an NBA basketball game on TV.

ON TV...Jason steps onto the court.

NBA ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
And Jason Crisp is gonna check into
the game. He got a reputation in
the BAA as a bit of a hot head...

Blake walks out of his room with a suit case and book bag
strapped over his shoulder.

SWISH
Where you going?

BLAKE
I'm movin' out.

Blake opens the door, steps out. Swish shrugs his shoulders.

SWISH
Peace.

INT. TEAM HOUSING UNIT - LAUNDRY ROOM - LATER

Janet's washing clothes as Swish walks in toting his laundry
bag. They make eye contact. She slams the lid of a washing
machine, grabs her laundry basket, storms out.

INT. RIVER CAFE - NIGHT

Swish sits at a table having dinner with Harlin, and New York
Knicks executive TOM ROGA.

Harlin slaps down a copy of SLAM magazine with LeBron James
on the cover.

DASH
That's the type of exposure we're
looking for. Swish has got the same
amount of talent LeBron does. He
can be a franchise player, and
everyone knows the knicks are on
life support.

ROGA

Let's not forget the economic climate we live in.

DASH

Don't play that card with me Tom.

ROGA

Players salaries are being affected across the board Harlin, you know that.

DASH

You've got the cap room to make this happen.

ROGA

No disrespect, but Mike's still got to prove himself at the next level.

DASH

We got every scout and GM in the league wanting a piece of this kid.

Roga looks at Swish.

ROGA

Mike you remember when I recruited you for the AAU team?

SWISH

I remember.

ROGA

You always used to tell me, one day I'm gonna play in the NBA. Well here's your opportunity.

DASH

Alright enough with the bullshit. Tell your boss we want a fair multi year deal, or we walk. Let's go Swish.

Dash and Swish stand. Roga looks up at Swish.

ROGA

You gonna listen to this prick?

SWISH

Buness is buness.

They walk off.

INT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - DAY

Players run offensive drills. Victor blows his WHISTLE. He steps onto the court, irate.

VICTOR

Moreno we're fifty games into the season and you still don't know the plays! It's a simple one three one set. Get it together guys. Quick.

Oscar nudges Speedy. They argue over who should talk.

VICTOR

You two got somethin' to say?

SPEEDY

You want us play team ball coach. But the fact is, one of these things is not like the other.

Speedy looks at Swish.

SWISH

Who you lookin' at?

SPEEDY

I'll whip your little ass dude.

Speedy charges Swish, teammates step between the two.

VICTOR

Hey! Hey!

Silence.

VICTOR

I'm gettin' sick and tired of your selfish, pre-madonna attitudes. So here's what we're gonna do. Our next game, every possession the ball moves at least five times before every shot. I don't care if we win or lose. You don't pass, you don't play. And trust me ladies, I won't hesitate to bench you for the rest of the season. Now get out of my sight.

The players head off court.

VICTOR

Swish.

Swish turns to him, annoyed.

VICTOR
You see Any Given Sunday?

SWISH
Yeah.

VICTOR
Remember that scene with Pacino and Fox?

SWISH
Yeah I know. You gonna tell me how I'm *ruinen da tim*. How selfish punks like me are bad for *da game*. Look Jason got his, so I'm a do me bottom line. Save your *cuch K* speech for somebody *dat* cares.

Swish walks away.

INT. ARENA'S/GAMES - DAY/NIGHT

The Knights play Hoosier ball, passing, scoring, with good chemistry. Even Blake's playing well, hitting hooks.

Swish and Robinson ride the bench in warm ups. They look on with sullen expressions.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

SUPER: NEW YORK KNIGHTS VS. TITUSVILLE TITANS

ON COURT -- The knights out hustle their opponents playing good defense.

BENCH -- Swish nudges Robinson.

SWISH
Dis is bull.

ROBINSON
I talked to coach last night. He agreed to trade me to Raleigh.

SWISH
I don't *bame* you. I'm getting sick of his stupid politics.

SIDELINES -- Victor paces, yelling. He stops, rubs his chest.

ROBINSON

You should request a transfer.

SWISH

Nah I'm *coo*. My agents workin' on gettin' me a *phat* contract wit Toronto. Den I'ma tell *cuch* to kiss my ass.

Robinson shakes his head, they give each other dap.

SIDELINES -- Victor suddenly collapses in front of the scorers table. Convulsing. The crowd GASPS.

Nick and some of the other players run over to him.

EXT. TEAM HOUSING UNIT - BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Swish dodges imaginary opponents, trash talking to himself. He shoots, Blake swats his shot from behind.

SWISH

What you doin'?

BLAKE

I should be asking you that.

SWISH

Look I ain't in *da* mood *alwight*.

BLAKE

Why didn't you go to the hospital?

Swish walks over and picks up the ball.

SWISH

I'm sick of *husbitals*.

Swish dribbles, shoots. Blake runs over and swats him again.

SWISH

What's your *probem*?

BLAKE

Your my problem! Your everyone's problem. Coach nearly died today, and all you can think about is yourself.

Blake picks up the ball, hurls it over the fence.

BLAKE
Now I see why everybody calls you
sas.

SWISH
Sas?

BLAKE
Selfish ass Swish.

Blake storms off the court. Swish watches him go, riddled with guilt. Swish paces, yells.

SWISH
Puck!

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

Swish is running. He runs past drug dealers on the block. Homeless people on the streets. Over the Brooklyn Bridge. Past Prospect Park. He can hear voices in his head.

JASON (V.O.)
Pass the ball bitch.

JANET (V.O.)
Get over yourself.

SPEEDY (V.O.)
You ruining this team!

BLAKE (V.O.)
Selfish ass Swish.

EXT. SIDEWALK/BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT

Swish watches a FATHER drill his 8 year old SON. The kid dribbles toward the basket.

FATHER
Left hand, left hand.

The kid crosses over, dribbles with his left, misses a lay up. The father grabs the ball, tosses it back to his son.

FATHER
What the hell was that. Do it
again.

Swish trails off...

INT. BETH ISRAEL MEDICAL - NEXT DAY

Victor lies in bed eating sunflower seeds reading a newspaper. Swish walks in carrying a bouquet of roses.

SWISH

Hey *cuch*.

VICTOR

What are you tryin' to seduce me?
Put 'em over there.

Swish rests the bouquet next to a small coffee table full of flowers and gift boxes.

VICTOR

Nice watch.

Swish glances at his showy wrist watch.

SWISH

It was a *gif*. So how you feelin'?

VICTOR

Like I just had a heart attack.

SWISH

Maybe is time to give up *da canca* sticks.

VICTOR

Least I wasn't on top of my wife.
You read this?

Victor hands him the newspaper. Swish stares down at a picture of Jason. Cap reads: *NBA Player tested positive for anabolic steroids*.

SWISH

Guess he got what he deserve.

VICTOR

We all do.

SWISH

What do you mean?

Victor removes his reading glasses.

VICTOR

I'm sayin' for every action there
is a reaction. I chose to smoke for
seventeen years.

(MORE)

VICTOR (cont'd)
 My heart finally had enough. You
 let money dictate who you are,
 that's a lonely road son.

Swish hands back the newspaper, thinks deeply.

SWISH
Cuch can I ask you *someting*?

VICTOR
 Shoot.

SWISH
 You really believe all *dat tim* ball
 stuff you *peach*?

VICTOR
 Most of it's bullshit I got from
 Disney movies.

Swish smirks.

VICTOR
 But my job is to make you guys into
 better ball players. My duty is to
 make you into better men. It's the
 same thing I plan on doing at the
 collegiate level. And if you can't
 understand that, than I feel sorry
 for you.

Victor picks up the newspaper.

VICTOR
 How was that?

SWISH
 You're getting *beta*.

VICTOR
 I know. Now pass me that yogurt
 cup.

INT. CAB - ROLLING - DAY

A grubby CAB DRIVER takes a long drag from his cigarette. He exhales, filling the cab with smoke. His eyes flash into the rearview. Swish stares out the window in deep thought.

CAB DRIVER
 Aren't you that ball player that
 got shot in the face?

SWISH
You mind puttin' out *dat cigawet*.

CAB DRIVER
What are you mother Teresa.

He ashes out his cigarette.

CAB DRIVER
You hear about that agent?

SWISH
What you talking 'bout?

CAB DRIVER
That sleaze ball, what's his name
ahh...Harlin Dash.

SWISH
What about him?

CAB DRIVER
FBI raided his house couple hours
ago. It was all over ESPN. Guy ran
the biggest gambling ring on the
east coast. He was stealin' money
from boosters, bookies, even his
own clients. Turns out he owed a
ton in back taxes. They found him
in his living room with a hooker
and a pound of coke.

Swish pretends to be disinterested.

CAB DRIVER
Prick was the Madoff of the sports
world. Least he didn't rep you
right?

SWISH
Yeah.

CAB DRIVER
Hey you think I think I can get
autograph for my kid?

INT. SWISH'S APARTMENT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - DAY

Swish and Robinson stand in front of the TV.

ON TV -- Several FBI AGENTS escort Harlen from his front door
to a squad car.

REPORTER (V.O.)
 Authorities believe Mr. Dash
 embezzled thousands through an
 illegal sports gambling ring...

BACK TO SCENE

Robinson looks at Swish.

ROBINSON
 There goes your contract.

INT. KNIGHTS PRACTICE FACILITY - COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Swish stands in front of Nick's desk, shirt drenched with
 sweat. He's vex.

NICK
 You can declare for the draft next
 year.

SWISH
 Hell no. I'm sure there are *penty*
 of over agents *dat* would be willing
 to take me on.

NICK
 Doubt that.

Nick reaches into the desk drawer, pulls out a file.

NICK
 Got the results of your last
 physical. Looks like you tested
 positive for DHEA.

SWISH
 What?

Swish snatches the file, skims through.

SWISH
 How did you-

NICK
 An old friend owed me a favor. He's
 got my liver. I got his signature.

SWISH
Dis is a lie. I'll sue your ass for
backmail.

NICK

Judge won't know the difference.
Once that comes out no GM in the
league's gonna touch you.

SWISH

Maybe I go to *da* press about you
getting perks *fom* Dash.

NICK

You mean the same perks you got?
The same perks that were paid for
in cash? A gift isn't a crime
Swish.

Swish throws the file on the floor. He stands, breathing
heavily, about to explode.

SWISH

You went thew all *dis twuble* just
to ruin me!

NICK

You know why I don't like you Mike.
Your the kid that all the other
kids have to live up to. That one
special player that makes all the
dads yell at their sons cause they
them to be more like Swish. I was
the puny kid with the bad overbite.
The last one picked in PE. I hated
cocky little punks like you.

SWISH

Sowy you sucked.

Nick rises from his chair. Leans over the desk.

NICK

Listen you little shit it's simple.
You finish out the season. Keep
your numbers low, and play your
role. Help us win a title and
everyone's happy.

SWISH

You mean *hep* you get a head *cuching*
job somewhere else for *mo* money.

Swish turns to leave.

NICK

By the way your the backup.

Swish spins, staring in silence.

NICK

Jason's back. I can't put you both
in the starting line up.

Swish walks out, SLAMS the door.

NICK

Retard.

EXT. MARVIN'S APARTMENT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - DAY

Swish knocks on Marvin's front door, it's cracked open.

SWISH

Marvin.

He steps inside.

INT. MARVIN'S APARTMENT - DAY

Marvin's trashy apartment is littered with clothes, pizza
boxes, soda cans.

A pulsating rap song pumps through a state of the art
entertainment system. Swish stands in the doorway.

SWISH

Hey yo Marvin!

Swish moves toward the bedroom, the doors half open.

He notices Marvin on the bed bobbing his head, injecting
himself with a needle. Swish rushes in.

SWISH

What you doin' man!

Marvin peers up, startled. He stands.

MARVIN

Swish?

Swish slaps the needle out of his hand. He grabs Marvin by
the shirt, pushes him up against the wall.

SWISH

You know how many *brovas* would kill
for *dis oppatunity*!

MARVIN

What you care for bra. Get off me!

Marvin pushes back.

MARVIN

J Crisp and Al do they dirt. Coach Fema. Your dirty ass agent. I ain't perfect. Nobody is.

SWISH

You wanna risk yo *caweer* over *dis*!

Swish picks up the needle.

SWISH

Over *dis*! What is it?

Marvin looks away.

SWISH

What is it!

MARVIN

It's HGH man alright! You don't know the pressure I'm under.

SWISH

Das an excuse.

MARVIN

My dad played in the league. My brothers in the NFL. This all I got.

SWISH

And you *tink* doin' roids is the *ansa*!

MARVIN

I'm doin' what I gotta do!

SWISH

You *diswrespect* yo *pawents*, *cuches*. *Evone* who *eva* believed in you.

MARVIN

Fuck that. It's about money Mike. This whole game's about money.

Swish snaps the needle, throws it at him.

SWIH

Your a *disgwace*.

Swish walks out. Marvin punches the wall.

MARVIN

FUCK!

INT. REC ROOM - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - LATER

Janet walks in, she notices Swish shooting pool by himself. She begins to turn around, stops herself and walks over to the pool table.

JANET

How much longer you gonna be?

SWISH

Why?

JANET

I want the table.

Swish sharpens his pool stick with chalk.

SWISH

You *pay* pool?

JANET

Forget it.

She turns, heads for the door.

SWISH

Why don't you *pay* me for it?

She spins.

JANET

How much?

SWISH

Punny. You know what I meant.

JANET

You didn't answer my question. How much?

Swish digs into his pocket, pull out a fifty dollar bill. He lays it on the table.

SWISH

Fifty.

JANET

Your on.

Janet walks over to the wall, grabs a pool stick. She strides over to the table with a confident swagger.

Swish sets the balls in the pool rack. He begins to shoot, then stands.

SWISH
What if I win?

JANET
You won't.

QUICK SHOTS: Pool balls sink into corner pockets. Both run the table. Janet's good. But Swish is a shark.

EXT. CONEY ISLAND FAIR GROUNDS - NIGHT

SFX: SCREAMS. A roller coaster dips down a steep drop as passengers fling their hands in the air.

GROUND S -- Swish and Janet walk through a large crowd of people. She's eating cotton candy.

JANET
I still can't believe you won.

SWISH
Evybody meets *dey* match.

They walk in silence for a while.

JANET
So why'd you bring me here?

SWISH
I loved comin' here as a kid. My pops used to say is *da birf* pace of *da* hot dog.

JANET
I hate hot dogs.

SWISH
I *tink* you hate men too.

JANET
Not really. Just the ones with speech impediments and bloated egos.

Swish cracks a smile. He stops, grabs her arm. She looks down at his hand, he pulls it away quickly.

SWISH

Look Janet...I'm *sowy* for *da way*
I've been acting. I shouldn't have
acews you like I did. And I should
neva have called you a slut.

She can see the sincerity in his face. He stares at the ground. She munches on the candy, waiting for him to grovel.

SWISH

I was *wong*, and I'm really *sowy*.

JANET

Admit that you were jealous at the club.

SWISH

Nah I wasn't...okay I was jealous.

Janet lifts his face to her.

JANET

And your defense sucks ass.

SWISH

And my *defese* sucks ass.

JANET

And you go right ninety percent of the time.

SWISH

I don't--

She narrows her eyes.

SWISH

And I go wight *niney pucent of da*
time.

She turns and walks away.

JANET

Keep going...

EXT. PIER - LATER

Swish and Janet sit on a bench laughing together eating cotton candy.

JANET

...There's something I've been
meaning to ask you.

SWISH
Yes I will *mawy* you.

She laughs.

JANET
No seriously. What happened at the
Karaoke bar?

Swish stares at her. His smile disappears as he looks away.

SWISH
You wouldn't *undersand*.

JANET
Try me.

SWISH
I have SAD.

JANET
Sad? What is that?

SWISH
Social anxiety disorder. Guess I
got it when I was a kid. Got *wus*
after I got shot.

JANET
You get it when your playing ball?

SWISH
No. When I'm on *da* court I *fuget*
about *everything*. It's like I'm mad,
but mad in a good way. When I'm off
da court is *anova* story.

Janet thinks. She stands, sticks out her hand.

JANET
Come on.

SWISH
Where we going?

JANET
You'll see.

Swish takes her hand as she leads him away.

INT. THEATRE - NIGHT

A small crowd packs the theatre. A bald tatted up freak show artist PIN HEAD, stands on stage holding a square peg board with nine inch razor sharp nails jutting from it's base.

PIN HEAD
What's my motto?

CROWD
If it ain't dangerous, it ain't
fun!

PIN HEAD
That's right ladies and gentlemen.
Pain is pleasure, pleasure is
pain...

IN THE CROWD -- Swish stands next to Janet, his eyes dart around nervously.

SWISH
Dis is a bad idea.

JANET
Your never going to get over your
fears if you don't face them.

ON STAGE -- Pin Head holds up the peg board.

PIN HEAD
...Alright folks, at this time I
need two volunteers to come on
stage and assist me as I drive this
nail board into my chest. Two
volunteers.

He scans the crowd. Janet has her hand raised, HOLLERING. Pin Head points to her.

PIN HEAD
Right here.

She grabs Swish's hand, they walk on stage.

PIN HEAD
Thank you very much for doing this
guys. What's your name?

JANET
Janet.

PIN HEAD
And you sir?

Swish clears his throat nervously.

SWISH
Mike.

PIN HEAD
Everyone let's give a round of
applause to Janet and Mike.

Crowd APPLAUSE. Swish looks around, breathing heavily. He swallows hard. Janet whispers to him.

JANET
Get mad.

PIN HEAD
Okay here's the deal. I'm going to have my lovely assistant lay this bed of nails over my chest as I lay on the ground awaiting my certain death. And when I say go, each of you will step on top of the peg board, and stand there for exactly one minute. Got it?

JANET
Got it.

Pin Head notices Swish heaving.

PIN HEAD
Mike. You with me?

SWISH
(Yelling)
PUCK IT!

Pin Head's a bit startled.

PIN HEAD
Wow. I like that. I like your energy Mike. You know what, everybody say puck it on three. One. Two. Three.

CROWD
PUCK IT!

PIN HEAD

Awesome. Let's do this. Drum roll please.

A DRUM ROLL plays through speakers as Pin Head lays on the stage floor. His ASSISTANT places the peg board over his chest. He glances at them.

PIN HEAD

Go.

Janet steps onto the board, balances herself. Swish is next, he wobbles for a minute, then catches himself.

The assistant glances at her watch as Pin Head makes an excruciating pain filled face.

Swish's heart THUMPS in his chest. Faces in the crowd contort, sinister looking.

Swish closes his eyes, mumbling under his breath.

SWISH

Get mad. Get mad...mad.

ASSISTANT

Holding...holding...holding.

Swish opens his eyes. As he looks out into the crowd, distorted faces morph back into normal faces.

The THUMP of the heartbeat disappears. He relaxes, taking slow, deep breaths.

ASSISTANT

Good.

Swish and Janet hop off. CROWD APPLAUSE. Pin Head stands, takes a bow. He turns to Swish and Janet.

PIN HEAD

How 'bout a hand for these two volunteers.

The crowd claps. A couple SCREAMS.

Janet looks at Swish, she smiles. Grabs his hand.

JANET

Not so bad is it.

EXT. STREET - BROOKLYN - NIGHT

Swish and Janet walk down the sidewalk.

SWISH

What we did tonight *heped*, but is not a cure. It'll come back.

JANET

So when it does, you get mad.

He looks at her.

SWISH

Sewiously though, how come you don't have a *boyfwend*?

JANET

He got shipped off to Afghanistan.

SWISH

And?

JANET

I came home from school one day and he had my roommate bent over the couch.

SWISH

Damn.

JANET

Yeah. On second thought, you were right. Love sucks.

SWISH

All I know is *dat* in college I didn't have a *probem* getting a girl. Now, *dey* always got a fat *fwend* *dey* want to introduce me too.

They stop in front of a basketball court. A couple tuff looking players are involved in an intense pick up game.

SWISH

You *weally tink* my defense sucks?

JANET

Yup.

Swish eyes the court.

SWISH

We'll see.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - PARK - NIGHT - LATER

Swish shuffles his feet, cutting off the lane. The opposing PLAYER spins, rises up for a shot. Swish strips him, streaks down court, scores a layup.

BLEACHERS...Janet shouts encouragements.

JANET

Good job Swish.

STREET CORNER

Anthony "Big GIP" Jackson and four of his crew members step out of black Escalade. They head towards the court.

THUG

Let's get this money.

COURT -- Swish brings the ball up court, throws a no look alley-oop to a TEAMMATE. A couple spectators hoot and holler.

Big Gip and his crew move towards the bleachers. One of the crew members recognizes Swish. He taps Gip on his arm.

CREW MEMBER 1

Hey yo, that's the nigga that stole my chain.

Big Gip stares at Swish puffing on his cuban.

BIG GIP

That's him. Handle it.

The four crew members reach into their wastes, pull out guns.

BIG GIP

Fuck y'all doin'.

CREW MEMBER 2

You said handle it.

BIG GIP

This ain't Grand Torino. Rodney King his ass.

They stuff the guns into their wastes. Two of them head back to the Escalade.

Bleachers -- Janet glances over at Gip and his crew. She notices the two men through the gate pulling bats out of the escalade. She looks at her watch.

COURT -- Swish is trash talking his DEFENDER.

SWISH
How you want it?

DEFENDER
Give me that three pussy.

Swish clowns him with an exceptionally quick crossover. He bounces the ball off the defenders forehead, catches it, shoots a three. SWISH. Spectators go wild.

SWISH
Das game baby!

Swish's temmates give dap. The MONEYMAN strides over holding up a fat wad of cash.

MONEY MAN
Three g's. Come and get it.

BLEACHERS -- Janet watches as suddenly, Gip and his crew members run on to the court.

JANET
Swish...SWISH!

She makes a b line for him.

COURT -- Swish turns, Janet's running towards him in slow-mo. She's pointing off to the side. Swish looks in the direction she's pointing.

In an instant, Gip and his crew members are on top of him.

A BAT smacks Swish across the face. He falls to the ground.

CREW MEMBER
Steal from me from me bitch nigga!

They proceed to beat and kick Swish to a bloody pulp. One of the thugs BOOTS smashes down on SWISH'S hand. He SCREAMS.

INT. BROOKLYN HOSPITAL CENTER - HOURS LATER

Swish lies in bed, he's heavily bandaged. His face unrecognizable. Victor walks in munching on sunflower seeds.

VICTOR
We gotta stop meeting like this.

SWISH
Who you tellin'.

Swish manages to crack a smile.

SWISH
Why always eatin' *dose tings*?

VICTOR
Their good for the heart.

SWISH
You back on the floor?

VICTOR
Not till next year. Gotta take it
easy for a while. You?

SWISH
Punny.

VICTOR
You know there's this quote by Paul
Meyer.

SWISH
Anover Disney speech.

VICTOR
Can I finish...Enter every activity
without giving mental recognition
to the possibility of defeat.
Concentrate on your strengths
instead of your weaknesses, on your
powers instead of your problems.

Swish gives a sarcastic clap.

SWISH
Dat was bewtiful.

VICTOR
Yeah thanks.

They lock eyes, sharing a quiet understanding.

VICTOR
Take care of yourself Mike.

Victor heads for the door.

SWISH
Hey *cuch*.

Victor turns to him.

SWISH
I'm gone win.

VICTOR
I know you will Mike...I know.

Victor walks out.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

BAA PLAYOFFS ROUND 1
SUPER: NEW YORK KNIGHTS VS. FAYETTEVILLE FLASH

COURTSIDE...Rick Kamla and Michael Cooper stand in front of the NBA-tv cameras.

KAMLA
Rick Kamla along with my cohost Michael Cooper coming to you live from Madison Square Garden. Where today the first round of the BAA playoffs will begin...

INT. BROOKLYN HOSPITAL CENTER - NIGHT

Swish is lying in bed reading a book.

IMAGES/KNIGHTS GAMES -- Oscar, Speedy, Marvin, and Blake playing their hearts out. Scoreboards. BUZZERS.

INT. BLAKE'S APARTMENT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - DAY

Swish watches the Knights play on TV. He's still bruised, with a large band-aid over his right eye. Ace bandage on his wrist. He looks out the window, thinking...

EXT. TEAM HOUSING UNIT - JASON'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Swish knocks on Jason's door dressed in basketball gear. Jason opens, shooting Swish a perplexed look.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - LATER

Swish dribbles with his left hand in front of Jason.

JASON
Yo this is stupid.

SWISH
BALL UP!

Swish backs Jason into the post, Jason rips him, scores a layup. He gloats as he checks the ball.

JASON
You can't beat me son. It's already over.

Swish bends over, pained. He rises, checks the ball back.

SWISH
BALL UP!

JASON
Ai'ght fuck it.

EXT. MARVIN'S APARTMENT - TEAM HOUSING UNIT - MINUTES LATER

Oscar knocks on Marvin's door. Marvin opens, sleepy eyed.

OSCAR
You gotta see this!

QUICK SHOTS: Knights players knock on doors. Word spreads.

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - NIGHT - LATER

The court is surrounded by Knights players ranting, clapping loudly. Jason takes Swish the hole, scores.

Swish falls on his back, clutching his wounded chest. Jason stands over him.

JASON
That's right nigga game point!

EXT. BASKETBALL COURT - FLASHBACK - DAY

Ron standing over Swish lying on his back.

RON
Get up!

BACK TO SCENE

Swish slowly rises to his feet. Gets in Jason's face.

SWISH
Check ball.

JASON
Ain't you had enough.

SWISH
Check ball!

Jason heads to the top of the key. Swish follows, limping, sucking air. He's trying not to show his pain.

He looks to the sidelines. Nick and Janet join the crowd which has now swelled. Jason glances around, he's not going to be out done.

JASON
Acknowledge me as the king of
Brooklyn.

SWISH
Check ball.

Swish checks the ball. Jason dribbles, toying with him, playing to the crowd.

Jason lowers his shoulder into Swish's chest, sneering.

Swish stumbles backwards, clearly hurting. Jason looks at the rim. Shoots. Swish leaps into the air, snatches the ball.

Some of the players CHEER. Now it's Swish's turn. Swish gives Jason a quick stutter step. Jason flinches.

Swish drives to the basket, Jason cuts him off. Swish stops on a dime, shoots a jumper with his left hand. SWISH. CHEERS.

Jason can't believe he's lost. Swish limps over to Nick, he can barely breath.

SWISH
I want to pay against *da* Rockets.

Nick scoffs.

NICK
With your injuries. Forget it. Your
a liability.

Nick walks away.

A couple players congratulate Swish as they head off court. He notices Speedy, Oscar, Marvin and Blake walking away.

SWISH
Hey fellas.

They turn to him.

SWISH
I *pucked* up. It ain't about sas, is about *da tim*. I hope you guys win a title.

He scoots past them. They look at each other, shrug their shoulders. They run over to him, pick him up.

SWISH
Good game baby boy!

SWISH
Oouch! Take it easy!

They set him on the ground.

MARVIN
Give us a minute.

The other players move off to the side.

MARVIN
I thought about what you said...and I don't need that crap to help my game. Appreciate you dawg.

SWISH
My *brova*.

They rap hands. Janet walks over.

SPEEDY
Handle your business playboy.

OSCAR
Told you he wasn't g-g-gay.

The guys laugh.

JANET
What was that?

SWISH
I wanted to *pove* I was *beta*.

JANET

What else you good at?

SWISH

I don't know. I take it game by game.

JANET

Uh huh. Let's go.

She grabs his hand. They walk off together.

SWISH

Where we going?

JANET

Knicks are playing in my bedroom.

Speedy nudges Oscar.

SPEEDY

Uh oh. Take it easy on him.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NEXT DAY

CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

SUPER: NEW YORK KNIGHTS vs. RALEIGH ROCKETS

ON THE COURT -- The Knights take the floor. Crowd CHEERS. Nick whispers in Jason's ear.

NICK

Do your thing.

STANDS...Some of the die hard FANS proudly flaunt custom made Knights Jersey's, holding up foam fingers for the cameras.

ON THE FLOOR...The defending champion Raleigh ROCKETS storm the court. Supporters belt out rallying cries.

The Rockets are an impressively well sized team, with Robinson among them. He runs past Swish standing courtside in street clothes.

ROBINSON

Y'all bout to get an ass whoopin'.

The Rockets star guard, NATE JACKSON, the same kid from the Rucker, takes a minute to pose for a photo op with adoring female fans. Speedy watches with Oscar.

SPEEDY

Nigga swear he pretty like me.

OSCAR

He ain't n-n-othin'.

Oscar notices "Buffie the body" signing an autograph in the stands. He nudges Speedy, pointing.

OSCAR

Yo it's Buffie.

Speedy sees her. His eyes widen.

SPEEDY

Recognize that ass anywhere.

SCORERS TABLE -- Michael Cooper speaks into his head set.

COOP

...Yeah Rick, I think this is a mismatch when you talk about the big front court of the Rockets matching up with the smaller Knights. But I'm looking forward to the point guard battle between Brooklyn's Jason Crisp and Queens native Nate Jackson...

FRONT ROW -- Janet sits behind the knights bench next to Victor and Tyler.

ON COURT -- Blake notices his PARENTS taking their seats in the crowd. He looks shell shocked as he nudges Marvin.

BLAKE

My parents are here.

Blake points. Marvin looks into the crowd, spots his father sitting next to Blake's parents.

MARVIN

Their sitting next to my pops.

Players strip off warm-ups. BUZZER sounds. Teams take the floor. Opposing players give each other pounds.

ON THE COURT -- Jason and Nate size each other up.

JASON

I run New York.

NATE

We'll see.

FIRST HALF -- Tip off goes to the Rockets. Nate brings the ball down court, whirls past Jason, dishes to the Rockets monolith center "Skywalker".

The seven footer slams it down, posterizing Blake.

SKYWALKER

Too easy.

SCORER'S TABLE

KAMLA

And it's just as you suspected
Coop, the Rockets go right into the
big fella Darwin Jones, the
nineteen year old prospect outta
Fairhope high school.

COOP

Could be a long night for the
Knights center Blake Edwards...

STANDS...Mixed reaction from the crowd. SCOUTS shake their heads, punch buttons on PDA's.

ON THE COURT...Momentum switches back and forth. Nate runs the Rockets offense with militant precision, feeding the ball to his wing men, athletic bigs.

The knights play determined basketball, but the Rockets size begin to wear on the Knights smaller front court.

HALFTIME BUZZER. SCOREBOARD READS: Rockets 61. Knights 48.

INT. KNIGHTS LOCKER ROOM - HALFTIME

Nick paces in front of his team.

NICK

Their picking us apart! Edwards
grow a pair god damnit.

Blake puts his head down. Speedy sucks from his inhaler.

NICK

You guys want to be champions you
better get it together. Now we got
one half to go. Lets move the-

Some of the players clap. Yell. Nick turns his head. *Swish stands in the doorway in his knights uniform.*

NICK

What the hell are you doing?

SWISH

Let me *pay cuch.*

Nick marches over to him, steamed.

NICK

You tryin' to show me up? This is my team, and my call. So you can take your wounded super hero bullshit somewhere else.

SWISH

Let me *pay.*

NICK

Get out!

SWISH

No.

Nick's face goes bright red. Spit drooling from his lips.

NICK

Get out! Get the fuck out of here now you retarded little shit!

The room goes dead silent. Swish walks out slowly. Nick looks around, takes a minute to collect himself.

NICK

What are you lookin' at!

THIRD QUARTER...Rockets swarm the knights on defense.

They've made key second half adjustments, trapping Jason, cutting off the lane.

Their just as deadly on offense, with Nate catching fire behind the three point line.

Jason's thrown off his game, shooting off balance three pointers, bickering with the ref's. Marvin's no better.

STANDS...Knights fans grow frustrated. BUZZER sounds.

COURTSIDE...Knights players head to the bench. Nick glances up at the scoreboard.

Scoreboard: Rockets 84 Knights 73

NICK
Let's go guys, let's go. Fourth
quarter's ours.

He looks at his bench. The players have lost hope. Jason
turns to Blake.

JASON
You plan on playing some D?

BLAKE
Why don't you guard him.

NICK
Hey. Cut it out. Now listen, we
gotta get the ball inside...

Jason notices Swish standing in the player entrance to the
court. He rises out of his chair.

NICK
Where you goin'?

JASON
Stop bitchin'.

COURTSIDE -- Jason walks over to Swish. They stand face to
face like two boxers before a fight.

JASON
Personally I think you got nothin'
on Marbury. In fact I would take
Telfair over you. But one thing you
do have is heart. I gotta respect
that. Besides, you beat me with one
hand. So get your punk ass on that
court, and lets get this win.

Jason sticks out his fist. Swish bumps him.

SWISH
Let's do *dis*.

They walk over to the bench together. The players notice and
give Swish high fives, patting him on the head.

NICK
No way. Your not playing.

JASON
He don't play. I don't play.

NICK

What?

Jason nods to Al. He thinks it over. Looks Swish dead in his eyes. Swish holds his gaze, steady. Confident.

AL

Me too coach. Kids got heart.

BLAKE

Count me in.

SPEEDY

Me too.

OSCAR

Me too.

Teammates chime in one by one.

NICK

This is my team! I run this ship!

BUZZER sounds. Rockets players take the court. They notice the Knights players standing on the sidelines, arms folded.

KAMLA (V.O.)

...Coop it looks like the knights players...the players aren't coming out for the fourth quarter. This is strange.

SIDELINES -- Jason begins to clap.

JASON

Swish. Swish. Swish...

Then Al, Blake, Speedy, Oscar. The whole knights team.

STANDS -- Tyler, Janet, and Victor stand, clapping.

TYLER

Swish. Swish. Swish...

It catches fire. The whole stadium's chanting.

FANS

Swish! Swish! Swish!!!

COOPER (O.S.)

Sounds like their saying...Swish.

SIDELINES...Nick rakes his hand over his head. He looks at Swish long and hard. He can't win this battle and he knows it. Finally, he gives up.

NICK
Hell. Check in.

Swish walks over to the scorer's table. The crowd erupts. The REFEREE stops him peering over at Nick.

REFEREE
He can't play he's not eligible.

Nick strolls up to the ref and hands his clipboard, glaring over at Swish.

NICK
Yes he is. I changed the roster sheet before tip off.

The ref checks it, shaking his head.

REFEREE
Your good.

FOURTH QUARTER -- The knights take the floor, pounding each other, ready for battle. Nate and Swish rub shoulders.

NATE
How many of y'all I got school in one night.

The balls inbounded. As the game goes on the Knights begin to gain momentum, rejuvenated by Swish's presence.

Swish and Nate go head to head. Swish plays left handed, grimacing every time he's hit. Al and Robinson trade baskets.

UNDER THE BASKET...Blake muscles up to Skywalker, he fakes one way, cuts in the opposite direction. Skywalker falters.

Blake heads to the rim, launches into the air, slams over Skywalker. His crotch in Skywalker's face. Crowd goes wild.

BLAKE
How's that taste.

AS THE GAME GOES ON...Marvin hits threes. Oscar slashes to the hole, skying over defenders. Speedy sucks it up, stealing balls, running the break.

The rockets players put Swish on his back on several plays. Each time he rises to his feet, continuing to show his heart.

Swish controls his offense passing, scoring, he's the ultimate leader. Nick can't keep up, Swish is too determined.

COURT...Al is fouled by Skywalker under the basket.

KAMLA (O.S.)

And that's five on Skywalker.
That'll send Davis to the line with
ten seconds left in the game.

SCOREBOARD: ROCKETS 101. KNIGHTS 100. CLOCK READS: 10.

COURT: Al steps to the free throw line. The REF tosses him the ball.

REF

Two shots.

Al takes a deep breath. Touches the TATOO on his arm. Shoots. The ball clanks off the front of the rim. Crowd GASPS. Al steps back. Swish walks up to him, whispers in his ear.

SWISH

Take your time.

COOPER (O.S.)

He's gotta hit this or it might be
over.

Al steps up to the line. Deep breath. He shoots. The ball flies through the air towards the rim...SWISH.

Crowd CHEERS. The Rockets COACH calls time out. Players head to the sidelines.

ROCKETS HUDDLE: The coach screams at his players.

ROCKETS COACH

Get it together! Shit! Alright
listen up...

KNIGHTS HUDDLE: Nick claps.

NICK

Good job men. Good job. Now we got
a get a stop. One stop, we run a
triangle defense...

SCORERS TABLE: Kamla and Coop.

KAMLA

What a great game.

COURT: The teams take the floor. Ball's inbounded. Nate dribbles up court, crosses over, Swish steals it, streaks down court. Calls TIMEOUT. The crowds jacked.

SIDELINES...Knights players huddle around Nick as he diagrams a play on his clipboard.

NICK

Okay fellas. We're gonna run Iso 2.
Oscar you v-cut to the basket.
Instead of popping back up play
your defender back-door. Swish if
he's open hit him, if not take it
yourself. This is it guys, six
seconds. Bring it in.

The players put their hands in a pile, one on top the other.

NICK

Knights on three. One, two, three.

PLAYERS

Knights!

As Swish heads onto the court Victor yells out.

VICTOR

Hey Mike!

Swish turns, looks at him.

VICTOR

Win!

COURT -- The Knights take the floor. Swish takes in the moment. He glances at the Rockets players. Blake. The crowd. The fans are on their feet.

SWISH

You know the *pay*?

OSCAR

Yeah.

Oscar inboundes the ball. Swish dribbles, scans. Everything begins to move in slow motion.

Blake steps out and sets a pick on Nate. Oscar moves into position. Swish dribbles around the pick, Robinson cuts off his path.

The CLOCK TICKS as Swish dribbles....Two DEFENDERS collapse on him. Jason and Al flank the three point line wide open. Swish rises into the air.

As he does this Oscar cuts back door behind Skywalker. Three...two...*Suspended in mid-air Swish passes down low to Oscar. He slams it through. BUZZER sounds. Knights win.*

KAMLA (O.S.)
Knights win! Knights win! It's
over!

Oscar streaks down court yelling, hand in the air.

OSCAR
I'm the best mother bitches!

STANDS -- The crowd goes into a frenzy. Janet hugs Victor.

COOP(O.S.)
Another unbelievable performance by
Michael Swish.

Court: Rockets players shake their heads in defeat.

Knights players swarm Swish and Oscar, hoisting both players on their shoulders. Swish looks out into the crowd, elated. Blake runs over to his parents.

BLAKE'S FATHER
Great game son!

They hug. Blake turns to his mother.

BLAKE
Mom...

She cracks a smile, hugs him tightly.

BLAKE'S MOTHER
I was wrong. It's not a stupid
game.

Standing behind them. Marvin's father hugs his son.

MARVIN'S FATHER
I'm so proud of you son.

Speedy notices "Buffie the body" in the crowd. She's consoling Skywalker.

She tries to hug him, Skywalker pushes her away, storms off. Speedy moves in for the kill.

SPEEDY

Excuse me.

She turns to him, smacking her gum, full of attitude.

BUFFIE

What?

SPEEDY

I just wanted to say that a brotha should treat a sista as fine as you like a queen. And from what I seen, that brotha can't handle you.

BUFFIE

Oh and you can right?

SPEEDY

I may not have the six pack he got. But I got somethin' he don't.

BUFFIE

What's that?

SPEEDY

Respect. Like Mef said to Mary, "It's me in your world, believe me."

She looks him up and down. Big man's got skills.

SIDELINES -- Victor rests his hand on Nick's shoulder.

VICTOR

I reported your tactics to the league office.

NICK

What are you talking about?

VICTOR

Black mailing players. Steroid distribution. Good luck with your career.

Victor walks away. Nick looks like he's going to cry.

COURT...Janet moves through the crowd. She makes it to Swish.

SWISH

Was I *pwedictable*?

JANET

Your defense still needs work. And your crossovers weak. But you know what?

SWISH

What?

JANET

Your sexy as hell.

She kisses him deeply. Marvin nudges Oscar and Speedy.

MARVIN

Get it dog.

KNIGHTS TEAM

Swish! Swish! Swish!

INT. PRESS ROOM - MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

SUPER: THREE WEEKS LATER

Swish stands at a podium. His face filled with emotion. The rooms jam packed with REPORTERS. Camera flashes.

SWISH

...I'm *twilled* to be in New York as a *memba* of da Knicks. And I'd like *tank da* Knicks organization, *cuches* and fans. I'm confident...

Swish's voices cracks. He gets himself under control, glancing at Janet in the back of the room.

SWISH

I'm confident *dat* we can win. *Pank* you.

EXT. ARENA HALL - MOMENTS LATER

Swish walks with his arm draped over Janet's shoulder.

SWISH

How'd I do?

JANET

Looked like you were mad as hell.

SWISH

Weally?

JANET
Just kidding.

Swish notices an ten year old boy with down syndrome standing next to his FATHER. He stops to sign an autograph.

FATHER
Thanks Mike. My boy loves you.

SWISH
What's your name big guy?

BOY
Zack. I play basketball too. I'm going to be just like you when I grow up.

Swish stares at him.

SWISH
No, your going to be *beta den* me.
You know why?

BOY
Why?

SWISH
Cause your going to go to *cool* and get your education *fust*. *Den* you can step on *da* court *wit* me.

Swish hands the boy the autographed picture. The boy's face lights up.

BOY
Wow!

SWISH
See you in a couple *yuz* kid.

INT. MADISON SQUARE GARDEN - NIGHT

SUPER: TWO WEEKS LATER

The stadiums packed. The lights are dim. Crowd BUZZES. Images of Knicks players flash across the JUMBOTRON.

BENCH...Swish sits on the bench in warm ups.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

...And now. Starting at guard, a
5"9 point guard out of Green City
high school, number 11. Michael
Swish.

He lifts his head. MUSIC plays. Crowd cheers.

FADE OUT.