

Breaking the Plane

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME – NIGHT

THE SCOREBOARD shows three seconds left, the home team down by six. It's fourth and one from the one yard line.

AT THE LINE OF SCRIMMAGE senior BULLDOG quarterback TYLER PETERSON, 18, barks out the signals. Players shift.

ON THE SIDELINE head coach TOM WESTBROOK, 40's, panics. He turns to his quarterback coach, JOE QUINN, late 50's.

WESTBROOK

What the hell is he doing?

Quinn looks away and concentrates on the play.

ON THE FIELD the play begins. Tyler fakes. The BACK launches over the pile.

TYLER BOOTLEGS to the left.

A RECIEVER beats the defender and is open.

TYLER sees the receiver and lofts the pass to him. The receiver leaps but the ball just passes out of his reach.

THE CLOCK ON THE SCOREBOARD runs out.

ON THE FIELD the other team celebrates victory.

Westbrook grabs Tyler by the collar and glares into his facemask.

Tyler smirks and Westbrook releases him.

AT THE SIDELINE Tyler drops his helmet to the ground and opens a Gatorade.

The helmet comes to rest next to junior quarterback, CHRISTIAN MACINERNY, 17, as he gathers footballs into his arms.

TYLER

This better get inside Scrub.

Christian bends for the helmet. Tyler kicks it, knocking it out of reach as he storms away.

Christian is unable to keep the footballs corralled. All but one drops to the ground.

He eyes a ball bag down field. He snaps off a beautiful spiral that sails into the bag.

EXT. STADIUM GATE

Christian struggles to carry both helmets and the full ball bag.

His parents, CHARLES and LILY MACINENRY, both mid 40's, wait for their son. Christian's younger sister, MAGGIE, 12, waits alongside her parents.

LILY
Great game Sweetie!

Christian rolls his eyes at her.

CHRISTIAN
I didn't play, Mom.

LILY
We can still be proud of you.

MAGGIE
Maybe next game?

Christian chuckles to himself. He avoids their gaze.

CHRISTIAN
Thanks Mags.

CHARLES
Chin up. What do we say?

Christian flashes a relaxed smile as he meets his father's comforting eyes.

CHRISTIAN
Be mentally tough...

CHARLES
And?

CHRISTIAN
...handle adversity.

Charles beams proudly.

CHARLES
You'll get your chance.

Lily hugs her son as Charles pats him on the back.

INT. HOUSE PARTY – NIGHT

Music blares through the rooms, halls, and crowd.

High school age kids dance, make out, drink. Tyler holds court in the corner of the sectional sofa, beer in hand.

He tosses the empty can on the table and is immediately handed another.

A BOY at the end of the couch questions Tyler.

BOY
Man Coach was pissed about you changing that play.

TYLER
Like I care.

He chugs the fresh beer.

TYLER
He called a bullshit play, so I changed it.

BOY
You showed him.

TYLER
Damn straight...and that's why I got the full ride, 'cause I'm a playa'. Not my fault Richards couldn't reach it.

Tyler and the boy hi-five and lock-up into a handshake.

A DRUNK GIRL with a cell phone in her hand falls into Tyler's lap.

DRUNK GIRL
Group selfie! Everybody say
cheese!

Tyler holds up his beverage to the camera with one hand,
flashes a sideways and back-handed V with the other.

The phone flashes as the picture takes.

EXT. BACKYARD – DAY

Christian tosses a football with ANNIE GIVENS, 17, pretty
and athletic, she is every bit the girl-next-door. The
only thing tomboy about her is the way she catches and
throws.

This game of catch is smooth and normal. It's routine for
these two.

ANNIE
I wish you'd stand up to him.

CHRISTIAN
He's not worth it.

ANNIE
Why is it always you?

Annie's younger brother, NOAH, 14, stands between the two.
Short for his age he jumps for the ball as it passes over
his head.

Christian snags the ball with one hand, spins it on its
side with one finger.

CHRISTIAN
I'm the back up.

ANNIE
It bothers me. You're so much
more than that.

She's protective of him. He flashes a flirty smile. She
whips the football back at him.

ANNIE
Your mom and dad seemed to
enjoy the game.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, they were real proud of
how I sat the bench.

Her phone chimes. Annie's jaw drops, her eyes wide as she
stares at it.

CHRISTIAN

What is it?

ANNIE

You won't believe this.

Noah strips the ball away from a distracted Christian.
He peers over her shoulder. His surprise matches hers'.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD – DAY

Tyler snaps off a perfect spiral deep downfield. It hits
the receiver in stride.

Tyler meanders back to Coach Quinn to get the next play.
Christian stands nearby holding a clipboard.

QUINN

Doubles twenty-six stretch.

TYLER

Come on Coach, air it out.

QUINN

Run the play.

Tyler saunters back to the huddle. Christian writes the
play down.

ON THE FIELD Tyler calls the signals. A LINEBACKER fakes a
blitz and drops back.

Tyler stands up into the shotgun and calls an audible.

The ball snaps back to him. He releases a good ball into
the hands of a posting receiver.

Westbrook marches onto the field.

WESTBROOK

Would someone tell me why the hell we're not running the ball?

TYLER

Jake was blitzing.

WESTBROOK

Jake was blitzing?

Westbrook glares at JAKE, the linebacker who faked the blitz.

WESTBROOK

Were you blitzing?

Jake's eyes dart nervously from Tyler back to Westbrook.

JAKE

Yeah, um...yes Coach, I was.

Westbrook marches off the field. He's pissed.

WESTBROOK

First team, water. Second O, huddle up.

Christian puts his helmet on and looks around for something to do with the clipboard.

QUINN

I'll take that. Ace twenty-two Zone.

Tyler bumps Christian on purpose as they pass each other.

TYLER

Watch where you're goin' Scrub.

ON THE FIELD Christian breaks the huddle. He runs the play that was called.

Westbrook nods approval to Quinn.

INT. COACHES' OFFICE - DAY

Westbrook sits behind a desk littered with play scripts and practice schedules.

He hardly notices the KNOCK at the door.

Franklin High School's athletic director, CLIFF HINES, 50's, hovers in the doorway.

HINES

Hate to ruin your morning
but I've got bad news Coach.

Westbrook looks up and glares at the unwanted visitor.

HINES

(continues)

It appears as though your
quarterback has made some poor
choices this weekend.

Hines holds an iPad up to Westbrook, showing the picture of Tyler with a beer at the party.

Westbrook deflates, closes his eyes as he sinks back into his chair.

HINES

You know the penalty.

Westbrook nods.

WESTBROOK

Three games.

HINES

As AD, I will be speaking with
Tyler and his parents.

WESTBROOK

No...let me.

Hines struts further into the office. He loves every second of this.

HINES

It's not going to be easy with
Mr. Peterson. He's the boosters'
biggest donor.

WESTRBOOK

I said I'll handle it.

Hines' presses, finds enjoyment in patronizing him.

HINES
They expect playoffs.

WESTBROOK
That sounds like a threat.

HINES
I don't want there to be any
surprises if changes need to
be made.

WESTBROOK
So I'm already out.

HINES
You're about to suspend your
best player. Your chances aren't
promising.

Westbrook points to the door, signals to Hines to see
himself out.

WESTBROOK
If you'll excuse me, I've got
practice to get ready for.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD — DAY

Westbrook and Quinn stand apart from the rest of the
coaches as they take the team through drills.

WESTBROOK
What'd you think?

QUINN
We go with MacInerny. He's smart,
he knows the game, the offense.

WESTBROOK
But can he handle the pressure?

QUINN
We're gonna find out.

A whistle blows. The players jog in unison towards the two coaches. They take a knee at their feet as they remove their helmets.

INT. LOCKERROOM – DAY

Christian sits in front of his locker, exhausted.

A large, stocky senior linebacker, PAT DEVLIN, 18, approaches Christian. He sifts through Christian's locker, touching everything on the shelf.

Christian does nothing to stop him.

PAT

Chrissy-boy? Why haven't you quit yet?

This exchange is routine for Christian.

CHRISTIAN

Seriously, what do you want?

PAT

You must like carrying Tyler's balls...

Christian peers up at Pat.

PAT

You're never gonna see the field. So sit back and enjoy the show... loser.

Coach Quinn peers down the row of lockers.

QUINN

MacInerny! Office, now.

PAT

Yeah, go see Coach so he can cut your ass.

INT. FOOTBALL COACHES' OFFICE

OUTSIDE THE OFFICE Christian approaches.

The door flings open. WILLIAM PETERSON, late 40's, storms out trailed by his wife, BARBARA and Tyler.

Their eyes lock as they pass. Tyler snarls at Christian who is stunned and confused.

INSIDE THE OFFICE

WESTBROOK

Have a seat.

Christian moves cautiously as he sits across from Westbrook.

WESTBROOK

Recent events have created a need for us to make some changes.

Westbrook looks hard at a terrified Christian.

WESTBROOK

Tyler will be ineligible the for the next three games.

CHRISTIAN

'Cause of the picture?

Surprised, Westbrook straightens in his chair.

WESTBROOK

You know about that?

CHRISTIAN

Coach, everybody knows.

He leans back and with a heavy sigh, delivers the news.

WESTBROOK

No surprise then. You're starting Friday night.

Christian's jaw hangs open. He doesn't blink.

WESTBROOK

Now get out of here.

INT. WESTBROOK HOUSE – NIGHT

Game film plays on the tv. It rewinds and the same play is repeated.

Westbrook sits on the couch. He studies the film, jotting down the occasional note.

Tom's wife JOAN approaches from behind and wraps her arms around her husband.

JOAN

Sweetie it's late. Come to bed.

WESTBROOK

Hey, look at this...we gotta be disciplined coming off the combo block if we're going to slow down that MIKE.

She's a football coach's wife and she knows the game and her husband all too well.

JOAN

What aren't you telling me?

Westbrook pauses the film and shifts to look at his wife.

WESTBROOK

I don't tell you enough how beautiful you are.

Joan joins him on the couch.

JOAN

I heard you suspended Tyler.

He stares at her for a moment, trying to conceal his worry.

WESTBROOK

I'm not sure we can win without him.

She nestles in closer to him, hugging his arm tightly. He pulls her in closer before pressing play.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY — DAY

Students gather books from lockers on their way to class.

Christian searches for a book as Annie leans against the adjacent locker. She reads the sports section.

ANNIE

Southport returns eight starters on defense. They were quarter-finalists last year.

CHRISTIAN

Did you do the Chem homework?

ANNIE

No. Listen...they mention you in here. They say the Bulldogs will turn to junior Christian MacNerny-

Christian stares blankly down at Annie.

CHRISTIAN

They spelled my name wrong?

Annie closes and folds the paper.

ANNIE

Trust me, they'll know how to spell it after Friday.

Christian closes his locker.

INT. LIBRARY — LATER

Annie and Christian study together.

CHRISTIAN

I'm gonna suck and we're gonna get crushed.

ANNIE

You'll be awesome!

CHRISTIAN

What possibly makes you think that?

Before she can answer, TWO BOYS at the next table are overheard talking about the football game.

BOY #1 (o.s.)
Season's over.

BOY #2 (o.s.)
C'mon, They've gotta have some chance.

BOY #1
With MacInerny? He's garbage.
Pat said half the time he has no idea what he's doing out there.

Christian avoids looking at Annie. He stays buried in his book.

ANNIE
Don't listen to them. You'll do great. I know it.

With all his might Christian looks up and forces a smile.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD – DAY

Receivers run routes-on-air. Christian short hops a pass. He struggles.

Coach Quinn stands close by watching. Christian fires another incomplete pass. He hangs his head, discouraged.

QUINN
Stop squeezing. Relax.

Christian looks up at him and nods.

QUINN
We've got two more days.
It's just routes.

Christian takes a deep breathe and readies for the next rep.

He drops back, sets his feet and fires a bullet right on time to the receiver who hauls it in.

QUINN

Good. Now do that again.

Tyler stands off to the side wearing street clothes. He can only watch.

Westbrook watches from the other side of the field. He does his best to hide his worry and concern.

INT. PETERSON HOUSE – NIGHT

An impeccably clean and expensively decorated dining room. The large table in the middle of the room has but only three occupants.

Tyler sits alone on one side of the table, his parents flanking him at the ends.

WILLIAM

That damn Westbrook has no idea what he's doing over there. He can't replace you.

Barbara doesn't look up but continues to pick at her food.

TYLER

They'll lose bad enough Coach'll have to lift the suspension.

WILLIAM

I like how you're thinking. But leave that part to me.

INT. MACINERNEY HOUSE – NIGHT

Christian tries to sneak past his parents and up to his room.

CHARLES

Come back here Mister. How was it running first team?

Christian slinks back into the kitchen.

CHRISTIAN

It was alright.

CHARLES

Just alright? But this is what
you've been working so hard for.

CHRISTIAN

It's just for three games.

CHARLES

Not if you show them how good
you are.

CHRISTIAN

We really don't stand a chance
anyways.

Charles moves towards Christian and places a hand on his
shoulder.

CHARLES

Hey, look at me.

Christian still stares at the floor.

CHARLES

Look at me.

His eyes slowly rise to meet his dad's.

CHARLES

Don't doubt yourself.

CHRISTIAN

Everyone else does.

CHARLES

You can't listen to others.
This is your chance and it's
up to you to show them.

CHRISTIAN

But what if I do fail, Dad?

Charles brushes it off, disregards Christian's question.

CHARLES

Can't think like that. You won't.

Christian forces a smile to get his dad to back off.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE

Christian is at the door. He watches Westbrook at his desk for a moment before knocking.

CHRISTIAN
Coach, you wanted to see me?

WESTBROOK
Yeah, come in. Sit down.

Christian sits on the edge of the chair looking ready for bad news.

WESTBROOK
How you feeling today?

Christian is caught off guard by the question.

CHRISTIAN
Fine, I guess.

WESTBROOK
Good. That's good. Look, I know
I'm asking a lot of you,
throwing you into the fire
like this...

The awkwardness hangs between them. Christian stares blankly back at Westbrook.

WESTBROOK
Win or lose, all I ask is that
you give it your best. Ok?

CHRISTIAN
Yes Coach.

WESTBROOK
Alright, make sure you get some
rest tonight.

Christian stands to leave. He reaches the door.

WESTBROOK
Christian...

He pauses and looks back at his coach.

WESTBROOK

...you're going to do fine out there.

Christian nods, half believing Westbrook. He turns the handle on the door.

INT. OUTSIDE THE COACHE'S OFFICE – CONT.

Christian leans hard into the wall and breathes heavy as the panic sets in.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM – NIGHT

Fans and students pack the stands. The lights shine bright over the pristine turf of the field.

The marching band and cheerleaders entertain the crowd in pregame festivities.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Westbrook finishes an inspirational pregame speech. The team is fired up and ready to go into battle.

WESTBROOK

Know your assignments and do your job. Get after'em right from the first play! Now get out there!

The players spill out of the locker room and into the night. Coach Quinn stands beside Christian.

QUINN

How you doing? Ready?

CHRISTIAN

Haven't thrown up in the last hour so I should be good.

QUINN

Remember your keys, carry out your fakes, and don't turn the ball over.

Still pale and worried, Christian nods.

QUINN

You can do this. Now let's go.

INT. STADIUM TUNNEL

Christian emerges from the locker room. The lights grow brighter and the sound of the crowd louder as he reaches the end of the short tunnel leading to the field.

He stops and takes it all in. Self-doubt is written all over his face.

Quinn smacks Christian on the shoulder pad, startling him out of his daze.

QUINN

Let's go kid, get out there!

Christian slips his helmet on and hustles onto the field.

EXT. IN THE STANDS

Annie sits with Maggie alongside Charles and Lily. They light up with excitement as Christian comes into view.

Tyler's parents are perched at the fifty-yard line at the top of the bleachers.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD

THE SCOREBOARD shows no score a few minutes into the first quarter.

ON THE FIELD the defense makes a stand on third down to force the other team to punt. Christian takes the field.

Tyler stands in the background in street clothes. He watches, rooting against Christian.

Under center Christian scans the defense. The defenders are fuzzy blurs.

He barks out the signals. The ball is snapped. Christian backs out too soon. The ball hits the turf.

It sits there for a moment before Christian falls on it, cradling it into his belly as others pile on.

EXT. IN THE STANDS

Annie and Maggie grimace and grasp hold of one another. Charles maintains a confident expression.

Mr. Peterson smirks, shakes his head as he points towards the field. Him and his cronies share a laugh at Christian's expense.

EXT. ON THE FIELD

Christian's hands shake as he hands the ball back to the official. He returns to the huddle. The CENTER growls at Christian.

CENTER

Jesus MacInerny! Handle the damn ball!

The huddle breaks and Christian is at the line again.

ON THE SIDLEINE Westbrook paces nervously.

ON THE FIELD Christian reverses out the wrong way. He reaches the ball to the running back who is swallowed up by the defense.

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook shakes his head realizing this isn't going to work.

ON THE FIELD Christian looks over the defense. He sees the blitz coming.

He drops back. The blitz off the edge isn't picked up. As he's about to be blindsided Christian spins out of the path of the defender.

He takes off running. He has a first down before finally being run out of bounds. The crowd comes alive.

The offense pounds his shoulders and helmet in celebration.

EXT. IN THE STANDS

Annie and Christian's family celebrate the first down.

EXT. ON THE FIELD

THE NEXT PLAY is a completed pass for fifteen yards.

A handoff for a gain of six. Christian has the offense on the move.

The running back breaks off a twenty-six yard run, cruising into endzone for the first score of the game.

The crowd roars with excitement. The players celebrate with Christian.

The extra point is good and the scoreboard reads 7-0.

EXT. FOOTBALL GAME

The teams battle back and forth. Pat makes a bone-crushing hit.

Christian cuts up the defense, completing a pass for a first down.

The other team scores. The Bulldogs kicks a field goal.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Coach Westbrook and the other coaches make halftime adjustments via chalkboards and motivational speeches.

EXT. FOOTBALL GAME

Back on the field, more hits, more completions more football.

The other team scores again. The scoreboard now shows 14-10 with only 2:09 remaining.

IN THE STANDS Mr. Peterson brandishes a wicked told-you-so grin.

ON THE FIELD Pat scowls and points at the offense from across the line of scrimmage.

ON THE SIDELINE the down marker reads 3rd down.

ON THE FIELD the quarterback drops back to pass. He suddenly pulls the ball down sneaking it into the belly of the waiting running back.

Pat isn't fooled as he meets the ball carrier at the line of scrimmage.

Coach Westbrook races to the sideline judge screaming for a timeout.

REF

Last one coach.

ON THE FIELD the Southport punter shanks the punt out of bounds at his own forty-yard line.

ON THE SIDELINE Christian receives final instructions from Coach Quinn.

QUINN

Alright, two-minute drill.
Watch me for the signs, work
the sideline and get out of
bounds. Got it?

The uncertainty returns to Christian's expression. His eyes are wide and his breathing quickens.

QUINN

Relax, you can do this.

Christian nods as he turns and trots onto the field and into the huddle.

CHRISTIAN

Gun ninety Z out. Get out of
bounds. If the clock's running,
we're on the line right away.

EXT. IN THE STANDS

Lily hangs on to Charles' arm. Annie covers her eyes. Maggie holds on to her tightly.

ANNIE

I can't watch.

EXT. ON THE FIELD

Christian is in the shotgun as he calls the signals. The ball is snapped, the clock begins to roll.

Christian looks downfield before quickly shifting his eyes towards the sideline. His receiver is open. He fires a bullet.

The receiver turns his head too soon and the ball slips right through his hands. The clock is stopped with 1:03.

At the line and in the shotgun again. Christian gets the snap. No one's open.

A receiver comes back to the ball. Christian releases a quick spiral that is complete.

The clock is running. Christian points and yells to everyone to hurry and get set.

He glances to the sideline for the play.

ON THE SIDELINE Quinn flails his arms widely, signaling the play.

ON THE FIELD at the line the ball is snapped and Christian drops back.

He snaps off a quick completion to the running back swinging into the flat.

The running back hauls it in and turns up field. He nears the sideline after a big gain.

As he's pushed out of bounds, a second defender drills him in the back, knocking him to the ground.

The referee sends his yellow flag high into the air signaling the late hit. Fifteen more yards. First and ten from the twelve-yard line.

Christian glances up at the scoreboard; twelve seconds remaining.

He's at the line, calls the signals, the ball is snapped.

No one is open and the pocket collapses. Christian tucks the ball under his arm and darts straight up the middle.

He jukes one defender, spins away from another and dashes across the goal line and into the endzone. Touchdown.

The clock runs out showing the final score 17-14.

The celebration begins on the field.

IN THE STANDS the crowd erupts. Charles and Lily, Maggie and Annie all hug in celebration.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA – DAY

Annie and Christian sit together as they eat lunch. A GROUP OF STUDENTS plants themselves at the same table.

An innocent looking girl smiles at Christian.

GIRL

Hey Christian. Great game.

CHRISTIAN

Uh, thanks.

The boy sitting next to the girl scoffs.

BOY

You guys got lucky.

Christian, lowers his voice and looks down at his food.

CHRISTIAN

I guess we did, a little bit.

BOY

A little bit? You had a damn horseshoe up your ass. That late hit was a gift.

Annie stares daggers at the boy.

ANNIE

One play doesn't determine the whole game.

BOY

I know. They should have lost
with all the shitty plays. But
like I said, you got lucky.

Annie glares at Christian who doesn't look up.

BOY

Your girlfriend always defend
you when you suck that bad?

The boy gets some laughs from the rest of his group.

BOY

Don't get me wrong. I'm glad we
won. Less work Tyler will have
when he comes back.

Christian finally moves to get up. Annie perks up, excited
that Christian is going to stand up to the boy. But instead
he turns and backs away.

CHRISTIAN

I gotta head to the library
before my next class. Want to
walk with me?

Annie deflates. She snatches up her lunch and follows.

INT. HALLWAY – CONTINUOUS

Annie walks with Christian.

ANNIE

Why do you take crap from jerks
like that?

CHRISTIAN

Cause I know guys like that aren't
worth it.

Annie does nothing to hide her hurtful expression.

ANNIE

Was I not worth it back there?

Christian stops at the entrance to the library looking
surprised. He opens his mouth but no words come out.

ANNIE
Nevermind. Come on, we're going
to be late.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD – DAY

Christian and Tyler gather next to Coach Quinn. They're ready to start a drill.

QUINN
Alright, get in there.

Both Christian and Tyler step forward. Christian stops and steps back in line, allowing Tyler to go first.

QUINN
What are you doing?

Tyler plays stupid but his arrogance still comes out.

TYLER
Oh, right Coach. My bad.

Christian steps into position. Tyler smirks at Christian, getting inside his head.

TYLER
Old habits you know? Just ready
to get back in there.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD

Christian is under center. He takes the snap and drops back. Pat blitzes right up the middle. Christian never sees him and is driven hard to the ground.

Westbrook blows the whistle and marches forward.

WESTBROOK
Damn it Devlin! We don't hit our
quarterback!

PAT
Sorry Coach. Just got carried
away I guess.

Pat still stands over Christian. He smirks at him.

PAT

Don't matter, you won't be the
quarterback much longer.

Christian is slow to get up. Westbrook extends a hand to help him up.

WESTBROOK

You're alright. Demand their
respect. Don't let them get
to you.

CHRISTIAN

If they don't kill me first.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S BEDROOM – NIGHT

Annie sits on Christian's bed with an Algebra book in her lap.

She pauses in the middle of a math problem and watches Christian study X's and O's from his playbook.

ANNIE

What are we?

His head snaps up from the book. He's confused, contemplates how to respond.

ANNIE

You and me...what are we?

CHRISTIAN

That sounds like psych, I
thought you were working on
math.

Not amused, she presses him again.

ANNIE

When you're not at practice and
we're not in school we're always
hanging out.

CHRISTIAN

I like hanging out.

ANNIE

I do too, but what does that
make us?

CHRISTIAN

You know you're my best friend.

ANNIE

Is that all I am?

Christian shifts, straightens up in his chair. He flips
the playbook closed and holds it up to her.

CHRISTIAN

You know how much pressure
I'm under right now? I don't
need this right-

Annie slams her book closed and jumps off the bed.

ANNIE

Call me in two weeks when Tyler
gets his spot back. Maybe then
you won't feel so pressured.

She gathers her things and storms out of the room.

He lets her go. He tosses the playbook onto the desk. The
gravity of it all sinks him deeper into his chair.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Tyler and Pat play keep away from Noah with a book.

They laugh and jeer as he struggles to get it back.

Tyler holds the book out of reach with one hand as he
restrains Noah with the other. Tyler laughs at the pitiful
effort.

THE BOOK is suddenly snatched out of Tyler's hand by Annie.
She's pissed and in full protective mode.

TYLER

What the hell?

Annie exudes all the courage she can muster becoming bigger
than she really is. Noah joins her at her side.

ANNIE

Real big of you to pick on a
freshman.

His expression changes when he sees that Annie is the one
who has interrupted his fun.

TYLER

Well, well, well...if it isn't
Big Sis to save the day.

Annie summons all her courage.

ANNIE

Leave him alone.

Pat closes in behind Tyler. They both chuckle at her
attempt at bravery.

TYLER

I wasn't trying to scare you.
Maybe we could be friends?

Tyler inches closer.

TYLER

You know, get to know
each other a little better??

Christian is suddenly between them. He stares down Tyler.

CHRISTIAN

Back off Tyler.

Tyler is humored by Christian's boldness.

TYLER

It's the Scrub. You win one
game on a fluke call and now
you've got balls of steel, huh?

A crowd has gathered in anticipation of this showdown.

Christian tries with all his might to hold a steady poker
face.

PAT

Let's just kick his ass now.

CHRISTIAN

No doubt two on one you could.

(to Tyler)

But you wouldn't want to extend
that suspension now would you?

Rage replaces the smile on Tyler's face.

TYLER

Two more weeks Scrub. Then I put
you back in your place.

Tyler backs away, holding Christian's gaze until the last
moment before turning away.

Christian exhales, he sits back against the wall.

ANNIE

That was...ummm...thanks.

CHRISTIAN

You said to stand up to them,
right?

Annie helps Christian regain his balance.

ANNIE

Well, yeah but I wasn't looking
for you to make that target
on your back any bigger.

Students in the hallway scatter as the bell rings.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM – NIGHT

The Bulldogs wear their road whites but most is covered
with mud, grass stains, and field paint.

THE SCOREBOARD shows the visitors down two scores midway
through the fourth quarter.

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook instructs Christian.

WESTBROOK

We've still got some time.
We put in a score here we'll
have time to get the ball back.

Christian stares blankly out at the field. A mixture of mud and blood are smeared across his forehead and chin.

WESTRBROOK

Snap out of it. Forget about
the picks and take care of the
ball. Move the chains.

Christian drops his eyes and nods. He trots out onto the field.

ON THE FIELD Christian scans the defense. Defenders shift and move around. Christian's eyes lock on a blitzing safety.

The ball is snapped. Christian drops back.

THE SAFETY reads Christian and is ready to pounce.

A RECEIVER breaks off his route. Christian releases a pass right on target.

THE SAFETY isn't fooled. He closes quickly on the receiver and the ball. He cuts in front, intercepting the pass.

DOWN THE SIDELINE the receiver streaks. There is no one between him and the endzone. Christian gives chase but can't catch up. A pick six seals the Bulldogs' fate.

ON THE FIELD Christian hangs his head. In the BACKGROUND, Westbrook eyes Christian.

ON THE SIDELINE Tyler smirks, reveling in Christian's failure.

THE OPPOSING QUARTERBACK takes a knee for the last play.

THE CLOCK runs out ending the game.

ON THE FIELD a reporter is in Westbrook's face.

REPORTER

Coach, one more loss and your
playoff chances are in jeopardy.
Can the season be saved?

WESTBROOK

The season's still young.
It's not time to panic yet.

REPORTER

But MacInerney really struggled
tonight. Maybe he's not ready
for this level of play. He-

WESTBROOK

-he made some mistakes but we
got outplayed in more ways than
one. That's a good team there.

Westbrook begins to walk away. The reporter cuts him off
with one more question.

REPORTER

What are the chances of an
early end to Peterson's
suspension?

Westbrook hesitates, his poker face falters for a brief
second.

WESTBROOK

We'll re-evaluate our quarter-
back situation in another week.

Westbrook leaves the reporter standing at the fifty yard
line.

EXT. LOCKER ROOM DOOR

Hines and Mr. Peterson are waiting for Westbrook.

HINES

A word Coach?

Westbrook is agitated and tired and talking to these two is
the last thing he wants to be doing.

HINES

Mr. Peterson and I feel that
the team really needs Tyler
and he's done more than enough
to satisfy discipline.

WESTBROOK

He's got one more week.

Hines chuckles uncomfortably and steps in closer to Westbrook.

HINES

Don't be a fool. Mr. Peterson insists Tyler's suspension be lifted.

Westbrook peaks past Hines at Mr. Peterson. Everything about him screams wealth and power. He stands, arms folded, commanding respect.

Westbrook steps past Hines and marches right up to Peterson.

WESTBROOK

With all due respect Mr. Peterson, your son broke a team and school rule, a pretty serious one. He sits for one more week.

Peterson will not back down nor be intimidated by anyone. He steps closer to Westbrook. They are almost eye to eye.

PETERSON

We both know you can't make the playoffs without him and not making the playoffs wouldn't be good for your career.

Westbrook has heard enough and rips open the locker room door and disappears inside.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOUSE

An ice pack rests on Christian's shoulder. His head tilted back, his eyes closed, and his feet up on the ottoman in front of an oversized armchair.

Annie sits beside him. She traces her fingers gently across scratches on his hand and up his arm.

She moves her hand to the scrapes and bruises on his face. A tear rolls down her cheek. She hurts for him.

He holds his hand over hers against his face. He smiles at her.

Christian reaches out to her and pulls her in closer. She cautiously lets him.

Closer still, her eyes lower as she concentrates on his lips drawing near to hers.

Her eyes close as his lips press against hers. He kisses her slowly, gently at first. The kiss grows deeper the longer it lasts.

She pulls back, her breathing faster now. He focuses on her gaze. They share a smile as he wraps her in his arms.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – DAY

Coach Quinn closes the office door behind him. As he moves past the empty rows of lockers he hears a locker open.

He peers down the bay of lockers where the sound came from and sees Christian.

QUINN

Shouldn't you be in class?

CHRISTIAN

It's my lunch.

QUINN

Then you should be eating.

Christian pulls his helmet from his locker. He rubs at the paint scuffs, other teams' colors that don't belong there.

CHRISTIAN

Not really hungry.

None of the colors come off the helmet.

QUINN

Those are war markings. Signs of a hard fought battle.

CHRISTIAN

They're a reminder of three interceptions and a loss.

QUINN

You played tough. You've shown courage beyond what anyone could expect.

Christian jams the helmet back into the locker.

Christian turns now for the first time to face Quinn.

CHRISTIAN

But it didn't matter. We lost. I failed.

QUINN

If you give up now the only one you fail is yourself.

Quinn places a hand on each of Christian shoulders. He peers into Christian's eyes.

QUINN

You've got one more game to show you deserve this.

CHRISTIAN

Even if we win the next game Tyler will be back and I'll be back on the bench.

QUINN

Not if you give us a reason to keep you in there.

Quinn leads Christian away from his locker. Quinn throws his arm around him.

QUINN

Tyler's arrogant. He doesn't have what you've got...

CHRISTIAN

What's that?

QUINN

You've got moxie, kid.

CHRISTIAN

I'm gonna have to look that
one up.

INT. WESTBROOK HOUSE – NIGHT

Westbrook sits up in bed watching game film on an iPad.
Joan exits the bathroom, finishing her bedtime routine.

JOAN

Honestly? I can't believe
you're actually considering
playing Tyler a week early.

WESTBROOK

Our backs are against the wall.
We could you use a spark like
Tyler.

She climbs into bed with him.

JOAN

I've met his parents, I don't
like them.

WESTBROOK

Trust me, I don't like them either.
But it's a little more complicated
this time.

She snatches the iPad from his hands.

JOAN

Sweetie, you know I love you,
you know I love football, but
after all the years of listening
to you bitch about this team
and moan about that team, you
don't think I know it's
complicated?

She tosses the iPad back at to him at the foot of the bed.

She lays down, rolling over giving him the cold shoulder
she turns out her light.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – DAY

Players dress and prepare for practice. Pat peers across the room and sees Westbrook sitting at his desk. He cautiously makes his way past other players on his way over.

WESTBROOK'S OFFICE

A knock on the door causes Westbrook to look up and see Pat.

WESTBROOK

What do you need Devlin?

Pat slowly enters and approaches. Westbrook doesn't take his eyes off him.

PAT

Coach, a few of us guys were, um, wondering if there was any um, way Tyler could play this week.

WESTBROOK

How many weeks was Tyler's suspension?

PAT

Three weeks.

WESTBROOK

And how many weeks has it been?

PAT

It's been two...uh...two weeks.

Westbrook stares at him, waits for him to do the math.

PAT

Right, one more week.

WESTBROOK

One more week.

Pat doesn't hesitate and leaves much faster than he came in.

Westbrook stands and peers out his office window at his team. He sees Christian at his locker.

LOCKER ROOM

Christian pulls his helmet out of his locker and examines the paint scuffs. He traces his fingers across a deep red one.

Feeling as though he's being watched he raises his eyes to meet Westbrook's.

COACHES' OFFICE

Westbrook gives a reaffirming look and an approving nod towards Christian.

LOCKER ROOM

Christian's expression changes to one of determination acknowledging Westbrook's supportive nod.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT — DAY

Players board two yellow school buses wearing game pants and carrying their helmets and shoulder pads.

Westbrook and Quinn stand at the door to the bus. Christian is the last one.

WESTBROOK

How you feeling?

Christian smile. He appears confident for the first time since being named the starter.

CHRISTIAN

Feel real good Coach.

WESTBROOK

Glad to hear that. Now let's go.

Christian climbs the steps onto the bus. Quinn and Westbrook pause before getting on themselves.

WESTBROOK

For both our sakes, I hope we're making the right decision.

Quinn pats Westbrook on the back.

QUINN

Trust your gut. You can't
go wrong trusting your gut.

They join the team on the bus.

EXT. LOCKPORT LIONS FOOTBALL STADIUM

ON THE FIELD the Bulldogs wear white pants with white jerseys.

Christian takes the snap, fakes to the running back then drops back. He has plenty of time to throw.

HE EYES a receiver streaking down field. He releases a deep, long pass.

THE BALL sails over everyone. A perfect spiral.

THE RECEIVER extends his hands, gently cradling in the pass, never breaking stride as he easily glides into the endzone. Touchdown.

THE SCOREBOARD shows the visiting Bulldogs now have a commanding 21-0 lead over the home team Lions.

IN THE STANDS Christian's family celebrates the touchdown.

Tyler's parents occupy their usual perch high above everyone else. Mr. Peterson grits his teeth, he grows more agitated with every score.

SEQUENCE OF SHOTS

Pat fills hard off the edge of the offensive line, blowing up the ball carrier for the Lions.

Christian unable to find an open receiver, tucks the ball under his arm and takes off running for a huge gain.

The Bulldogs intercept a pass and return it for a touchdown.

With the ball on the goal line, Christian reverses out straight back and hands the ball to the running back who launches himself over the pile and into the endzone.

END OF SEQUENCE

THE SCOREBOARD shows the clock running out as the Bulldogs win easily 35-0.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM PARKING LOT – NIGHT

Players board the busses post-game. As Christian approaches the he notices his family waiting nearby.

CHRISTIAN

Hey guys...thanks for coming.

LILY

You played so well-
 (sarcastically)
 It is ok to be proud now that
 you're playing?

Christian sheepishly smiles.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, sorry...I was a jerk about
 that before-

He doesn't finish his thought as Lily throws her arms around her son.

Pat approaches the busses and catches Maggie's eye.

Maggie lights up at seeing Pat. She runs up to him.

MAGGIE

Pat! It's been so long since I've
 seen you! You did great tonight!

She throws her arms around his waist hugging him.

He's startled and embarrassed at first but after a moment puts an arm around Maggie, reciprocating the hug.

PAT

Thanks Maggie. It's good to see
 you too.

Christian and Pat make eye contact. Christian smirks. Pat can't hide his shame. Maggie let's go, still smiling.

Pat looks down at her and smiles back before turning to board the bus.

INT. SCHOOL BUS – NIGHT

Christian peels tape from his wrists. Coach Quinn drops into the seat next to him.

QUINN

Good job tonight. See what happens when you play mistake-free football?

CHRISTIAN

They weren't very good.

Quinn sighs heavily and studies Christian. Trying to figure him out.

QUINN

When you're good that's what you're supposed to do to bad teams. Today, you were good.

Christian finally pulls loose the last piece of tape. He turns towards Quinn forcing a smile.

CHRISTIAN

Doesn't matter. Tyler'll be back this week.

A smile spreads across Quinn's face.

QUINN

Not so fast. You gave us plenty of reasons to stay with you.

Quinn moves back to his seat at the front next to Westbrook and the other coaches.

The realization that he could still be the starter quickly sets in.

EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE – NIGHT

Christian quietly knocks on the door. A light goes on and Annie lights up when she opens the door and sees him.

ANNIE

Oh my god...you played awesome!
I was following online.

Christian leans in and pulls her into his arms. He hugs her tightly, lifting her off the ground.

CHRISTIAN

You wouldn't believe it. They
couldn't stop us. Every play
we ran worked!

He sets her back down but doesn't let her go. They hold each other's gaze. After a moment, her smile begins to fade.

CHRISTIAN

What is it? What's wrong?

ANNIE

It doesn't matter does it?
They're gonna bench you aren't
they?

Christian's smile returns but only now it's a smirk as he knows something she doesn't.

ANNIE

What is it?

CHRISTIAN

I wouldn't count me out just
yet. Quinn thinks I have a
chance after tonight.

Annie's smile returns now as she jumps back into his arms. Her excitement gets loud. Christian tries to shush her.

CHRISTIAN

Not so loud, I don't want to
wake your mom.

ANNIE

She's not home. She's on a date.

A mischievous grin curls at the corners of his mouth.

CHRISTIAN

Oh really...?

He takes her hands and tries to playfully pull her inside.

ANNIE

Not so fast there mister.
You need your rest.

Christian slouches and his shoulders sag with playful disappointment.

Headlights light up the porch as a car pulls into the driveway.

ANNIE

Impeccable timing.

IN THE DRIVEWAY

Annie's mom, SILVIA, late 30's, steps out of the passenger side. THE DATE steps out from behind the wheel, 40's, he is well dressed and looks established.

BACK ON THE PORCH

Annie leans in gives Christian a quick kiss and a smile.

ANNIE

I'm so proud of you. Now
get out of here.

IN THE DRIVEWAY

Silvia passes Christian as she leaves the date at the car.

SILVIA

Hey Christian, how'd the
game go?

CHRISTIAN

We won, by a lot.

Silvia smiles and touches Christian on the arm as she continues towards the house.

The date eyeballs Christian, sizing him up.

THE DATE

So you're the quarterback, huh?

For the first time the realization hits him that yes, he is THE quarterback.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, I guess that's me.

THE DATE

I'm Peter.

PETER extends a hand. The handshake lasts a bit longer than it should have, two males jockeying for the role of Alpha.

PETER

So the paper says you're just filling in for the other kid.

CHRISTIAN

Yeah, he was suspended.

Peter notices he struck a nerve with that comment and decides to have a little fun antagonizing Christian.

PETER

So it's back to the bench now?

Trying to conceal a reaction to the hurtful question, Christian tries to politely walk away.

CHRISTIAN

I've got to get going.

PETER

Sure, sure. Hey good luck.

CHRISTIAN

Thanks.

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE — DAY

Players come together on both sides of the ball for a controlled scrimmage.

WESTBROOK

Give me first team O and
first team D. Goaline.

The players divide. The defensive huddle forms just inside the ten yard line behind the ball. Pat stands just outside looking to the sideline for a signal.

The offense huddles at the fifteen. Christian and Tyler stand on either side of Coach Quinn.

QUINN

Heavy right, twenty-two iso.

Both quarterbacks step move at the same time, trying to step into the huddle.

TYLER

What the hell, Scrub?

For a moment Christian moves to leave but then freezes. He stays and holds his ground. He stands tall facing Tyler.

CHRISTIAN

I think I'll stay.

Tyler draws closer. They stand toe to toe.

Quinn shoots a look at Westbrook who watches closely.

BACK IN THE HUDDLE

TYLER

Get out of my huddle.

CHRISTIAN

I don't think that's up to you.

Christian's boldness infuriates Tyler.

Before Tyler can make contact with Christian, Westbrook makes a decision.

WESTBROOK

Peterson! You go in when I
tell you to go in.

Tyler is stunned, his mouth agape.

Christian steps into the huddle and calls the play.

TYLER

Are you kidding me? Do you have any idea what you're doing?

QUINN

That's enough Tyler.

TYLER

Naw, this is bullshit.

Westbrook marches right up to Tyler. He grabs him by the front collar of his shoulder pads. He snarls into Tyler's facemask.

WESTBROOK

You will address me as Sir or Coach and if you ever want a chance to play here again you'll keep your mouth shut and do what I tell you.

Tyler chuckles and rips himself away from Westbrook.

TYLER

You'll regret you did that.

Tyler storms off the practice field.

Pat watches him go before turning his stunned gaze back to Christian.

Westbrook turns to Christian, nods a confirmation that he's all in with him.

WESTBROOK

Go on, run the play.

Christian's eyes narrow into a look of determination as he turns back to the huddle.

INT. DEVLIN HOUSE – NIGHT

Pat sits on the couch in his living room. His dad, KEVIN, 40's, sits in a recliner.

A football game plays on the tv. Kevin chugs a beer as the remaining two cans of a six pack sit in his lap.

KEVIN

How'd practice go? Did you hurt anyone out there today?

PAT

It was ok. We didn't hit too much this close to gameday.

KEVIN

Well you're not out there to make friends. Can't play nice.

Pat rolls his eyes. Same speech as always.

KEVIN

What's this I hear about Tyler not starting?

Pat is uneasy and hesitant to respond. He does so cautiously.

PAT

Christian hasn't done too bad.

KEVIN

He's no Tyler and that coach Westbrook is a dumbass.

Pat says nothing as he looks away from the tv.

KEVIN

You're quiet. Have a drink.

He tosses Pat a beer. Pat looks it over, touches his finger to the pull tab.

PAT

I've actually got some homework to finish so I'll take this to go.

Kevin pays no attention to Pat leaving the room but focuses on the game on the tv.

INT. DEVLIN HOUSE — HALLWAY — CONTINUOUS

Out of sight of his dad, Pat reaches into the kitchen and sets the beer on the counter before continuing to his room.

INT. COACHES OFFICE — DAY

William Peterson rages at Westbrook who sits behind his desk, taking the verbal assault. Hines stands in the corner, lets Peterson go.

PETERSON

Who the hell do you think you are? You think you're not replaceable?

WESTBROOK

I'm the head coach of this football program.

PETERSON

You won't be for long!

Westbrook keeps his cool, never taking his eyes off Peterson.

WESTBROOK

He lost the starting job because he broke a team rule. He needs to earn his spot back.

PETERSON

That's not going to be good enough. You'll make him the starter, immediately.

Westbrook defiant, leans back in his chair.

WESTBROOK

MacInerny is my quarterback.

Peterson is used to getting what he wants and doesn't get told no very often. He turns his attack towards Hines.

PETERSON

I want him fired immediately.

Hines steps forward, entering the conversation now.

HINES

As much as I'd like to do that
as I do support your position,
it's not that easy.

This only infuriates Peterson further.

PETERSON

Get it done, or it'll be
your job too!

Hines chuckles uncomfortably, the warning very real to him.

HINES

Let's all calm down here.
Tyler made a mistake and he's
answered for it. I'm sure you
believe in second chances.

WESTBROOK

Tyler's suspension is over, but
there's still more for him to
learn from this.

HINES

Tom, don't be a fool. Think
about your career here. Think
about your family.

Westbrook focuses on Hines before lowering his eyes and
contemplates the advice.

After a moment he raises his eyes to meet Peterson's stare.

WESTBROOK

MacInerny's my quarterback, Tyler
is the backup until I decide
otherwise.

Peterson sticks his nose in the air.

PETERSON

The next school board meeting
is in two weeks. I advise both
of you to keep that night open.

Peterson slams the door behind as he leaves.

HINES

You're a goddamn fool and you
are not taking me down with you.

Hines leaves just as violently as Peterson.

Westbrook collapses into his chair holding his head in his
hands.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY – DAY

Annie and Christian approach his locker. A paper dangles
from the slot along the edge of the door.

Christian snatches it and glances at it before crumpling it
up.

ANNIE

What'd it say?

CHRISTIAN

Nothing.

ANNIE

Come on, let me see it?

She tries to grab it from him. He holds it up way out of
her reach. He playfully holds her at bay with the other
hand.

Annie changes tactics and begins to tickle Christian under
his raised arm and in the ribs.

He lowers the paper in attempt to defend himself. She
steals it away and turns her back to him to read.

Her smile vanishes. She whips around to confront Christian.

ANNIE

What the hell is this?

Christian's mouth opens but Annie's shock cuts him off.

ANNIE

You need to report this.

(reads note)

"Kill yourself so Tyler can
play?" That is not ok.

Christian, un-phased by the letter, begs to differ.

CHRISTIAN

It's no worse than the others.

He realizes too late the mistake he's made.

ANNIE

Others? What others?

CHRISTIAN

That I should quit, that I should fake an injury, my favorite, I should drop out.

ANNIE

This is hate-mail. We have to report this...

CHRISTIAN

Most of them are from Pat, I think.

ANNIE

How do you know?

CHRISTIAN

He's in remedial English. I think a couple of them were even written in crayon.

Annie relaxes and smiles. Christian shuts his locker and throws his arm around Annie. He takes back the paper and crumples it up and tosses it into a nearby garbage can.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – NIGHT

The team sits gathered around Westbrook, dressed in game uniforms and ready for battle. They hang on every word.

WESTBROOK

I don't care that these guys won conference last year. Don't care that they haven't lost. Don't care about their defense. Do not be intimidated by them. That team over there is no bigger, no faster, & no stronger

than you. They've shown on film that they bleed just like you. They can be scored on, they can turn the ball over & they will make mistakes if you force them to.

He scans the room. His eyes narrow as they fix on Christian.

WESTBROOK

Believe in your hearts that you are the better team out there tonight. If you do that, we go in as underdogs and we come out as contenders.

Westbrook's stare pierces at Christian. At that moment the realization hits him that his coach truly believes in him. A fire inside has been lit.

Christian takes charge. He springs to his feet.

CHRISTIAN

I know what it feels like to be doubted. It sucks. Don't doubt yourselves. I believe in all of you, now believe in me and together we can do this.

(beat)

Now let's go!

He thrusts his helmet in the air and the rest of the team jumps to their feet and follow Christian out into battle.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM – NIGHT

THE SCOREBOARD shows a tie game, late in the fourth quarter.

ON THE FIELD Pat and the Bulldog defense are backed up deep into their own territory. The visiting Devils are threatening to score

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook nervously paces. Christian yells support to the defense, his jersey torn on the shoulder, his pants stained and dirty, and his lip busted.

ON THE FIELD the Devils quarterback barks out the signals. The ball is snapped. Play-action by the quarterback and running back fool Pat for a moment.

He recovers, changes course. He has a line on the quarterback. A gap in the offensive line opens.

THE QUARTERBACK sets his feet and rears back to shoot the endzone. As the ball comes back Pat is there. He drives his shoulder into the QB's back, separating ball from thrower.

Another BULLDOG DEFENDER falls on the ball, recovers the fumble.

THE CROWD erupts in pandemonium. Momentum has shifted.

ON THE SIDELINE Quinn is in Christian's ear. He yells the play to Christian to be heard over the screams of the crowd.

QUINN

I right, fake forty-three
reverse, keep.

Christian's eyes widen as he realizes the play is for him.

QUINN

Trust yourself. Trust your line.
Make a good fake and take off!

ON THE FIELD the huddle breaks. Christian takes a nervous, deep breath as he scans the defense. He is composed.

The flanker in motion as the ball is snapped. He bends his path deeper into the backfield.

Christian drops back, turns his back to the defense. He holds the ball in his right hand and an empty left out to the streaking flanker.

THE FLANKER curls over the empty hand. The defense bites and gives chase to the flanker.

CHRISTIAN HOLDS for a second longer. He spins out and takes off in the opposite direction. He passes the line of scrimmage before the defense realizes he has the ball.

THE FREE SAFETY has an angle on him.

CHRISTIAN sees him. He can cut back towards the pursuit or try to beat the safety.

CHRISTIAN shifts gears, accelerates. The safety tries to adjust his angle but it's too late. Christian flies past him.

He cruises into the endzone. Touchdown. THE CROWD explodes.

THE DEVILS take the kick off back to their own thirty yard line.

THE BULLDOG DEFENSE aligns in a prevent look. Pat scans the formation, points and shouts adjustments.

THE DEVILS in a five wide, empty shotgun set ready for a two minute drill.

They snap the ball. The Devil quarterback takes an initial drop. They set up a middle screen but Pat isn't fooled. He reads it perfectly and cuts in front of the crossing receiver.

Pat takes the interception towards the endzone. His fellow defenders throw devastating blocks on unprepared Devil receivers.

Pat has one guy to beat, the Devil quarterback. He tries to go low but fails and Pat lowers his shoulder and runs him over.

Pat reaches the endzone for what is the game sealing touchdown. The Bulldogs celebrate on the field.

THE BULLDOG SIDELINE goes crazy.

THE CROWD is deafening.

ON THE SCOREBOARD the final seconds tick away.

ON THE FIELD the celebration is just getting started. Hugs and high fives are everywhere.

Christian and Pat are suddenly face to face. The awkwardness freezes Christian for a moment.

Pat is on cloud nine and doesn't care. He hi-fives Christian and slams a hand on his shoulder pad before moving on to the next guy.

Relieved, Christian allows himself a relaxed smile and joins in the celebration.

Tyler watches the exchange. His eyes narrow. He stays on the perimeter, not an active participant in the celebration.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Christian hustles to class. As he reaches the room Westbrook and a well dressed MAN appear.

WESTBROOK

Hey Christian. Mrs. Nedles' English class, huh? That can wait. I want you to meet Coach Reynolds from UW.

The two shake hands. Reynolds looks the part of Div. 1 college coach. The perfect hair, the team colored polo with logo, and his best car salesman smile he's got.

REYNOLDS

Big win last week. Impressive.

Christian drops his eyes, bashful and not used to accolades and praise.

CHRISTIAN

Thanks. It was a big win for our team.

Both Reynolds and Westbrook exchange a chuckle.

WESTBROOK

See? What I'd tell you? Humble pie.

REYNOLDS

(to Christian)

Coach here has shown me some film and I think you've got great potential.

Christian glances from Westbrook to Reynolds. He's not sure he believes what he's hearing.

REYNOLDS

With your grades and clean disciplinary record, you're just the type of player we're looking for.

Westbrook beams from ear to ear. He puts his hand on Christian's shoulder. He's very proud of his quarterback.

REYNOLDS

We'll definitely be keeping our eye on you these next few weeks.

Christian shakes Coach Reynolds' hand, still unable to know if this is for real or not.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – DAY

Pat dresses for practice. Tyler's locker is adjacent to Pat's. Tyler torments and picks on weaker players as they pass.

Pat notices but says nothing.

TYLER

What the hell's the matter with you?

PAT

Nothin.

TYLER

What do you mean nothing? Stop being a little bitch.

Pat ignores him as he tries to finish dressing.

TYLER

I know you hear me. You've jumped on the MacInerny bandwagon just like a little bitch.

PAT

What the hell are you talking about?

TYLER

You won that game. Not him. But yet, he's the one who gets the attention.

Pat is stunned and confused.

TYLER

You made him look good and that doesn't help me get back what's mine.

PAT

I was just playing my...

TYLER

Whatever man. I'll get my spot back. He got lucky once and you bailed him out another. But neither of you will survive Delevan. No way this team stands a chance against them without me.

He doesn't allow Pat another word. He slams his locker shut.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

TWO GIRLS approach Christian at the lunch table. They are giddy and smitten being this close to him.

GIRL #1

Hey Christian, great game last week.

Christian fumbles with his water bottle, almost spilling it. Annie rolls her eyes showing her annoyance. He tries to play it cool.

CHRISTIAN

Thanks. It was a huge win for our team.

GIRL #2

So do you have a date to
homecoming yet?

Christian smiles, tries to flirt back.

CHRISTIAN

Are you asking?

Annie clears her throat rather loudly and kicks Christian
under the table.

CHRISTIAN

Actually I'm taking Annie.

Their smiles disappear. They glare at Annie noticing her
presence for the first time.

Annie gives them her best fake go-away smile she can
muster.

GIRL #1

Well you let us know if that
changes.

The girls turn the charm back on as they smile and wave to
Christian.

ANNIE

What the hell was that?

Christian avoids eye contact, turns his attention back to
his food.

CHRISTIAN

What was what?

ANNIE

You're not getting off that
easy. You would've gone off
and found a janitor's closet
or something if I hadn't
been sitting here.

Christian gives her a get real look. He begins a comeback
but she continues before he can.

ANNIE

By the way, I never said I'd go to homecoming with you. I actually don't recall you asking.

CHRISTIAN

So will you go with me?

ANNIE

You're going to have to do better than that.

She grabs her things, leaving him alone and confused.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY – DAY

Christian strides down the hallway. Random kids step forward to hi-five him and pat him on the back. He's all smiles riding this new wave of stardom.

He catches up to Annie at her locker.

CHRISTIAN

Ok, so I owe you a more formal proposal. I'll work on that.

Her eyes narrow playfully, accepting his apology.

ANNIE

Who are you? Since when do you walk down the middle of the hallway? And seriously, how many more times am I going to have to listen to
(mocking him)
Ooh, it was a big win for the team?

His smile quickly disappears, pain replacing his happiness.

ANNIE

Relax. I'm just kidding. You know I'm proud of you.

Christian allows a more humbled smile.

ANNIE

Can we agree to keep your
superstar in check?

He throws his arm around her as they head off down the hallway.

INT. OUTSIDE COACHES OFFICE

Tyler marches up to the office door only to find Christian already there waiting.

TYLER

What the hell are you doing
here Scrub?

Christian's new boldness shows as a sly smirk curls at the corner of his mouth.

CHRISTIAN

Aren't you my back up now?
I think that would make you
the Scrub, no?

Tyler stands toe to toe with Christian who doesn't back down this time.

TYLER

You are so in over your head
and you don't even realize it.
Everyone thinks you're good.
You're not good, you're lucky.
And your luck is about to run
out.

Christian stands his ground with the confidence of knowing something no one else knows.

CHRISTIAN

I'm not so sure about that.

The office door opens. Out steps Pat along with Westbrook and Coach Reynolds from UW.

Tyler's draw drops in disbelief. Christian revels in Tyler's reaction.

REYNOLDS

Thanks for coming down to talk.
Keep up the good work and keep
those grades up too.

PAT

Yes sir.

They shake hands. Pat is on cloud nine.

WESTBROOK

Now get your but back to class.

PAT

Yes sir.

Westbrook turns his attention towards Christian and Tyler.
He pauses for a moment taking in the scene. His eyes hold
Tyler's confused expression.

WESTBROOK

Come on in Christian.

TYLER

But Coach I wanted to...

WESTBROOK

It'll have to wait till later.

Tyler's disbelief deepens into hurt. For the first time he
feels himself being pushed aside.

His eyes narrow in hatred as the door closes with Christian
on the other side.

EXT. CHRISTIAN'S HOUSE - GARAGE - NIGHT

Charles and Christian tie up bags of recycling. They
collect other bags and together take out the trash.

CHARLES

I'm glad your first meeting with
a college coach went well.

CHRISTIAN

It was pretty surreal. The whole
time I sat there wondering when I
was going to wake up.

They reach the end of the driveway and position the cans and bags at the side along the curb.

Charles watches Christian. He is proud, yet still very protective.

CHARLES

Promise me you'll be careful.

CHRISTIAN

As long as the line blocks...

CHARLES

No, I want you to be careful, visiting with these coaches.

Christian senses the awkwardness and gives his dad a confused look.

CHARLES

I just want you to keep a level head. You know, a little perspective.

Christian relaxes and smiles. He understands where his dad is coming from.

CHRISTIAN

I get it dad. I'll be careful.

They head back up the driveway together. Charles throws his arm around Christian's shoulders.

EXT. SUBURBAN NEIGHBORHOOD STREET — NIGHT

A parked car rests on the side of the street blending in with others randomly dispersed down the street.

INT. PARKED CAR

Tyler sits in the passenger seat staring out the window. Three OTHER BOYS, his cronies, occupy the car with him.

DRIVER

You sure you want to go through with this man?

Tyler looks down at his phone.

TYLER'S PHONE shows no new messages. He clicks on a name that reads COACH ALSTON. Again, no messages.

TYLER

Hell yeah.

EXT. STREET

The boys are all dressed in black. Each one carries a carton of eggs. The DRIVER fires the first egg at the mailbox that reads WESTBROOK.

Tyler begins whipping eggs at the house. The other boys join in.

Eggs pelt the garage, the porch, the front door, and the windows.

A light goes on inside. The three boys run back to the car. Tyler is still throwing eggs.

The car is running now and pulls up to Tyler who jumps in as he launches his last egg.

AT THE DOOR is Coach Westbrook. He is furious. He charges down the steps into the yard, trying to get a license plate number.

He turns back to his house and assesses the damage. Joan appears at the door.

JOAN

Oh my god. The mess...
Are you ok?

He meets her worried expression with ashamed eyes.

JOAN

Why would...who would do this?

Westbrook is back on the porch. He puts his arms around his wife.

WESTBROOK

Go back inside. I'll clean
this up.

JOAN
No. I'll help.

EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE — NIGHT

Peter's car pulls into the driveway. He gets out and hustles around to open the door for Silvia. The two make their way to the front door.

INT. FOYER

Peter's chivalry continues as he helps Silvia out of her coat. He drags his lips slowly across the back of her neck and down across her shoulder.

She turns into him, looks up into his eyes. He smiles and kisses her. She tries to pull back. He holds her close as his hands begin to wander.

She lets him kiss her while doing her best to keep his hands off certain places.

ANNIE (o.s.)
Mom?

Annie appears on the stairs leading into the foyer. Peter releases Silvia, her breath rapid. Christian and Noah follow Annie down the stairs.

ANNIE
Mom...are you ok?

Silvia scoffs, laughs.

SILVIA
Of course. What are you kids up to?

ANNIE
We were studying...are you sure you're ok?

Peter watches Annie. Christian catches him staring at her. Peter smirks back.

SILVIA
Are you kids hungry? Did you eat?

Peter once again sizes up Christian. He oozes arrogance.

ANNIE
We ate earlier. Christian was
just leaving.

Silvia's expression turns to panic. She acts quickly.

SILVIA
Oh, before you go I have
Something I wanted to show you.

She leans in and gives Peter a peck on the cheek as she opens the door for him.

Disappointed, he forces a smile. For a moment his eyes are daggers, warning Christian.

PETER
I better get going too. Good night.
(to Silvia)
I'll call you tomorrow.

SILVIA
Sounds good.

She closes the door behind him. She turns and leans back against the closed door, eyes closed and head back.

ANNIE
Mom? What'd you want to show
us?

Silvia snaps out of it, leads them back towards the kitchen.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD — DAY

The players are in their lines and go through their dynamic stretch and warm up routine.

Westbrook stands back and off to the side preparing for the first phase of practice.

Christian notices two other gentlemen approaching the practice field and marching up to Westbrook.

Once they reach him, Christian realizes that it's Hines and Mr. Peterson.

Christian observes the conversation from afar. It's one-sided with Peterson doing all the talking.

Peterson jabs a finger towards him. He whips away and storms off.

Hines shakes his head in disappointment. Westbrook spins, marches back towards practice leaving him behind.

Tyler watches Christian with a wicked smile. He approaches Christian.

TYLER

Looks like your beloved coach
is gettin' his ass fired.

Christian tries to conceal his confusion and tries to stand up to Tyler.

CHRISTIAN

What are you talking about?
He's not getting fired.

TYLER

No playoffs, he's as good as
gone.

Christian realizes Tyler isn't bluffing.

TYLER

Time's up Scrub.

Christian turns away from Tyler. This truth stuns him. His gaze finds Westbrook. He watches him for a moment as the panic turns to fear.

INT. ANNIE'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Christian lies back on Annie's bed. She rests her head on his chest. He holds her in one arm while his other is tucked behind his head.

He stares at the ceiling lost in thought.

ANNIE

I think I love you.

Startled, he looks down at her.

CHRISTIAN

You're unsure?

She turns her head onto her chin and focuses on him.

ANNIE

I've never been in love before.
We've been best friends for as
long as I can remember.

He carefully brushes a strand of hair away from her face.

ANNIE

So this...being here with you...
I think it must be love.

He watches her explain her feelings to him. They sit in
silence for a moment.

CHRISTIAN

I think they're going to fire
Westbrook.

Annie sits up now, her mouth agape in shock.

ANNIE

They can't. Why would they?

Christian repositions himself as well so as to see her
better.

CHRISTIAN

If we don't make the playoffs.
(beat)
Tyler's dad is behind it.

Annie is stunned. She quickly transitions to a look of
determination.

ANNIE

Then you have no other choice.
Make the playoffs. Win.

Christian smiles, appreciating her confidence. He slides his hand carefully along the side of her face. He pulls her into him.

ANNIE

I know you can do it.

He kisses her, then pulls back as his gaze goes deep into hers.

CHRISTIAN

Annie?

ANNIE

Yes?

CHRISTIAN

I love you too.

She explodes into a smile and snuggles tightly to him. He swallows her up in his arms.

EXT. FOOTBALL GAME - NIGHT

The Bulldogs don their road whites once again.

Christian drops back and sails a pass deep down the left sideline.

THE RECEIVER pulls the pass down in stride and strolls into the endzone.

BROADCASTER (V.O.)

MacInerny has been lights out tonight. Two first half touch-down passes and he ran for a third. Now he's added another!

ON DEFENSE Pat chases the running back. He dives at his feet, missing the tackle.

Other Bulldog defenders run the ball carrier out of bounds short of the first down.

THE OTHER TEAM punts on fourth down.

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook and Quinn give Christian final instructions.

WESTBROOK

Keep the clock moving. Secure
the ball. Even if we have to
punt they won't have much time.

Christian nods affirmation.

QUINN

Trips twenty-two give.

Christian takes the play onto the field.

ON FIRST DOWN he runs the play called and the back is
stopped at the line of scrimmage.

THE DEFENSE is loading up the box with eight guys leaving
only three guys back to defend the pass.

ANOTHER RUN PLAY goes for only a short gain.

Christian receives the signals for the next play.

AT THE LINE he scans the defense. He sees an uncovered
receiver in the slot.

Christian calls out an audible, changing the play.

IN THE STANDS Lily clings to her husband. Charles grimaces,
full of nerves and worry.

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook and Quinn begin to panic.

WESTBROOK

No...no...no! Don't do it!

ON THE FIELD it's too late. Christian snaps the ball and
drops back. He has the receiver open slanting across the
middle.

He winds up to deliver the ball but the pressure is too
much and he is hit hard from behind.

THE BALL shoots awkwardly forward out of his hand and into
the hands of a linebacker.

He is caught and taken down inside the five yard line.

CHRISTIAN IS SLOW to get up. He drags himself back to the sideline where Westbrook is waiting for him.

He stops Christian and places both hands on either side of his helmet.

Christian tears up, his eyes falling away under the weight of Westbrook's disappointment.

He taps a gentle hand on the top of Christian's helmet as he slides past.

IN THE STANDS a wicked smile spreads across Mr. Peterson's lips. He takes pride in being proven right.

ON THE FIELD the defense lines up for a goal line stand.

Pat eyes the quarterback. The ball is snapped. The running back darts straight ahead, takes the handoff of and launches himself over the pile

Pat reads it perfectly and goes airborne to meet him.

The running back is too much for Pat as they collide in midair. Pat is knocked backwards and the ball carrier comes down across the goal line, landing in the endzone.

Touchdown. The Hawks celebrate. Pat sits on his knees, devastated and defeated.

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook can only look on bearing the heartache of defeat.

EXT. PARKING LOT

The team is loading onto the bus for the ride home. Christian hugs his parents and leaves them. He approaches the bus to board but Tyler cuts in front of him with a wicked smile.

TYLER

Way to go Scrub. Westbrook'll
sure to be gone now. Hey no
worrries...I'll get us into the
playoffs. And if you're lucky,
I'll still let you carry my
helmet.

Tyler cackles as he gets on the bus. Christian's eyes narrow, hatred building to the point of wanting to knock Tyler out.

He swallows it back and boards the bus.

INT. SCHOOL BUS

Christian passes Coach Quinn on his way to his seat. Westbrook is the last one on.

WESTBROOK
(to the driver)
We're all set.

Westbrook takes his seat and notices Quinn across the aisle grimace as he rubs the heel of his hand against his chest.

WESTBROOK
Coach? You ok?

QUINN
Yeah...yeah I'm fine.

Westbrook keeps his eye on him, still very concerned.

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY – DAY

Christian trades books at his locker. As he turns to head to class a teammate named BILLY jumps in front of him, out of breath and alarmed.

CHRISTIAN
Whoa...slow down there. Where's the fire?

BILLY
You haven't heard?

CHRISTIAN
Heard what? Billy, you ok?

BILLY
It's Quinn. They took him to the hospital after the game. They're saying heart attack.

Christian's eyes are wide as his mind races.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM — DAY

Coach Quinn lies in the bed, hooked up to various machines. An oxygen tube is strewn across his upper lip and clipped to his nose.

A KNOCK on the door as it begins to open. Quinn turns his eyes towards his visitor.

Christian peeks his head into the room.

Quinn perks up and waves him in.

QUINN
Come on in. It's ok.

CHRISTIAN
Coach...I'm...I'm sorry.

Quinn appears insulted and confused.

QUINN
What are you sorry for?

CHRISTIAN
It's my fault you're here.

Quinn chuckles and smiles dearly at Christian.

QUINN
Son, I'm in here 'cause I'm
fifty-seven years old and I
like salt.

Christian relaxes and smiles. Quinn watches him for a moment. He fidgets, standing at Quinn's bedside.

QUINN
I'm guessing you're not here
to talk about my diet. Sit
down. What's on your mind?

Christian shifts uncomfortably, looks around and chooses the chair near the head of the bed.

CHRISTIAN
Why did Westbrook pick me?

Quinn sees where this is going and tries to sit up.

QUINN

You've never given yourself
enough credit. You've got heart
and sometimes, that's worth
a lot more than talent.

CHRISTIAN

Could've used some talent the
other night. I lost us the game.

QUINN

You took a chance...a safe chance.
Our defense didn't stop them much
either. It doesn't fall on you.

Christian straightens, moves to the edge of the chair.

CHRISTIAN

I'll understand if he benches
me for Tyler.

Quinn frowns, rejecting this as nonsense.

QUINN

And why, after all this would
we do that now?

Christian drops his eyes to the floor.

CHRISTIAN

I know what happens if we don't
make the playoffs. Tyler's our
best shot.

Quinn sits up and swings his legs off the side of the bed.
He faces Christian.

QUINN

You are our best shot. Tyler
plays selfish and uninspired.
You play with heart and courage
not many have at this level.

He struggles to stand. He clutches the silver pole that
holds the IV bag connected to his arm. After a second
attempt he's finally upright.

QUINN

Everything happens for a reason.
We can sit by and worry about the
worst thing that can happen, or
we can get in the game and
fight for the best thing that
can happen.

Christian looks up now to meet Quinn's intense stare. He stands to face him. Christian is inspired.

QUINN

Westbrook is sticking with you.
So am I. One more win and we
make the playoffs. Go out and
take care of business and
everything else will sort its
self out.

CHRISTIAN

I won't let you down Coach.

Quinn smiles. He feels endeared and proud.

QUINN

We're counting on it.

INT. CHRISTIAN'S HOUSE — DINNER TABLE — NIGHT

The whole family enjoys a rare meal together. Charles and Lily flank Christian and Maggie.

Charles watches over the table. His eyes settle on Christian, worry showing through.

CHARLES

Have you heard anything more
from the UW coach?

Christian bumps his phone on. There are no new messages.

CHRISTIAN

No...not since last week.

Charles shoots a look at Lily. This is the let down they were worried about.

CHARLES

I'm sure he'll contact you
before Friday.

Christian is relaxed. He smiles as he glances between his parents with calm certainty. He straightens up, holding his head high.

CHRISTIAN

I don't think I'll hear from
him again unless we make the
playoffs.

Charles begins to protest but Christian has it in check.

CHARLES

I don't want-

CHRISTIAN

-And that's ok. If it's meant
to be then he'll call.

Charles sets down his fork and folds his hands under his chin. He watches Christian with pride and admiration.

INT. ANNIE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Silvia clears empty plates from the table. Peter eyes her as he sips from a glass of wine.

She rinses the dishes at the sink when he sneaks up from behind her. He tries to get frisky and she squirms, using a free hand to push his away.

SILVIA

Hey there...Annie'll be home
soon.

PETER

Where is she exactly?

SILVIA

Studying at the library with
Christian.

He backs off and leans against the adjacent counter. He drinks more wine.

PETER

Why does a gorgeous girl
like her settle for a loser?

SILVIA

Christian's not a loser, he's
a great guy and they're best
friends.

Peter's eyes roam up and down Silvia. He throws back the
rest of his wine and moves back in once again.

His hands are more active. Silvia shifts again, trying to
dodge his groping.

SILVIA

Come on, not now.

He ignores her plea and kisses her neck.

She dries her hands on a dishtowel. She tries to move away
but he has her pinned against the counter.

Silvia struggles to push him away but he's too strong.

SILVIA

Peter, please. I don't want to...
Please, stop...

Peter ignores her pleas and becomes more aggressive.

TWO HANDS slap hard on Peter's back. They grip hard and rip
him off her. He's thrown back across the kitchen.

Christian stands in front of Silvia, blocking Peter from
her. Annie stands with Silvia.

CHRISTIAN

She said NO and now I think you
need to leave.

Peter is pissed and not finished.

PETER

I think somebody needs to teach
you some respect.

He takes a step towards Christian, ready to strike. Annie pounces from behind Christian and kicks Peter between the legs.

Peter doubles over in a heap onto the floor.

Christian grabs him by the back of the neck and arm and peels him off the floor. He guides him down the hallway towards the front door.

EXT. FRONT PORCH

Annie opens the front door. Christian throws Peter out into the yard. He still clutches his crotch.

CHRISTIAN

Leave and don't ever come back.

ANNIE

Consider yourself dumped,
asshole!

She slams the door shut behind her.

EXT. FOOTBALL PRACTICE – DAY

Christian runs through a play with the offense. The offense huddles and Christian approaches Westbrook who gives directions.

Christian runs another play. He looks sharp executing the play.

As the sun goes down, a whistle BLOWS signaling the end of practice. The team converges on Westbrook.

INT. LOCKER ROOM – LATER

Christian closes his locker in an empty locker room. He turns to leave but notices Westbrook watching him.

CHRISTIAN

Coach? You ok?

Westbrook stares up at a goal board. The season's schedule is there with blue dots stuck under columns for each goal that was met against each opponent.

WESTBROOK

Look...we haven't gotten a first
down inside the five all season.

Christian looks up, studies the board.

CHRISTIAN

How 'bout that. We got one more
chance. Maybe we'll get one.

Westbrook faces Christian.

WESTBROOK

I think that's what I like
best about you...your optimism.

CHRISTIAN

I know what's on the line and
I know what needs to be done.
You're my coach, I won't let
you down.

EXT. FOOTBALL GAME — NIGHT

The stands are packed with fans of both teams. Faces are
painted, cheerleaders yell, the crowd is restless.

BROADCASTER (o.s.)

We're at Bulldog Stadium where
it feels like a win-or-go-home
playoff atmosphere.

The North Prairie Patriots don their road white jerseys and
go through pregame warm ups on their end of the field.

BROADCASTER (o.s.)

(continues)

The Patriots of North Prairie
High School are undefeated and
have already punched their
ticket for to the state playoffs.

Christian throws routes to a line of receivers. Westbrook
approaches.

WESTBROOK

How you feeling?

Christian snaps off another pass that drills a slanting receiver right in the hands.

He pauses, flashing a confident smile to his coach.

CHRISTIAN

Feel good. Loose. I think we're ready.

Westbrook pats him on the shoulder pad in agreement.

Both teams clear the field, jogging back to their respective locker rooms.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

The players surround Westbrook. Some stand, some are down on one knee, others sit at their lockers.

Westbrook paces around, his glare darting from one player to the next. All eyes are on him.

WESTBROOK

Gentleman...tonight you have an opportunity that most young men in your shoes won't ever get. You control your own destiny. And your destiny doesn't depend on whether you win or lose out there tonight. Will you be able to look number one in the eyes tomorrow morning when you see him in the mirror?

He scans the room, looks from player to player, reading their expressions.

WESTBROOK

(continues)

Will you be able to say you left it all out on the field? There was nothing more you could've done to help your team?

Westbrook let's the question hang in the air as he scans the room for doubters.

WESTBROOK

That's all I ask of you tonight.
Leave it all out on that field.
Have no regrets tomorrow or ever.
If you do that, if you play
your hearts out, win or lose,
you will be champions forever.
Now get out there take control
of your destiny! Let's go!

The players all explode to their feet and charge out of the locker room.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - SIDELINE

ANNOUNCER (o.s.)

And here's your Franklin Bulldogs!

Pat is the first to shoot out of the inflated football helmet and through the paper banner held up by the cheerleaders.

The rest of the team follows closely behind. Christian and Westbrook are the last two.

Westbrook catches up to him and places his hand on his shoulder.

WESTBROOK

Christian...whatever happens out there...I want you to know I'm proud of you.

CHRISTIAN

Thanks Coach. But save the gushy stuff for later and let's go make those playoffs!

The Bulldogs kickoff to start the game. The Patriots return the kick to the thirty-five yard line.

Westbrook paces the sideline. He stops and barks into his headset.

Pat stuffs the running back for a loss.

IN THE STANDS the home crowd erupts with excitement. Annie is in her usual spot alongside Christian's family.

The Peterson's watch from higher up in the stands behind the MacInerny's.

ON THE FIELD a booming punt sails high and deep through the night air, taking the Bulldog return man back to the fifteen yard line.

BEGIN SERIES OF SHOTS

Christian drops back to throw. The RIGHT GUARD gives a poor effort and the D-lineman slips right past him.

Christian is easily sacked for a loss.

A PASS from Christian is on target but slips through the hands of the receiver and is intercepted by a Patriot defender.

A Patriot running back breaks through an arm tackle by Pat.

A Patriot receiver pulls in a long pass for a touchdown.

William basks in the Patriots score.

Christian scrambles out of a collapsing pocket and breaks off a long run.

A referee signals a penalty negating the run.

Pat zeros in on the running back trying to beat him to the edge.

Pat meets him but takes the brunt of the impact and is knocked on his back.

The running back scores.

Christian is blind-sided as he starts to throw and the ball pops loose. The Patriots recover the ball.

Lily buries her face as she clutches Charles' arms. He grimaces, concerned for his son.

In the background William smiles, revels in the punishment Christian is taking.

-END SEQUENCE OF SHOTS

EXT. FOOTBAL FIELD

Christian peels his helmet off in agony. The SCOREBOARD behind him shows the visiting Patriots leading 17-0 at halftime.

IN THE STANDS William is on the move.

WILLIAM
(to his wife)
Stay here. I'll be right back.

BARBARA
Where are you going?

WILLIAM
I'm going to make sure our son
is going in this game.

He pushes his way past other parents and students. Charles is concerned as he notices William leaving the stands.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - HALFTIME

The team is scattered around the room, beaten and battered.

Christian sits in front of his locker and scans the room. He sees nothing but defeat.

He notices Tyler sitting next to the same offensive lineman that missed the block that resulted in Christian being sacked more than once.

Something doesn't seem right to Christian.

The lineman nods and pats Tyler on the shoulder. Tyler gets up and moves to the receiver who let the pass slip through his fingers.

Christian's eyes follow in that direction. His gaze falls on Westbrook. Behind the window peering into the office, William is in there scolding Westbrook.

INT. COACHES' OFFICE

William gets in a few last words.

WILLIAM

I'm trusting you will do the
right thing.

William storms out of the office. Westbrook is left alone. He peers out the window to find Christian staring right at him.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

Christian locks eyes with Westbrook who sadly glares back.

Christian realizes what is about to happen. He rises to his feet and moves to the center of the room.

TYLER

(to the receiver)

This should be good...

(to Christian)

Final last words Scrub?

Christian ignores Tyler and scans around the room. All eyes are on him.

Christian is all business right now. He is intense as he comes at the team around him.

CHRISTIAN

I've been told I'm not good
enough. That this team can't
win with me. Ya' know what?
I didn't think we could either.

Westbrook emerges from his office but hangs in the background.

CHRISTIAN

(continues)

I was scared. I didn't think
I had what it takes to lead.

Westbrook and Christian lock eyes. A relax smile curls on Westbrook. Christian smiles back.

CHRISTIAN

But Coach believed in me.
And that's all I needed. I've
learned that we can't be
afraid of failing. That it
doesn't matter how many times
we get knocked down, how many
times we're told we're no good,
we have to get up and keep
going, keep fighting.

Christian pauses a moment, a smirk curls at the corner of his mouth as he recalls Quinn's words.

CHRISTIAN

All I ask of you is to fight on
with me, with courage and heart.

Tyler rises and in all his smugness steps in front of Christian.

TYLER

So very touching MacInerny. But
nobody cares. You're just telling
us what we've all known all
season long...that you suck.
You've let everyone down and
I've got to come in and clean
up your mess.

Pat jumps to his feet and in a blink of an eye is between the two quarterbacks.

He grabs two fistfuls of Tyler's jersey and shoves him straight back against the lockers.

Westbrook is momentarily panicked, taking a step forward.

PAT

No! You're the one who let us
down.

Tyler is shocked and speechless. His eyes are wide and his mouth hangs open.

PAT

He got us this far, all
you do is tell everyone how
awesome you are and that it
should be you out there. You
blew it. You let us down, not
him.

Christian steps forward and places his hand on Pat's
shoulder. He nods his appreciation to him.
The receiver and the lineman join Christian and Pat.

LINEMAN

Sorry man...we've got your back
now.

Christian looks at the two of them and smiles his
forgiveness. He turns his attention back to Tyler.

CHRISTIAN

Don't worry Tyler...I got this.

The rest of the team now gathers behind Christian and the
others. Westbrook emerges in front of them all.

WESTBROOK

I'm gonna take quite a bit of
pleasure in saying this...Tyler,
get out of my locker room.

Tyler, still stunned looks around helplessly.

TYLER

You won't get away with this!
You'll be sorry.

WESTBROOK

Probably...so I'll just go
ahead and enjoy it for now.

Tyler snarls at everyone and stomps out of the locker room,
a spoiled child not getting his way.

Westbrook turns and faces Christian and the team.

WESTBROOK

This will all be for nothing if we can't go back out there and turn this thing around.

CHRISTIAN

What am I doin' standing here talkin' to you for then?

(to the team)

We've come this far...have faith in eachother, follow me for one more half and I promise you...I will not let you down.

Pat offers his hand up to Christian.

PAT

We've got your back. We won't let you down this time...

(yells to the team)

will we?

TEAM

No!

Christian's hand claps loudly as he grabs hold of Pat's. They lock up in unison as the positive tension builds.

WESTBROOK

Put all the doubters to rest!
Get out there and show'em what kind of team you really are!
Now let's go!

Everyone chants and yells as they begin to spill out of the locker room.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM

The team emerges from underneath the stands and back onto the field.

IN THE STANDS Charles and Lily hold their breath, waiting anxiously to see their son. Annie sits along side them. A smile quickly spreads across her face.

ON THE FIELD Christian emerges with Westbrook, bringing up the rear of the team.

The SECOND HALF BEGINS.

Christian drops back, eyes downfield.

THE RECIEVER jukes the defender and breaks to the deep middle.

CHRISTIAN looks off the safety to one side before coming back to the open receiver. He releases it deep and straight.

THE RECIEVER hauls in the pass in stride. He coasts into the endzone.

THE CROWD erupts in celebration. Annie throws her hands in the air celebrating the score.

BACK ON THE FIELD the Bulldogs are on defense. Pat stalks out the running back, blasting him at the line of scrimmage.

THE DOWNMAKER reads third and long.

THE PATRIOT quarterback is in the shotgun. He handles the snap looking for an open receiver.

ON DEFENSE Pat reads the pass, sniffing out an open lane to blitz through. He has a clear path to the quarterback.

The quarterback pulls back to throw but is blasted by Pat. The ball pops loose and the Bulldogs recover.

THE BULLDOGS are back on offense. Christian can't find anyone open. He dodges one defender, shakes off another and takes off running.

Christian leaps over a Patriot defender diving at his feet. He's in the open field now in full stride.

A PATRIOT DEFENSIVE BACK has an angle on him. Christian is finally caught and run out of bounds at the fifteen yard line.

Christian is met at the sideline by Westbrook.

WESTBROOK
Great run kid. You ok?

CHRISTIAN
(breathing heavy)
Yeah...I'm good.

WESTBROOK
Ok, let's go ace thirty-two-

CHRISTIAN
Coach, let's shoot the endzone
right away.

Westbrook stares hard at Christian. Christian's gaze doesn't falter but is strong and confident.

WESTBROOK
Alright. Twins strong ninety-
nine flare.

The Bulldogs are at the line of scrimmage.

Christian scans the defense. He takes the snap and rolls to the left. Everyone is covered.

A PATRIOT DEFENDER barrels down on him. THE LINEMAN sees him coming and steps back and throws himself into the defender keeping him from getting to Christian.

He fires a strike into the hands of the dragging backside receiver. Touchdown.

Christian jumps at the lineman who catches him in his arms.

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook congratulates the offense as they exit the field.

ON THE FIELD the Patriots are pinned deep in their own territory.

THE DOWNMARKER shows it's third and long.

THE PATRIOT QUARTERBACK fakes left and boots back to the right. A Bulldog defender comes free off the edge.

The quarterback tries to backtrack but has nowhere to go. He turns back downfield and heaves it up.

DOWNFIELD the receiver is covered. A BULLDOG DEFENSIVE BACK outleaps the receiver and intercepts the pass.

The Bulldog defense turns into blockers, paving the way for the defensive back. He has a clear path down the sideline.

He cruises easily into the endzone for another score.

IN THE STANDS the crowd goes wild. Lily and Annie throw their arms around each other in celebration.

ON THE FIELD the Patriot coaches calm their players, drawing up plays on whiteboards, giving them adjustments.

PATRIOT COACH

(to the offense)

They're scoring too fast. We're gonna slow things down. Keep it on the ground, take your time. Grind it out.

THE BULLDOG SIDELINE buzzes with excitement. Westbrook gathers his defense.

WESTBROOK

We've got to settle down and focus. Be disciplined. Stay home and do your job.

ON THE FIELD the Patriot offense is on the move.

THE RUNNING BACK blasts into the line of scrimmage. The pile moves in favor of the Patriots.

A SWEEP around the edge goes for another first down.

The Patriot offense slowly and methodically approaches the line of scrimmage. The quarterback takes his time scanning the defense.

A COUNTER PLAY to the right has the running back following a pulling guard.

PAT is SEALED INSIDE by a double team. He's unable to get to the play.

ON THE SIDELINE Christian eyes the scoreboard nervously.

THE SCOREBOARD reveals that it's getting late in the fourth quarter. The Patriots have another first down.

ON THE FIELD a receiver slants hard across the middle. As the ball reaches his hands Pat slams into him.

The receiver hangs onto the ball for a first down inside the five.

Pat is slow to get up. He is bent over, hands on his knees breathing heavy.

THE PATRIOTS come to the line. The Bulldogs crowd the ball in a goal line defense.

The Patriot quarterback barks out the signals. He takes the snap, reverses out, fakes to fullback up the middle.

The tailback jab steps towards the fullback but cuts back the opposite way.

Pat doesn't bite on the fake. He spies the tailback. He closes in on the hole that is opening in the line.

The tailback takes the ball, his eyes wide he sees Pat coming.

Pat collides with the tailback at the line of scrimmage. But Pat doesn't get low enough.

The tailback carries Pat back into the endzone for a touchdown.

IN THE CROWD the Patriot fans go wild.

ON THE PATRIOTS' SIDELINE they players are jumping all over each other in celebration.

Completely gassed, Pat peels himself off the turf.

ON THE SIDELINE Christian gets final directions from Westbrook.

WESTBROOK

We'll have just over a minute
after the kickoff. We still have
one time out and-

Pat is at Christian's side. Tears are in his eyes as he struggles to speak.

PAT

Christian...I'm sorry...I...
I couldn't stop him...

Christian places his hands on Pat's shoulders. Calms him.

CHRISTIAN

You had my back at halftime, I've
got yours now.

ON THE FIELD the kickoff is high and deep. The Bulldog return man catches the ball and streaks straight up the middle.

One Bulldog player after another throw blocks that pave the way for the return man. He makes a single cut and finds a seam. He's past every with only the kicker to beat.

THE KICKER takes an angle but it the returner is too fast. He flies right past the kicker, coasting into the endzone.

IN THE STANDS the Bulldogs fans explode in wild celebration.

ON THE FIELD other Bulldog players join the returner in the endzone.

A WHISTLE BLOWS and a REFEREE waves his arms back at midfield. A YELLOW penalty flag sits at his feet.

THE REFEREE walks off a fifteen yard block in the back penalty. He spots the ball at the Bulldog thirty yard line.

THE BULLDOG SIDELINE is dejected. Westbrook does his best to rally his team.

WESTBROOK

We're still ok. Let's go! We
can still do this! Christian...

CHRISTIAN

Yeah Coach...

Player and coach exchange confident smiles.

WESTBROOK
You know what to do.

ON THE FIELD Christian enters the huddle.

CHRISTIAN
Alright. Two plays. Gun sixty
wheels. If you don't get out of
bounds we're at the line for gun
ninety white. Ok, let's do this!

The huddle breaks and the Bulldogs are at the line.
Christian scans the defense.

He takes a deep breath and calls for the snap. The play
begins.

Christian stands tall in the pocket. Chaos reigns as bodies
fly all around him.

THE SLOT RECEIVER heads towards the sideline before turning
up field. The cornerback is out of position and doesn't see
the receiver.

IN THE BACKFIELD Christian sees the receiver come open. He
launches the ball deep downfield.

THE BALL REACHES THE RECEIVER as the safety reaches him.
He's hit as the ball makes it to his hands.

THE RECEIVER hangs on to the ball as the safety brings him
down in bounds just past the forty yard line.

THE SCOREBOARD continues to roll passing under twenty
seconds. Christian rushes everyone downfield.

CHRISTIAN
Let's go! Let's go! On the line!
Get set! Set, set!

ON THE SIDELINE Westbrook screams and waves for the offense
to hurry up.

Everyone scrambles to get lined up. The defense moves slow,
trying to waste clock.

THE REFEREES spot the ball. The chains are set. Christian is at the line anxiously waiting for the ref to wind the clock.

The referee BLOWS his WHISTLE and winds the clock. Christian calls for the snap. The play begins.

THE CLOCK on the SCOREBOARD counts down.

ON THE FIELD Christian drops back. The defense brings everyone.

A LINEBACKER has a clear path to Christian. THE LINEMAN swings his head and sees that his quarterback is about to be hit.

He steps back and pulls to try and head off the linebacker.

A RECEIVER charges downfield. He jukes the defender and posts back inside. He gains the step on the defender needed to get open.

CHRISTIAN sees the receiver and steps up to throw. He pulls the ball back at the exact moment the linebacker is a step away from him.

The LINEMAN obliterates the defender, allowing Christian to get the throw off.

THE POSTING RECEIEVER snatches the ball from the air. He slices across midfield passing the twenty yard line. He races towards the corner.

A DEFENDER has an angle on him. The two race towards the endzone.

THE RECEIVER realizes he might not make it. He dives for the endzone. The defender knocks him out of the air short of the goaline.

CHRISTIAN RUSHES to the nearest referee.

CHRISTIAN
Timeout! Timeout!

THE REFEREE BLOWS his WHISTLE and waves his arms stopping the clock.

THE SCOREBOARD shows three seconds remain in the game.

Christian comes to the sideline to confer with Westbrook.

WESTBROOK

Ok, good job...we're not done yet
though. We're gonna go-

CHRISTIAN

-Give me the ball.

Westbrook peers into Christian's eyes. Christian holds his stare un-phased.

Westbrook smirks and nods in agreement.

WESTBROOK

Heavy right, one twenty-four boot.

Christian smiles at the play called. He turns to head back onto the field.

WESTBROOK

Christian!

He stops and looks back at his coach.

WESTBROOK

Whatever happens-

CHRISTIAN

-I know.

Christian flashes a confident smile before turning away.

ON THE FIELD the huddle breaks and the Bulldogs march up to the line. The defense crowds the line of scrimmage.

Christian calls out the signals. The ball is snapped. The running steps to the right and comes forward.

Christian opens to the right, holds the ball out to the running back. He fakes and pulls the ball back into his belly.

The running back goes up and over the pile that has formed at the goaline.

Christian keeps the ball and bootlegs back to the left. The race for the corner is on.

TWO DEFENDERS aren't fooled by the play-fake. They have an angle on Christian.

He seems them coming. As they close in on him he dives for the pylon. The defenders leap to intercept him.

As Christian reaches the ball out to the pylon he's hit by both defenders. The three land in a pile on the goaline.

THE REFEREEEE does not signal a score.

THE SCOREBOARD has run out.

As the two defenders slowly roll off, Christian rolls over to reveal ball lying on the goaline.

REFEREEEE

The ball has broken the plane.

He thrusts both arms in the air.

REFEREE

Touchdown!

IN THE STANDS the Bulldogs explode in celebration. Annie, Maggie, Lily, and Charles hug one another in celebration.

ON THE FIELD the Bulldog sideline storms the field.

THE LINEMAN lifts Christian up off the turf. Everyone pats Christian on the helmet and shoulders.

STUDENTS and FANS spill onto the field to celebrate.

Westbrook fights his way through the team. He reaches Christian. Player and coach embrace.

WESTBROOK

Damn proud of you son.

CHRISTIAN

It's my turn to say thanks.

WESTBROOK

Save it...cause we're going to
the playoffs!

The celebration continues on the field.

EXT. ANNIE'S HOUSE – DAY

Christian is dressed in a suit and tie as he gets out of
his car.

As he turns to face the house he sees Annie standing on the
porch. She wears a simple but elegant cocktail dress.

ANNIE

So, big football star...you're
late.

Christian flashes that newfound confident smile as he
climbs the porch steps.

She steps in front of him, stopping him before he reaches
the top.

He quickly produces a corsage from behind his back.

CHRISTIAN

I had a stop to make. And you
know me...I have a flare for the
dramatic.

She holds her wrist to him. He places the corsage on her.

She admires the pretty flowers when he suddenly grabs her
up in his arms. He swings her down off the porch, swinging
her around.

They stop spinning and their eyes lock. She is putty in his
arms.

CHRISTIAN

You know...I'm gonna make all
the other guys jealous when I
walk in there with you.

ANNIE

Yeah, well I get to walk in with
the starting quarterback.

CHRISTIAN

You're ditching this scrub for the starting QB?

ANNIE

Yeah, he's better looking.

As she starts to giggle he leans in and kisses her. They move towards the car as he opens the door for her.

FADE OUT