

THE PLAYER

by

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FADE IN:

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

From the top of the highest lights, fog hangs low over a small high school football stadium.

At ground level, the field is freshly chalked and pristine.

SCOREBOARD - Home: 0 Visitors: 0 Quarter: 1 Time: 12:00

The scoreboard reveals we're in Chowchilla, California, a small farming community in the Central Valley, Redskin Country.

The stadium is bristling with pre-game activity. The home crowd is excited and dressed warmly.

Behind the home bench, cheerleaders stretch.

In the stands, the marching band PLAYS the school fight song. A BEAUTIFUL GIRL, lips caressing an alto sax, distracts a couple of NERDY LOOKING DRUMMERS.

On the visitors side, the Dos Palos Broncos are laughing and joking around. The coach is smiling and relaxed.

The Redskin side is quiet, almost sullen. COACH STROUD, 42, a natural leader and motivator, paces the sideline, reassuring his players.

INT. C.U.H.S. VARSITY LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

JACK TAYLOR, 19, a young man with boyish good looks and a world class arm, sits on a bench putting on his football shoes in a hurry. His hair is wet. Behind him, we see clothes hanging in his locker. As we get closer, a single drop falls to the floor revealing a pool of water.

The sound of cleats CLICKING on a concrete floor echo through an empty corridor as Jack continues to dress. The locker room door flies open and BANGS against the wall.

KURT RICHARDSON, 17, athletic but shy, bursts into the room followed by TYREE JOHNSON, 17, smooth on and off the field.

TY

Bout time you showed up. The coach  
is freaking out.

KURT

No time for warm-ups. We're about to kick off.

JACK

Sorry bro. Something came up that couldn't wait.

KURT

You look like you just showered with your clothes on. What's up with that?

JACK

You don't want to know.

TY

In case you forgot, we have the Valley Championship game in oh, about five minutes. You might think about grabbin' your helmet and gettin' up on outta here. Just sayin!

Jack is now tying his shoes as fast as he can.

JACK

One, more knot, and I'm...

TY

You want some help?

JACK

No, I got it.

Jack finishes his final knot. As he stands up, the room spins. He hesitates, then steadies himself. Kurt notices something is amiss.

KURT

You all right?

JACK

(Feining  
Confidence)

I'm good to go. We got some payback to hand out.

TY

Awe, hell yeah we do.

Jack leads both boys out of the room at a brisk trot.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

The Redskin Varsity football squad is huddled on the sideline, COACH STROUD is giving them pre-game direction.

As Jack, Ty and Kurt arrive, the entire team erupts into loud cheers.

COACH STROUD sees Jack and a look of relief comes over him as he motions with his arms to bring it down and listen.

The team goes silent, all eyes on coach.

COACH STROUD

Take a knee.

The players in front go down on knees. The coach gazes across the field at the other sideline then motions with his head in that direction.

COACH STROUD

You see those guys laughing? The Broncos don't think you have a chance.

Most of the team looks.

COACH STROUD (CONT'D)

Who do you think they're laughing at?

ALL

Us. Us coach.

COACH STROUD

That's right. They think this team is a joke. So, I ask you. Do you believe them? Or do you believe in yourselves?

ALL

Us coach. Us.

COACH STROUD

Then if you truly believe, there's only three things left to do.

Coach Stroud holds three fingers up.

COACH STROUD (CONT'D)

First, we wipe the smiles off their faces. I want every one of you to hit the first guy you see like you have a rocket strapped to

(MORE)

COACH STROUD (cont'd)  
your ass.

TY  
Amen coach.

Kurt slaps Ty on the helmet.

Coach drops a finger.

COACH STROUD  
Don't lose your focus! Play every  
down as if it's your last. No  
offsides. No stupid holding  
calls. And, no quitting on a  
play.

Coach points his index finger at the team and several  
players for emphasis.

COACH STROUD (CONT'D)  
Save nothing. Nothing for your  
girlfriend, Richardson. Nothing  
for the dance Ty. Leave it all  
out on that field.

The coach makes a fist.

COACH STROUD (CONT'D)  
(Louder)  
Can you do that?

ALL  
Yes. Yes coach.

COACH STROUD  
(Even Louder)  
Are you sure?

ALL  
Yes coach. Yes.

TY  
You know we can!

COACH STROUD  
(Loudest)  
Then let the Broncos know they  
have a fight ahead of them. Who  
are we?

ALL  
Redskins. Redskins. Redskins.

The chanting continues louder and louder as the players bounce up and down. The home crowd joins in until it crescendos into a deafening roar. Finally, the coach motions quiet. The team settles down and the crowd follows.

COACH STROUD

That's right. Bring it in. Bring it in.

The team comes together, hands to the center of a tight team huddle.

COACH STROUD

Kick off team get out there.  
Defense on three. One, two,  
three.

ALL

Defense!

The team breaks. The kick off team heads out to the field.

The referee blows his whistle and the ball is kicked.

INT. MADERA SHERIFF DEPT. CAPT. SMITH OFFICE - DAY

SUPER - FOUR MONTHS EARLIER

Jack Taylor sits in front of a large wooden desk with a name sign reading "Captain Smith."

Jack's uniform is now that of a Madera County Sheriff's deputy.

Detective ROB RODRIGUEZ, 30, Homicide Detective, sits next to Jack wearing plain clothes with a Glock .40 strapped to his hip.

CAPTAIN SMITH, 54, ex-Marine Officer, thinks he's still in, enters the room, sits down and lights up a cigar. Jack muffles a cough and attempts to pretend it doesn't bother him. Behind the CAPTAIN, you clearly see a no smoking sign.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Deputy Taylor, do you know why you're here?

The captain puffs as he talks.

JACK

Rod said something about a special assignment?

CAPTAIN SMITH

We don't normally put rookies undercover, but we have a situation. And Rodriguez tells me you're our man.

ROD

As you can see sir, he has the look and from what I understand, is a helluva football player.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Is that true? Can you play ball?

JACK

I played quite a bit in the military.

CAPTAIN SMITH

What does that mean?

ROD

His file says he Q.B.'d the All-Army team.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Really?

JACK

Yeah, I did.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Well, it's not quite All-Marine football. But, I guess you'll do.

JACK

Great! But, what's this have to do with undercover work?

ROD

The Chowchilla Redskin's all-star quarterback washed up on shore at Eastman Lake two weeks ago. The report showed high levels of heroin and rufilin

JACK

Rufilin?

CAPTAIN SMITH

He was a straight "A" student with a bright future. This was no accident. And we're gonna get to the bottom of it. You son, have

(MORE)

CAPTAIN SMITH (cont'd)  
an important role to play.

JACK  
You want me to infiltrate the  
football team?

CAPTAIN SMITH  
Exactly. I need you to get on the  
squad and get close to the  
players. Find out what you can  
and report back.

JACK  
Will do.

CAPTAIN SMITH  
(To Rob)  
Make sure he gets a full briefing.

Captain Smith notices a deputy pacing nervously at his door.

CAPTAIN SMITH  
Looks like my 2 O'clock is here.  
If there's nothing else, you're  
dismissed.

Jack and Rob exit as the next officer enters.

OPEN OFFICE AREA WITH CUBICLES

CONTINUOUS Rob and Jack walk through the HQ.

JACK  
You know I hated high school.

ROD  
Who hates high school?

JACK  
I was small -- constantly picked  
on. I couldn't wait to join the  
army.

ROD  
I doubt anyone will mess with you  
now.

JACK  
I'm not worried about that, but  
how long will I need to be there?



ROD  
Three, maybe four months. It  
depends on you.

JACK  
So roughly equivalent to a year in  
Iraq.

Rod laughs.

ROD  
It won't be that bad. You'll be  
staying with a friend of the  
Captain, Bill Richardson.

JACK  
Is he --

ROD  
-- an ex-marine too. Yeah, a  
retired colonel.

JACK  
Oh great. Back to boot camp as  
well.

ROD  
He's not nearly as bad as the  
Captain.

JACK  
That's a relief.

JACK  
Don't worry about Bill. His boy  
Kurt will help you get on the  
team. They have another kid  
Sarah, band type, she won't be  
much help.

JACK  
That was me. In the band -- up in  
the stands.

ROD  
You, band?

JACK  
Yeah, that's what kids my size  
did.

ROD  
We're not sending you there to  
play the piccolo?

JACK  
(Indignant)  
I played the drums.

They reach the door.

The two shake hands.

EXT. RICHARDSON HOUSE, CHOWCHILLA, CA - NIGHT

A white county sedan drives away revealing Jack with a green duffel bag. He walks up the driveway as BILL RICHARDSON, 46, stands tall at the front door, awaiting his new recruit.

BILL  
Welcome, trooper. You must be  
Jack Taylor.

JACK  
I won't be having to do push ups  
will I?

BILL  
I see Captain Smith has been  
talking to you. Lies, all lies.

Bill gives Jack a firm, dominating hand shake and pats him heartily on the back as they walk through the door.

INT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Bill guides Jack down the hallway.

BILL  
That's Kurt's room.

Motioning to the room on the end.

BILL (CONT'D)  
This is your room, and that...

Bill looks Jack square in the eyes.

BILL (CONT'D)  
...that room's off-limits,  
soldier.

JACK  
Daughter's room, right?

BILL  
Sarah's not as old as she looks.

JACK  
Got it sir. Off-limits. That  
won't be a problem.

BILL  
Great! Dinner's at 1900 hours. I  
know you understand what that  
means.

INT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack is busy hanging clothes in the closet. Kurt is laying  
with his back on the bed, feet on the floor, tossing a  
football to the ceiling.

KURT  
You're a senior, right?

JACK  
Yeah.

KURT  
Me too, finally. School just  
started, so you haven't missed  
much. Our first game isn't for  
three weeks.

Jack stops what he was doing and turns toward Kurt who  
continues playing catch with himself.

JACK  
How's your team this year?

KURT  
Not that great.

JACK  
Why's that?

KURT  
You didn't hear what happened?

JACK  
No.

KURT

Our Q.B. drowned. They say he got stoned and took a midnight swim.

JACK

Dude that's awful.

KURT

I don't buy it, though. Drew was clean -- and the best QB in the area. Now, all we have is Rick.

JACK

What's wrong with Rick?

KURT

He can't throw for shit. But you'll have to ask my sister what else is wrong with the guy. They just broke up.

SARAH Richardson, 17, should be a cheerleader but has better things to do, opens the door and walks in like she owns the place. We recognize her as the beautiful sax player from the opening scene.

SARAH

You must be the foster kid.

JACK

You must be the band geek. We were just talking about you.

SARAH

What? About how smart and talented I am?

KURT

Like that would ever happen. No. We were talking about your ex-boyfriend and my slim chances of ever catching a pass this year.

SARAH

Oh. I'm so over that guy. Besides, you can't catch, anyway.

KURT

And how would you know?

Sarah knocks the ball out of Kurt's hand as he tries to catch it. Kurt quickly retrieves it and holds it out of Sarah's reach.

SARAH

(To Jack)

Last year, wide open in the end zone, the ball hits him square in the hands -- dropped! He thinks I don't watch.

KURT

One pass. Geez! What about the other 40 I caught? All you do is blow a flute -- how hard is that?

SARAH

(Correcting)

Saxophone.

JACK

It's actually a difficult instrument to play.

KURT

Whoa! Are you some kind of band geek too?

JACK

Well, I did play the drums, but it's been a while.

SARAH

Not cool enough for you anymore?

JACK

No. I just don't have time right now.

Jack motions for the ball. Kurt tosses it to him quickly as Sarah attempts to intercept it.

KURT

(Pleased with himself)

Ha!

SARAH

There's more to life than just football.

KURT

Yeah. There's video games.

Sarah turns to leave and pauses halfway out the door.

SARAH  
 Good night -- what's the word for  
 nerdy jock? Oh yeah, bench  
 warmer.

Sarah playfully sticks her tongue out and then disappears  
 behind the door.

JACK  
 Is she always like that?

KURT  
 I'm afraid so.

EXT. C.U.H.S. - MAIN CAMPUS - DAY

Kurt and Jack walk out of the parking lot onto the main  
 campus. Students are milling around in groups. Many of  
 them have cell phones and are talking or texting.

KURT  
 Hey there's my crew. I'm gone.  
 The office is over there --

Kurt points in the direction of the administration building.  
 A large sign above the door reads OFFICE.

KURT  
 -- where it says, office.

JACK  
 Thanks. I never would have found  
 it.

KURT  
 See ya bro.

LATER - JUST OUTSIDE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

Jack is about to open the door when Sarah appears and  
 startles him.

JACK  
 You like sneaking up on people?

SARAH  
 No. The Colonel, I mean my dad,  
 said to make sure you found the  
 office.

JACK  
 I'm here --

Jack looks up and points at the sign.

JACK (CONT'D)  
-- where it says office.

SARAH  
Wow. You are smart for a jock.  
Follow me.

Jack follows.

JACK  
I'm not a jock.

INT. C.U.H.S. ADMINISTRATION BUILDING - DAY

Sarah and Jack walk through the door. The office is hectic. The bell rings and students quickly exit. Secretaries and student assistants buzz about behind the counter. One of the assistants steps up to the counter.

STUDENT ASSISTANT  
Hey Sarah, who's this?

The assistant looks Jack up and down.

STUDENT ASSISTANT (CONT'D)  
Are you new here?

JACK  
Yeah, I'm...

SARAH  
(Interrupting)  
He's the foster kid staying with us. Can you tell Ms. Silverman her transfer student is here.

STUDENT ASSISTANT  
(To Jack)  
Just go back. I'll be right here if you need me.

Sarah leads Jack past the reception area. The assistant watches him as he passes. Sarah notices the attention and shrugs.

SARAH  
OK. Sit here, new meat.

Sarah turns and starts to leave, then looks back.

SARAH  
Try not to wander off.

JACK  
I won't. I may, actually, need  
some classes.

MS. SILVERMAN'S OFFICE

MS. SILVERMAN, age 42, in a low cut blouse flaunting her implants, bends over at her computer screen, occasionally looking up to see if Jack is staring. He is.

MS. SILVERMAN  
So, Jonathan.

JACK  
Call me Jack.

MS. SILVERMAN  
It looks like you only need 30  
units to graduate.

JACK  
Really?

MS. SILVERMAN  
This is strange. Were you at some  
sort of military academy?

JACK  
What? I mean yes. I've had lots  
of military school... uh...  
training.

MS. SILVERMAN  
Four classes and you're done. But,  
I can't let you leave early  
without a job, so I've filled out  
your schedule with electives.

She hands Jack a slip of paper. He spots economics and glee club for 6th and 7th period and groans.

JACK  
You put me in glee club and home  
economics.

MS. SILVERMAN  
Sorry, dear. That's all we have.  
Well, unless you want to be a P.E.  
assistant the whole afternoon.



JACK  
I do. Really.

MS. SILVERMAN  
Of course, you'll have to get the  
coach to sign off.

JACK  
Where do I find him?

MS. SILVERMAN  
His office is inside the boys  
locker room, next to the gym.

Mrs. Silverman moves out from behind her desk and hands Jack a new schedule. As Jack turns to leave, Ms. Silverman wraps her arm around his shoulder, pressing her breast against him, then whispers in his ear.

MS. SILVERMAN  
You just let me know if there's  
anything else I can do for you.  
Anything!

Jack eases away from her out the door.

JACK  
You've done quite enough, thanks.

Jack cringes as he exits.

EXT. C.U.H.S. - MAIN CAMPUS - DAY

Jack strolls across the campus taking in the scene.  
Students are walking, talking, texting and chatting.  
Jack's cell phone is pressed against his ear.

JACK  
(Loud)  
You sent them my real transcripts!

ROD (V.O.)  
Relax. You're from Oregon. No  
one's gonna recognize you.

JACK  
Yeah, I guess you're right. Hey,  
if I pass four classes I'll get a  
real diploma.

ROD

Don't go gettin' ideas. You won't be there that long. Just make the team and make an impact.

JACK

All right --

Jack reaches the gym and sees the sign that reads, "BOYS LOCKER ROOM."

JACK

-- gotta go.

Jack opens the locker room door and reacts to something in the air.

JACK

(To self)

I remember this place. You never forget that smell.

INT. C.U.H.S. - BOYS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Jack walks down a hallway as two freshman boys approach.

Meet GILBERT, 14, poster child for nerdy freshman, and JEROME, 14, chunky, confident without the chops to back it up. We recognize them as the two drummers from the opening scene.

Looking slightly scared, both boys quickly move to the side, pressing their backs against the wall. As Jack reaches them, he starts to say something when Jerome hurriedly pulls a dollar out of his pocket and presents it to Jack.

At first Jack looks puzzled, then chuckles.

JACK

Hey guys. I'm not here to take your lunch money.

Gilbert and Jerome look surprised.

JEROME

You're not? Cool!

Jerome quickly shoves the dollar back into his pocket.

JACK

Do you know where I can find the coach's office?

Gilbert and Jerome point in the direction Jack is headed.

JACK

Thanks guys.

Realizing they aren't about to be eaten, both boys open up.

GILBERT

The coach's office is down there  
on the right.

JEROME

The sign on the door says coach.

JACK

Thank God for signs.

The two boys wait until Jack is sufficiently down the hallway then scramble in the other direction.

JEROME

I thought lunch was history.

GILBERT

Me too.

At the end of the hall, Jack stumbles upon the Varsity locker room, a place he was never allowed to enter. Realizing this, he quickly walks to the far door when he is suddenly blocked by RICK MARTINI JR., 18, the self appointed King of C.U.H.S.

On either side stand the twins, BERT and BART Baker, 17, the right side of the Redskin offensive line.

JACK

Hey have you...

RICK

(Interrupting)

You lost?

BERT

What do you think you're...

Rick raises his hand near Bert's mouth. Bert stops mid sentence.

JACK

I'm looking for the coach's  
office.

With a smile on his face, Rick extends his hand to Jack.

RICK  
I'm Rick, Rick Martini. You probably heard of me -- varsity quarterback.

Jack accepts the gesture and shake's Rick's hand.

JACK  
Actually, I have.

RICK  
Of course you have. I'll show you the way.

Rick grabs Jack by the arm, escorts him down a hallway with Bert and Bart close behind snickering under their breath.

RICK  
This your first year here?

JACK  
I just transferred in.

RICK  
That's great.

They arrive at a propped open door.

RICK  
Here you go. The coach is right in here.

Rick gives Jack a little help getting through the door. In the process, Bert closes it behind Jack. As the door closes, you see the sign, "GIRLS LOCKER ROOM." Rick and his cronies chuckle as they run back down the hallway.

INT. OUTSIDE GIRLS LOCKER ROOM DOOR - DAY

The door bursts open. You hear a chorus of girls SCREAMING. Jack leaps out, then slows to a walk.

JACK  
(To self)  
Where was that sign when I needed it?

INT. COACH STROUD'S OFFICE - DAY

Coach Stroud sits at his desk sizing up Jack who is seated opposite him.

Behind the coach you see numerous football championship trophies. His ball cap says "REDSKIN FOOTBALL" on it. The coach notices the ad slip in Jack's hand and motions for it.

COACH STROUD

Give me the ad slip.

Jack eagerly hands it over.

COACH STROUD

Three p.e. classes? You bored kid?

JACK

No. Just avoiding Home Economics and Glee Club.

COACH STROUD

I don't really need another assistant -- what school did you play for?

JACK

I've never played high school ball.

The coach seems surprised.

COACH STROUD

A kid your size? You must have had one of those soccer moms. Didn't want you to get hurt.

JACK

No. I grew up playing football. I just haven't played in High School, yet.

COACH STROUD

All right. I'll sign off.

Coach Stroud scribbles on the ad slip with his pen and hands the slip to Jack.

COACH STROUD (CONT'D)

I need players for the practice squad 7th period. You'll work out with the team until the last bell. If it turns out you have more than just size, we'll see about a permanent spot on the team.

JACK  
Sounds good to me.

COACH STROUD  
Go find a locker in the varsity  
football room. It's back that  
way.

JACK  
Will do coach.

Jack rises and starts to leave, but the coach isn't quite done.

COACH STROUD  
Then go find the equipment room  
and grab a helmet and pads. Don't  
grab a new one. Those are reserved  
for starters. Got it?

JACK  
Got it coach.

Jack slips out the door.

INT. C.U.H.S. CAFETERIA - DAY

With lunch tray in hand, Jack faces the rows of cafeteria tables. He sees the jock table, it's full.

The hot girls giggle and text each other at another table as he walks through. It's quite crowded and he's running out of options.

Finally, he sees Gilbert and Jerome at a table in the far corner with an open seat. He heads straight for it.

JACK  
Hey guys. Looks like you didn't  
lose your lunch money. You mind  
if I...

Jack sits down without waiting for an answer. Startled, the group sits silent.

JACK  
Thanks!

GILBERT  
We lose it a lot. Our lunch  
money.

JACK

I bet you do. So did I when I was your age. Now, they have to be more creative with me.

JEROME

You get messed with too? No way.

JACK

Yeah. Right after I saw you, some 'tard named Rick and a couple of large book ends showed me the girls locker room.

JEROME

You mean Bert and Bart Baker. We call them the Bubba twins.

Jack laughs.

JACK

Fitting.

GILBERT

Sometimes they just give us wedgies.

JEROME

Or shove us into lockers. It depends on their mood.

GILBERT

I've missed a week of lunches already, thanks to the Bubbas.

JEROME

I don't fit in a locker, so I just get a lot of wedgies.

Jerome adjusts his shorts a little.

Jack tries to muffle a laugh, but can't.

JACK

Is it just those two?

GILBERT

Rick and some other seniors mess with us too, but it's mostly the Bubba's.

JACK  
I bet their mom still walks them  
to the short bus in the morning.

ALL  
Laughs.

Jerome makes a retard face.

JACK  
O.K. Listen up guys.

Jack leans in, and motions for a huddle.

JACK (CONT'D)  
I'll never take your lunch money  
-- or shove you in a locker. It's  
not cool, so don't worry about me  
from now on. Got it?

GILBERT  
Cool!

Sarah appears behind Jack at the table. He doesn't notice  
her at first.

SARAH  
For an ex-band geek, you sure  
managed to land right in the  
middle of band central. Nice  
work.

Startled, Jack turns and realizes it's Sarah.

JACK  
Band what?

GILBERT  
Hi Sarah.

Sarah ignores Gilbert's hello and continues her teasing of  
Jack. Jack turns back around and feigns indifference.

SARAH  
Yep. Welcome to the drum line.

JEROME  
Wassup Sarah my girl. You comin'  
over later?

SARAH  
Knock it off Jerome. Try to  
remember that bad attention is not  
necessarily better than no  
(MORE)



SARAH (cont'd)  
attention at all.

Sarah turns her focus back to Jack who is still casually eating.

SARAH  
So what instrument did you say you played?

JACK  
(To the Group)  
I play the drums.

ALL  
Cool. Right on.

SARAH  
You should see if Jack can keep a beat.

Sarah walks off in the direction of a table full of girls.

JEROME  
You know Sarah?

JACK  
Yeah, I'm staying with her family.

JEROME  
You lucky dog. I would crawl through broken glass...

JACK  
(Admonishing)  
Dude!

GILBERT  
You got skills or what?

JACK  
Yeah, I still got 'em.

Jerome begins knocking out a drum CADENCE on the table. Gilbert and the rest of the crew join in. Jack picks it up quickly as the table starts to shake and the guys are all smiles.

JEROME  
You still got 'em. Check you out.

Several tables away, Rick hears the noise and looks for the cause of the disturbance. Once he spots the boys having

fun, he stands up on a cafeteria bench and shouts in their direction.

RICK  
Knock it off nerds. I'm eating  
lunch here.

Bert and Bart look at the boys and scowl. Everyone stops except Jack who continues for a couple more beats until he realizes he's the only one tapping.

Satisfied, Rick sits back down.

GILBERT  
(Whispering to  
Jack)  
It's best to do what he says.

JACK  
It's O.K. I get it.

EXT. C.U.H.S. - P.E. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

SUPER - 5TH PERIOD

Boys in P.E. clothes mill around in groups.

Enter assistant COACH BARNES, 35, gruff and experienced. Kurt and Jack toss a football back and forth as the coach rounds up the class.

Jack's powerful arm becomes apparent as he fires a bullet Kurt's way. Kurt corrals the ball then shakes off the sting in his fingers.

COACH BARNES  
Listen up.

Coach Barnes separates the group in half.

COACH BARNES  
You all grab the red flags. The  
rest of you put on yellow and  
start with the ball on the 20.

Coach blows the whistle. Kurt turns to Jack.

KURT  
Cool. We're on the same team.

In the huddle, Kurt looks around then takes over.

KURT  
Barry, I need you to hike the  
ball.

Kurt motions to several boys.

KURT  
I need you guys to block.

He then turns to JAVIER CONTRERAS, 17, varsity running back  
and a close friend.

KURT (CONT'D)  
Javier, you take the slot.  
Everyone else just block. Oh yeah.  
Jack, you're the QB. Let's see  
what you got.

JACK  
Thanks buddy.

KURT  
My hands still sting from your  
fastball. I wanna see how far you  
can throw.

JACK  
Let's find out. Go long. Javier,  
give me five and out.

The players emerge from the huddle.

Jack, in a shotgun formation signals for the ball from  
center. Jack fades back and fires a long pass down the  
sideline. Kurt catches it and easily out runs defenders for  
a touchdown.

Kurt trots back into the huddle, smiling. Javier pulls on  
Jack's shirt.

KURT  
Not bad. Not bad.

JAVIER  
Hey hit me. I'm gonna be open all  
day.

JACK  
No problem. Run a slant.

Kurt turns to Jack as he begins jogging to his position.

KURT

Where did you say you played?

JACK

I just play for fun.

The ball is snapped for the extra point. Kurt starts his pattern. Javier cuts behind him. Jack avoids the rush with the ease of a seasoned player.

Coach Stroud walks up as Coach Barnes is watching the action from the sideline.

Jack easily dodges another attempted flag pull and floats a touch pass to Javier in the back of the end zone.

Coach Stroud stops behind Coach Barnes.

COACH BARNES

You ever see this kid before?

COACH STROUD

Yeah. I just put him on the practice squad. He says he's never played high school ball.

COACH BARNES

I'll keep my eye on him.

COACH STROUD

You do that.

MONTAGE

- Jack passes to Kurt
- Jack passes to Javier
- Jack avoids tacklers and scores
- Coach Barnes writes notes on a clipboard
- Coach Barnes blows his whistle.

END MONTAGE

COACH BARNES

Hit the showers boys. Play time's over.

Jack and Kurt walk toward the locker room. Coach Stroud waits for them at the door.

COACH STROUD

Nice hands, Richardson. And you, son, where did you learn to throw the football?

JACK

My dad mostly. But, I've had other help.

COACH STROUD

Quarterback camp?

JACK

No. Not exactly.

Coach Stroud gets distracted by several boys horsing around. He starts to walk off and turns back briefly.

COACH STROUD

O.K. See you both at practice.

KURT

What did he mean see you both at practice?

JACK

I made the practice squad.

KURT

That's awesome. We are so short of good players.

JACK

It's just the practice squad.

KURT

Don't worry, you'll make the team.

JACK

You already have a quarterback.

KURT

Dude, you're way better than him.

JACK

You think I have a shot?

KURT

Yeah. I do.

Jack smiles

INT. C.U.H.S. BOYS LOCKER ROOM - LATER - DAY

Jack, picking up towels, hears a commotion in the hallway and darts over to investigate. Bert has Gilbert pinned against the wall.

BERT

I said...

In a very poor attempt at Ebonics pimp slang.

BERT

...who's yo pimp, boy?

JACK

(dead pan)

I'm...

As he walks toward's them.

JACK (CONT'D)

...his pimp.

Bert laughs.

JACK

I said, I'm his pimp! You gotta problem with one of my ho's, you talk to me.

BERT

This kid?

JACK

Yeah, he's mine.

BERT

And you are?

JACK

Jack Taylor. We've met, remember.

Jack moves in between Bert and Gilbert. Jack puffs up and gets in Bert's face. Bert lets go and Gilbert quickly escapes and runs out the door, peeking back from a much safer vantage.

BERT

Oh yeah. You ever find your panties in the girl's locker room?

Jack plants his finger in Bert's chest and pushes him with it. Bert seems surprised.

JACK  
That kid there.

Jack motions with his head to Gilbert, still watching.

JACK (CONT'D)  
Don't touch him. Don't take his  
lunch money. Don't even look at  
him.

BERT  
Or what?

Bert puffs up to Jack. They're now in each other's face.

JACK  
Do you really want to find out?

BERT  
What if I touch you?

Bert attempts to shove Jack with both hands. Jack intercepts Bert's right arm and quickly puts him in an arm bar then forces him to the floor.

JACK  
This is what happens, bitch.

Jack twists Bert's arm and shoves his face into the floor with his knee now on the back of Bert's thick neck. He winces in pain as Jack applies more pressure.

JACK  
If you ever mess with one of my  
ho's again, it's your ass. We  
clear?

BERT  
What?

JACK  
You heard me, fat boy.

BERT  
O.K. O.K.

Jack let's go and Bert struggles to his feet then stumbles toward the door.

BERT  
I was just playin.'

Bert hastily exits.

Gilbert stares in amazement.

JACK  
 (To self)  
 Some things never change.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

The team is split into several groups.

Kurt and the receivers take turns running routes with TY throwing passes.

MONTAGE - TY THROWING PASSES

-- Ty overthrows Kurt.

-- Ty underthrows Jack.

-- Coach Stroud winces.

-- Ty bounces a passe in Javier's direction. It's not pretty.

END MONTAGE

Coach Stroud, shaking his head in disgust walks over to the receiver corps.

COACH STROUD  
 (To Jack)  
 Number 12, swap out with Ty and throw for awhile.

JACK  
 Will do, coach.

Ty flips the ball to Jack from a few yards away and heads back into the receiver line.

TY  
 I hope you can do better.

KURT  
 (To Ty)  
 He couldn't do much worse.

TY  
 You can't throw either, bi'atch.



The players in earshot laugh.

MONTAGE - JACK THROWING ACCURATE PASSES

- Jack throws a quick post to Kurt.
- Jack throws a long post to Ty who makes a nice catch.
- Coach Stroud smiles in approval.
- Jack hits Javier on a slant.
- Coach Stroud smiles.

END MONTAGE

Coach Stroud blows his WHISTLE.

COACH STROUD

Get some water. Then I want first  
teams on the field, full contact.

LATER

The starting offense and defense line up with Rick at the QB position. Bert and Bart take their positions at right guard and tackle.

Coach Stroud calls a play just behind the huddle MOS.

MONTAGE - RUNNING PLAYS

- Rick hands off to Javier for a short gain.
- Rick makes a bad toss to Javier for a fumble.
- Coach Stroud rolls his eyes.

END MONTAGE

Jack watches from the back with the other second stringers.

The offense huddles up for another play.

COACH STROUD

Listen up. Time for some pass  
plays. Let's start with a slot  
right 87 post.

MONTAGE - RICK THROWING PASSES

- Rick misses Ty wide on an out.

-- Kurt is wide open, the ball is thrown elsewhere.

-- Rick overthrows Ty.

-- Coach Stroud rolls his eyes, again.

END MONTAGE

COACH STROUD  
(To Coach Barnes)  
Let's rotate some people in.

Jack and several other players sub-in on defense. Coach Barnes directs the action. Jack lines up at the strong safety position.

In the offensive huddle.

RICK  
Come on Tyree. Catch the ball.

TY  
You overthrew me by two feet.

RICK  
I thought you could jump.

COACH STROUD  
Knock it off. Same play the other way. Run it again.

The teams line up.

The ball is snapped, Rick fades back to pass.

Ty makes his cut to the post. Jack reads the move, gets position on Ty and intercepts the underthrown ball.

Jack takes a couple of steps and fires the ball on a tight rope 25 yards back to Rick. The ball goes right through his hands and hits him in the facemask, rocking his head back. Rick is pissed. Several players laugh.

Now, the entire team knows Jack has a world class arm, especially Rick.

BACK AT THE HUDDLE

RICK  
You could have come back for the ball. You're making me look bad.

TY  
Oh, you don't need my help there.

KURT  
I was wide open -- again.

COACH STROUD  
Rick, check down if it's not there. And Ty, you gotta come back for the ball. Clear?

RICK  
Yeah coach.

TY  
Yes coach.

COACH STROUD  
Let's keep it short this time.  
Ninety-six Slant on two.

#### MAIN FIELD

The center hikes the ball to Rick who takes three quick steps and fires it at Kurt slanting over the middle. The ball is thrown high, Kurt barely gets a finger on it. Jack, moving in from safety, snags the ball off the tip. Jack dodges tacklers until the whistle blows.

KURT  
Nice grab.

JACK  
Thanks. That wasn't your fault.

KURT  
I know. It's all good.

Jack and Kurt arrive at the water station.

KURT  
You looked good out there.

JACK  
Thanks. You were right. Rick can't throw for shit.

They both laugh.

The school bell rings. Several of the practice players turn and start walking towards the locker room. Rick walks up with Bert and Bart in tow.

RICK  
Isn't it about time you headed for  
the girls locker room with the  
rest of the scabs?

BART  
Yeah, real players only, man.

KURT  
He picked you off -- more than  
once.

RICK  
It's not my fault you can't catch.

KURT  
You don't even throw to me, so  
how...

JACK  
(Interrupting)  
He's right. I'm only a practice  
player. I'll see ya later man.

Jack turns and starts walking towards the locker room. After  
about 20 yards, Coach Stroud notices Jack leaving and has a  
quick huddle with Coach Barnes who's nodding in affirmation.

COACH STROUD  
Hey number 12. Where do you think  
you're going?

Jack stops and turns around.

JACK  
Showers coach.

COACH STROUD  
Get back over here.

Jack jogs back and stops in front of the two coaches.

COACH STROUD  
I don't know where you learned to  
play. And, you have some catching  
up to do, but I have a full-time  
spot for you if you want it.

Jack looks at Kurt who's miming yes, yes, yes.

COACH BARNES  
What's it gonna be son?

JACK  
I'm in. All in.

Kurt pumps his fist as the two coaches pat Jack on the helmet and shoulder pads.

COACH STROUD  
Great. Go with coach Barnes.

Coach Barnes and Jack jog back to the defensive area.

RICK  
(To Bart and Bert)  
That kid's starting to annoy me.

Bert and Bart nod.

BERT  
He's already on my list.

EXT. C.U.H.S. PARKING LOT - DAY

Jack is leaning up against Kurt's car with a Bluetooth device in his ear, cell phone in hand.

JACK  
I made the team.

ROD  
(V.O.)  
That's great. The Captain will be pleased. You find anything out yet?

JACK  
Yeah. You were wrong. Colonel Richardson is just like the Captain.

ROD  
(V.O.)  
I know...

Rod laughs. Jack pulls out the ear piece.

ROD  
...I hope you like push ups.

JACK  
Very funny. I'll call you in a few days.

Kurt walks up. His hair is damp and freshly combed.

Jack quickly pushes the end call button.

KURT

Who was that? You got a girlfriend already?

JACK

No. Not even close.

INT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Kurt and Jack lounge on the bed, side-by-side, going over the Redskin playbook.

KURT

...I'm just sayin' you need to memorize the offense.

JACK

I'm cool playing safety. It's a lot of fun.

KURT

Yeah, but what if Rick gets hurt. We don't have a backup.

JACK

You're right.

KURT

We can practice on weekends to get you up to speed.

The door opens. Sarah, wearing a sexy top and short shorts, stands in the doorway.

KURT

Don't you ever knock?

SARAH

Why? Are you two doing something you shouldn't?

KURT

Gross.

JACK

It's cool. What's up?

SARAH  
Dinner's up in two minutes.

KURT  
Ah crap. We don't want to be  
late.

Kurt jumps up.

JACK  
What happens if we're late,  
pushups?

KURT  
Lots of them.

JACK  
I knew it.

Sarah notices both playbooks and seizes the opportunity to  
tease.

SARAH  
It sure didn't take you long.

JACK  
Excuse me?

SARAH  
I didn't know they gave  
benchwarmers playbooks.

KURT  
Very funny.

JACK  
Hey. I'm starting at safety.

SARAH  
Isn't that where they put fast  
guys who can't catch? I guess you  
and Kurt have something in common.

Kurt picks up the football and tosses it at Sarah who uses  
the door as a shield. The ball bounces off. She sticks her  
head back in and flashes a satisfied grin.

KURT  
How did I get so lucky?

JACK  
I was thinking the same thing  
myself.

Kurt shoves Jack.

KURT  
I know she's hot. But still a  
brat.

JACK  
You're right there.

INT. KURT'S CAR - NIGHT

Kurt and Jack, looking exhausted from practice cruise  
through a suburban neighborhood.

JACK  
That was a tough practice. I  
can't believe I made it through my  
first week.

KURT  
You did great. One more week  
'till our first game. You think  
we're ready?

JACK  
Our D is looking good. The  
running game is shaping up. But...

KURT  
Our passing game sucks. I know.

JACK  
Hey, we'll do all right.

KURT  
Against Dos Palos? Have you seen  
their run defense? Our only  
chance is to throw the ball,  
and...

Kurt Shrugs.

JACK  
Good point.

A text message comes across Kurt's cell phone. He looks at  
it.

KURT  
Party at Ty's house tonight. You  
game?



JACK  
Definitely. I was wondering what  
you all did for fun on a Friday  
night.

EXT. TY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Kurt and Jack walk up to the front door of Ty's typical suburban house and ring the bell. As Ty opens the door, the sound of video games fill the air.

TY  
What's up my brothers. Come in,  
come in.

KURT  
What's up man. Who's coming?

TY  
Javier and a bunch of the guys.

KURT  
Cool. What are we playing?

The three of them walk into the house.

INT. TY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack turns the corner to the den revealing an entire room filled with gaming consoles and computers. No girls. No beer. Just dudes.

JACK  
(Astonished)  
Video games. So where's the beer?

TY  
Not here my brother from another  
mother.

JACK  
And cheerleaders. Where are the  
cheerleaders?

KURT  
Definitely not here.

JACK  
Wow. So this is what you all do  
for fun?

Ty picks up a video controller and hands it to Jack. Ty then points at the screen where you see the intro for Madden Football.

TY

This shit teaches you how to read defenses.

JACK

Oh I can play. This is just not the party I was expecting.

Javier walks up with a can of Mt. Dew and a large piece of Pizza.

JAVIER

(Chewing)

Food's in the kitchen. Let's play, bitches.

TY

I want some of Jack first. He says he can play.

JACK

You're on.

JAVIER

I got winner. I'll smoke all you fools.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Jack and Ty are furiously playing. Jack appears to be having a great time. He stands up, raises his arms in the air.

JACK

Game over, baby!

TY

Damn, boy. You are good.

INT. KURT'S CAR - NIGHT

KURT

It's almost light.

JACK

Is that a typical Friday night?

KURT  
For our crew it is.

JACK  
What about the rest of the team?

KURT  
Lots of the guys do some partying.  
It's mostly harmless.

JACK  
Out at the lake?

KURT  
Yeah, that's the spot.

JACK  
You never go there?

KURT  
Rarely. I don't party much.  
Besides, none of the cheerleaders  
know I exist.

JACK  
The best girls aren't always  
cheerleaders.

KURT  
True. But, the hot ones are.

Jack nods in agreement.

JACK  
You don't know of any girls who  
might like you?

KURT  
There's one. But, I'm worried she  
doesn't like me the same way.

JACK  
You'll never hit a home run if you  
don't step up to the plate -- just  
sayin.'

KURT  
I'd be happy with a single.

Jack smiles.

JACK  
I hear ya.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

SUPER - FIRST LEAGUE GAME V. DOS PALOS

SCORE BOARD - HOME: 7 VISITORS: 28 QUARTER: 4 TIME: 2:38

The Redskin offense, huddled deep in their own territory, waits for the coach to send in the next play. From the looks on their faces and the stains on their jerseys, you can tell it's been a rough first game.

Ty arrives at the huddle and whispers in Rick's ear.

RICK

Strong Right, 36 Blast, on one.  
And Bert, try blocking this time.  
Ready...

ALL

...Break!

As the team jogs to the line. Bert looks back at Rick.

BERT

Sorry, Rick.

The team jogs to the line of scrimmage with a sense of urgency.

The cheerleaders watch quietly on the sideline.

The Redskin stands are packed, but the crowd is silent.

The visitors side is roaring.

Back at the line of scrimmage.

RICK

Blue 44, Blue 44, down, set, hut.

Rick hands off to Javier who is met by a hoard of Dos Palos Broncos for no gain. The clock continues to shrink along with the Redskins chances of an opening victory.

On the sideline, resigned and doing damage control, Coach Stroud shuffles players.

COACH STROUD

(To Javier)

Go in for Ty. Run the 36 Blast again.

Javier nods and runs to the huddle as Ty hurries off the field.

Standing in the front row behind the home bench meet RICK MARTINI SR., a rich man with high expectations for his son. Next to him you see VERN BAKER, father of the Bubba's, and long-time Martini sidekick.

RICK SR.  
(Yelling)  
For Christ's sake, throw the damn ball already.

Vern pulls a metal flask out from under a gaudy Hawaiian shirt and takes a long sip.

VERN  
(Yelling)  
We need points, coach.

RICK SR.  
(Softly to Vern)  
My dog know's more about football than that guy.

Back in the Redskin huddle.

JAVIER  
Coach says run the 36 blast again.

Rick looks up at his father motioning with his arm to throw the ball. The exchange doesn't go unnoticed by the Redskin coaching staff.

RICK  
Coach must be confused.

KURT  
No, he's not.

RICK  
Listen up. Slot right, 78 shake, on one. Javier, get open.

The ball is snapped. Rick drops back with plenty of protection.

Javier makes a cut to the corner. He's open by several yards.

Rick launches an off target pass that's easily picked off by the Dos Palos safety who runs it back for a touchdown, taunting the Redskin players and showboating the last 20

yards.

Kurt, standing there, watching, gets blindsided by a Dos Palos player.

The home crowd GROANS. The cheerleaders GROWN.

Coach Stroud throws his clipboard to the ground then quickly composes himself.

Rick walks off the field and ignores Coach Stroud as he attempts to talk to him.

A SHORT TIME LATER

The Dos Palos QB kneels as the clock ticks to zero.

The visiting crowd cheers.

Coach Stroud shakes hands with the opposing coach then turns back toward the home sideline.

DOS PALOS QB

(To Jack)

We own you, bitches.

Kurt starts to go after the guy. Jack holds him back.

JACK

Don't worry about that guy.

SCORE BOARD - HOME: 7 VISITORS: 35 QUARTER: 4 TIME: 0.00

On the Redskin sideline, Coach Stroud gathers the team.

COACH STROUD

Bring it in. Bring it in and take a knee. Let's go.

The team comes together. Some of the boys are visibly upset.

COACH STROUD

Shake it off. The Broncos are ranked number one in the Valley. We held their offense to two touchdowns. You should be proud of yourselves. Just don't expect to win a game when you turn the ball over five times.

EXT. C.U.H.S. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

COACH STROUD walks toward the locker room. He's intercepted by Rick SR. and Vern who appear out of the darkness.

RICK SR.

Coach. You got a minute?

COACH STROUD

Not really. What do you need Rick?

RICK SR.

I'm just here to tell you some of the alumni are concerned.

COACH STROUD

The alumni, right.

RICK SR.

What kind of play calling was that?

COACH STROUD

This is my team Rick, not your dealership. I call the shots here.

Coach turns and opens the locker room door.

RICK SR.

Just tell me why we're still running the ball with three minutes left.

Coach Stroud stops, turns back around and gathers his thoughts for a moment then unloads his frustration on a well deserving Rick Sr.

COACH STROUD

Oh you wanna know why we were running. Because your boy already threw three interceptions. I was trying not make it four.

RICK SR.

We had...

COACH STROUD

(Interrupting)

Good night, Rick. Thanks for all your help.

Coach Stroud walks through and closes the door firmly.

RICK SR.

(Yelling)

You better fix that line -- and  
teach those boys how to catch a  
football.

Rick Sr. turns to Vern.

RICK SR.

What a Jamoke. I wouldn't let  
that guy coach pee wee football.

INT. KURT'S CAR - NIGHT

Kurt and Jack bruised and beaten cruise Robertson Blvd.,  
Chowchilla's palm tree lined main street.

Kurt suddenly bangs the steering wheel with his fists in a  
fit of disgust.

KURT

I'm so pissed!

JACK

The game was closer than the  
score, ya know.

KURT

I didn't even catch a pass. At  
least you got an interception.

JACK

You blocked well.

KURT

Whatever.

JACK

You wanna head home or try  
something different?

KURT

Party at Eastman lake?

JACK

Your sister's right ya know. There  
is more to life than football and  
video games.



KURT  
All right. Let's do it.

Kurt smiles, wheels his car around as Jack hangs on then cranks up the music.

EXT. THE LAKE SHORE PARK - NIGHT

KURT pulls up to the lake park where campfires light up the post game party. Students mingle in groups and sip keg beer from plastic cups.

Kurt and Jack stroll into the mix.

KURT  
This is it folks. The non-victory celebration.

Jack spots Gilbert and Jerome on the fringes of the party. He and Kurt walk over and exchange greetings.

JACK  
So, where's the keg?

GILBERT  
It's in the back of the blue 4x4.  
When you see a bunch of cowboy hats, you're there.

JACK  
Thanks, brother.

Jack looks around and spots a group of cowboys.

JACK  
There it is. Let's go Kurt.

Jack and Kurt walk toward the keg.

JACK  
You wanna beer?

KURT  
I'm driving.

JACK  
Dude. You don't have to drink it, just hold the cup. It'll raise your cool factor.

KURT  
Count me in.

At the keg, Jack picks up a plastic cup and fills it till the foam runs over. He slurps the edge and licks his lips.

JACK  
Damn, that's good.

Kurt holds out his cup and Jack fills it as well.

At the parking lot, Rick arrives with his entourage. He and his crew strut into the party like they had just won the Super Bowl, barreling through Gilbert and friends. The Bubba's push several of the younger boys over. The rest quickly scatter.

Jack doesn't notice the King's arrival. He's locked on to a group of girls hanging out on a picnic table nearby.

Jack points out the opportunity to Kurt who follows him in the direction of the girls.

JACK  
(To Kurt)  
Just be yourself. No, I mean try to be cool.

KURT  
Got it. All about the cool.

DARLA and STACY, the "it" girls of the senior class hold court while several less popular girls gather around them, basking in their popularity.

Jack and Kurt arrive at the picnic table. Jack makes eye contact with Darla.

JACK  
Darla right?

DARLA  
You're number 12 right?

JACK  
I'm Jack. And, I'm sure you all know Kurt.

DARLA  
Nice interception.

JACK  
You saw that? Right on.

DARLA  
(To Kurt)  
Are you on the team?

KURT  
Yeah. I'm a wide receiver.

DARLA  
You're not that wide.

KURT  
No. It means...

Jack elbows Kurt who stops mid sentence.

JACK  
It means he's a varsity starter.

DARLA  
Oh. I didn't know.

STACY  
(To Jack)  
I've seen you at school a few times.

JACK  
I sit behind you in 4th period English.

STACY  
Oh, right.

Rick and crew walk up and peer over Kurt's shoulder looking to see what's in his hand.

RICK  
Look at that. Kurt's drinkin' a beer.

KURT  
What's the big deal?

RICK  
Shouldn't you be home killing orcs online and eating Cheetos with your elf friends?

Everyone laughs except Jack and Kurt.

Jack turns to Rick and smiles.

JACK  
Shouldn't you be rescuing your  
favorite sheep from the Bubba  
twins?

KURT  
(Sheep Noise)  
Ba ah ah ah ah

The girls break into giggles and laughs.

RICK  
(To Jack)  
Was I talking to you?

BART  
(To Bert)  
I think he means us.

Bart steps up to Jack but is intercepted by Bert who's  
already gone down that road and pushes his brother back. You  
can almost smell the testosterone in the air.

BERT  
(Under his breath)  
Not the guy you wanna mess with,  
brother.

BART  
But he just...

Rick slaps Bart upside the back of his head.

RICK  
Shut up Bart -- take a joke  
already. No problem here. Just  
came over to get a drink.

Rick and crew walk around Jack and Kurt, slightly bumping  
them to get to the girls. A classic cock block.

RICK  
Hey ladies, who wants to get me a  
beer?

CARLA, 16, a somewhat cute football groupie jumps up from  
the table.

CARLA  
I will. I will.

Stacy shakes her head at the naive sophomore trotting off  
and decides to put Rick back in his place a little.

STACY  
You guys sucked! I can't believe  
you let Dos Palos beat you.

RICK  
We would have won, but my  
receivers couldn't get open. I  
had to throw the ball up and pray.

Kurt's mouth drops open.

KURT  
What the... I was open all night.

RICK  
Are you on the team?

BERT  
Doh!

Bert and Bart high five each other.

Kurt puffs up and starts towards Rick. The Bubba's  
immediately move in front of Rick, ready to block for him.

KURT  
Yeah, I'm on the...

Jack grabs Kurt by the shirt and pulls him out of the  
confrontation. As Jack and Kurt are walking away, Rick  
hurls a parting insult.

RICK  
Yeah, teach him how to catch and  
then maybe I'll throw him a bone  
every once in a while.

Jack and Kurt stop at a safe distance.

JACK  
You know he sucks. I know he  
sucks. The whole town knows he  
sucks. There's no point arguing  
about it.

KURT  
You're right.

Sarah appears out of the darkness with a beer in hand  
followed by VANESSA, 17, Sarah's BFF and a really cute girl.

VANESSA  
Hey, Kurt.

SARAH  
Holy crap. What are you doing  
here?

JACK  
My bad.

KURT  
I don't know why everyone is so  
surprised.

VANESSA  
(To Kurt)  
You were great out there tonight.

KURT  
I didn't even...

Jack elbows Kurt and gives him the come on man look.

KURT  
(To Vanessa)  
You want something to drink? The  
keg's over there.

VANESSA  
That would be amazing.

Kurt leads Vanessa off into the darkness toward the keg.

SARAH  
I can't believe it. Kurt's at a  
real party.

LATER AT A PICNIC TABLE NEAR THE BOAT DOCK

Jack and Sarah watch Kurt and Vanessa getting cozy with  
their feet dangling off the boat dock.

The crowd has thinned and the fires are now smoldering  
embers of their former selves.

SARAH  
She's had a crush on him since  
fifth grade. It's about time he  
figured it out.

JACK  
Some boys are just late bloomers.

SARAH  
Oh, look, there he goes -- in for  
the kiss.

On the boat dock, Kurt and Vanessa awkwardly embrace.

JACK

Way to go Kurt.

SARAH

Wow. They sure are making up for  
lost time.

SPLASH.

Kurt and Vanessa, now in the water, climb back onto the dock  
laughing.

BACK AT THE PICNIC TABLE

SARAH

(Yelling)

Nice moves brother.

Jack and Sarah laugh at Kurt's folly. As the laughter  
fades, they look around and notice everyone left has coupled  
up. Some kissing, some just snuggled up together. An  
awkward moment is upon them as they realize they're the only  
two not together.

SARAH

It looks like there aren't any  
cheerleaders left.

JACK

I hadn't noticed.

Jack leans back and does the classic stretch move leaving an  
arm behind Sarah as an opening. It's about as obvious as a  
fart in church.

Sarah lays her head on Jack's shoulder. His arm responds by  
slowly wrapping around her supple waist.

Jack smells her hair and gives that "Oh My God" look.

Sarah turns her face and stares slowly into his eyes while  
running her hands down his muscular back. Suddenly her hand  
stops near his right hip. Startled, she moves her hand away  
quickly, then puts it back for a further feel. A look of  
recognition comes over her.

SARAH

Is that what I think it is? Oh my  
God, you're packing.

Sarah jumps up and backs away.

JACK  
It's o.k., I can explain.

Jack stands up. Sarah, suddenly sober, comes back looking for answers.

SARAH  
Start explaining.

Kurt and Vanessa walk up, holding hands, their clothes still dripping. Kurt puts his hand on Jack's shoulder.

KURT  
(Whispers)  
Thanks.

VANESSA  
(To Sarah)  
You ready, sis? My mom's gonna be pissed if I'm not home soon.

SARAH  
(To Kurt)  
You're sober right?

Kurt nods.

SARAH (CONT.)  
Why don't you drive my wet friend home. I'm sure you two have more to talk about. Jack can drive me back in my car.

Vanessa nods in approval.

JACK  
I'm sober.

Points at his half full beer cup.

JACK (CONT.)  
First beer.

KURT  
Oh, o.k.

SARAH  
Be safe. We'll see you back at the house.



INT. SARAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Jack pulls onto the road, the music BLARES. Sarah turns it off completely. Silence.

SARAH  
Are you some kind of gangsta?  
Tough guy?

JACK  
No. No!

SARAH  
Then What?

JACK  
Ah Crap. (Beat) Well, actually...

SARAH  
This should be interesting.

JACK  
...I'm an undercover officer.

SARAH  
Holy crap. How old are you? I  
was about to kiss you.

JACK  
You were?

SARAH  
I was. Now answer the question  
and tell me why you're here. You  
a NARC?

JACK  
I'm 19 -- almost 20. I'm not a  
narc.

SARAH  
You're here trying to find out who  
killed Drew, aren't you? Does  
Kurt know?

JACK  
No. Just your dad. How did  
you...

SARAH  
(Interrupting)  
I knew he and Smith were up to something. Is Jack Taylor even your real name?

JACK  
Actually, it is.

SARAH  
Why would you go undercover and use your real name?

JACK  
I'm not from around here. And, this is not exactly a dangerous assignment.

Sarah stares at the windshield.

SARAH  
(TO self)  
Oh my God. I have a cop living in my house. A hot cop, but still a cop.

JACK  
You know I can hear you.

SARAH  
Sorry. My filter's not working. When did you graduate?

JACK  
I didn't. I joined the army on my 17th birthday.

SARAH  
The army?

JACK  
I was only in two years. My HUM-VEE got hit by an I.E.D. and they let me out early after my wounds healed. I went to the Police Academy and here I am.

SARAH  
And now you're living in my house, posing as a high school senior.

JACK

Well, technically, I'm not posing.  
If If I'm here long enough, I'll  
have enough credits for a diploma.

SARAH

Looks like you've got it all  
worked out. Play a little  
football, arrest a few bad guys,  
and earn your diploma.

JACK

Yeah, maybe. Except the part  
about catching bad guys. I don't  
have a single lead.

SARAH

Then, I guess you should have come  
to me sooner.

Jack pulls into the driveway. Bill is standing at the front  
door. Neither one of them notice him at first.

JACK

So you know something -- Ah crap.  
This looks bad.

SARAH

He doesn't have to know that I  
know. Ya know.

JACK

O.K. O.K.

EXT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - NIGHT

The morning twilight can't conceal the displeasure on Bill's  
face. He looks like he's been waiting for hours.

Jack and Sarah sheepishly exit the car. Jack approaches Bill  
with Sarah ducking behind him for cover.

BILL

Sarah. Go in the house and get  
some sleep. I'll speak to you in  
the... I mean later.

Sarah quickly moves around Jack and bolts for the door. She  
turns back and mouth's SORRY, then hastily makes her way in  
the house.

BILL

I can't wait to hear your explanation, soldier.

JACK

I was working on the case, sir -- out at the lake. Kurt hooked up with Vanessa, so Sarah was my ride home.

BILL

That's it?

JACK

She waited around for hours. No man left behind.

Jack pats Bill on the shoulder.

JACK

You trained her well.

BILL

You better have made some progress?

JACK

Oh yeah. I'm definitely on to something.

BILL

All right then. Good work. I'll pass the news on to the Captain.

INT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - DAY

JACK'S BEDROOM

Jack sleeps in after a long night. As late morning sun hits his eyes, he rolls over, and there's Sarah, bright eyed and sitting on his bed.

SARAH

Thanks for covering for me.

Jack stretches and tries to regain his faculties.

JACK

Covering? Oh yeah. I think I covered for both of us.

SARAH  
He can't ground you.

JACK  
There's worse things in life than  
being grounded.

SARAH  
I'll be 18 on November 1st, then  
what can he say.

Jack sits up.

JACK  
Who's older, you or Kurt?

SARAH  
I am by 30 minutes. He hates it.  
What about you?

JACK  
My birthday's on January 2nd.

Sarah leans in and nuzzles Jack.

SARAH  
(Whispers)  
We're not that far apart.

JACK  
God you smell good. Now get outta  
here, tease, before you get me  
shot.

Sarah jumps up, and skips to the door. As she's about to  
close it behind her, she pops her head back in.

SARAH  
You still haven't asked me what I  
know.

JACK  
I will as soon as I get some  
clothes on, and maybe a shower.

SARAH  
So, hurry up. We have a case to  
solve.

The door closes.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

The Redskin first teams square off at the 40 yard line. Kurt sets up wide left. Jack eyes the offense from the safety position.

Rick drops back and overthrows Javier. Coach Stroud cringes. The offense heads back to the huddle.

COACH STROUD

Rick, get some water. Jack, run the offense for a couple series.

Jack quickly crosses the line of scrimmage and takes his place in the huddle. Rick storms off tossing his helmet on the sideline.

COACH STROUD

Time for some passes. Slot right, 87 post on one. Let's go.

The offense sets up on the line of scrimmage.

JACK

Blue 24, Blue 24, down, set, hut, hut.

Jack takes three steps back and fires the ball to Kurt in the seam between the corner and safety. Kurt makes a great catch then a move on the safety and scores.

Rick sees the successful play from the sidelines and kicks his helmet.

Kurt arrives back at the huddle.

KURT

That's how it's done.

Jack high fives Kurt. Coach Stroud is looking at his play chart with a smile on his face.

TY

Show me some love brother.

JAVIER

I'll be open, too.

JACK

Don't worry guys. Lots of love to go around.

COACH STROUD

Good job. Now run the 95 drag.

Bart looks over to Rick on the sideline. Rick nods. Bart then whispers in Bert's ear.

The team lines up again. The ball is snapped. Jack takes 5 steps back, Bert and Bart let their rushers through.

Jack scrambles away from tacklers and hits Ty on the drag route.

Ty runs for about fifteen yards before going out of bounds.

On the way back to the huddle, Ty gives Jack a high five.

TY

You da real deal, man. Where have you been?

Coach Stroud, mad as hell, grabs Bert and Bart by the face mask and chews them out MOS.

QUICK MONTAGE

-- Bart and Bert seriously blocking with Coach Stroud behind them.

-- Jack hits Javier on an out.

-- Jack hits Kurt on a corner.

-- Jack scrambles down field for a long gainer.

END MONTAGE

Coach blows his whistle.

COACH STROUD

(Shouting)

Four laps and hit the showers.  
Bakers! You owe me eight. Try to get them done by midnight.

INT. C.U.H.S. LIBRARY - DAY

Jack and Kurt sit alone going over playbooks. Across from them at the freshman band table, the boys discuss drumming techniques until Bert, Bart and another senior interrupt their peace.

Jack spots the harassment.

JACK

Ah, man.

KURT

It's just harmless fun.

JACK

How did you like it when you were a freshman?

KURT

I didn't.

Jack stands up.

JACK

Exactly.

Jack walks over to the table.

JACK

(To Bart and Bert)

Are we having fun, gentlemen?

BERT

Just sayin' hi to our little band buddies.

BART

Who are you, the hall monitor?

JACK

(To Bert)

You didn't tell him?

BART

Tell me what?

JACK

It's like this. These boys here are my ho's. No offense guys. And I'm their pimp.

JEROME

That's right.

BART

Real funny.

JACK

So, why don't you all move along. This street corner's mine.



Jack smiles and puts a hand on Bert and Bart's back.

JACK (CONT.)  
Go on. Find your own ho's.

BART  
I'm not going anywhere.

BERT  
We should go. Come on.

Bert coaxes his brother away from the table.

BART  
You gonna let that newbie tell us  
what to do?

BERT  
He's tougher than he looks.

Back at the drum table, Jack takes a seat.

JACK  
(To the drum corps)  
Sorry, guys. That's all I could  
come up with.

JEROME  
I'm your Ho.

GILBERT  
I'll be your Ho.

JEROME  
Pimp Daddy Jack. It kinda has a  
ring to it.

The table breaks out laughing.

JACK  
Right on. Now, go make me some  
money, bitches.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - NIGHT

PARKED ACROSS THE STREET FROM THE RV DEALERSHIP

SARAH  
That's it. R.V. World.

JACK  
That's your big lead?

SARAH  
Yeah. Rick's dad would have done anything to get him the starting quarterback job.

JACK  
You're saying douche bag senior is responsible for Drew's death?

SARAH  
Pretty much.

JACK  
Let's just say you're right.

SARAH  
So, you think I am right?

JACK  
I'm not saying you're wrong. But, where's the proof?

SARAH  
Did you know Drew worked here part-time?

JACK  
Yeah, I read that.

SARAH  
He was here the day he disappeared.

JACK  
But, his car was found parked at Eastman lake.

SARAH  
They could have easily slipped him the drugs in his lunch -- a drink -- something.

JACK  
I guess that's possible.

SARAH  
Don't you think it's funny that not one person saw him after he left work?

JACK  
Yeah, I do. I think you're on to something, partner.

Jack pulls out into traffic and drives away while Sarah tries to conceal how pleased she is with her detective skills.

EXT. KERMAN LIONS HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

SCORE - HOME:14 VIS:0 QTR:3 DOWN:1 TO GO:10 CLOCK:12:00

Down by 14 going into the third quarter, Coach Stroud paces the sideline. He looks at Rick. Then at Jack.

COACH STROUD

Taylor, warm-up that arm.

Surprised but eager, Jack grabs a football and Kurt runs to a suitable warm up spot. The two begin throwing the ball behind the bench. The kick-off team heads out to the field.

The ball is kicked, the Redskin return team tackles the Kerman player fairly easy.

A COUPLE PLAYS LATER - The scoreboard shows it's 3rd Down, 10 to go.

The pass lands incomplete. On the sideline, the down marker shows a four.

COACH BARNES

Let's go. Punt return team.

Rick, standing next to Coach Stroud, waits for direction.

COACH STROUD

(To Rick)

Martini. Taylor is going in at Q.B. Take a breather.

Kurt pumps his fist and mouths yes. Ty does a little happy dance. Jack quickly puts his helmet on.

Rick stands there in disbelief, then anger.

RICK

You can't do that! This is my team!

COACH STROUD

It's done. Give it a rest.

RICK

This is bullshit.

As Jack and the rest of the offense trot onto the field, Rick turns and walks to the back of the player area looking for his dad in the stands. He sees him, raises his arms in appeal, then throws his helmet on the ground.

Up in the stands, Rick Sr. sees his son and the realization begins to show on his face.

RICK SR.  
What's goin' on? Junior's not hurt.

VERN  
I think that moron just benched your boy.

RICK SR.  
We'll see about that.

Rick Sr. jumps to his feet and leans over the rail.

RICK SR.  
(Yelling)  
Hey coach. Have you lost your mind?

Coach Stroud turns and glares for a brief moment then turns back around. Rick Sr. sits back down.

RICK SR.  
That knuckle head. When I get done with him, he'll be lucky to get a job coaching badminton.

QUICK MONTAGE - THE NEXT SERIES

-- Jack completes a medium pass to Kurt.

-- Jack passes to Ty over the middle for another completion.

-- Jack fades back. He's in trouble. Defensive linemen swarm him, but he miraculously evades the would be tacklers and hurls a long pass to Kurt in the end zone for a touchdown.

END MONTAGE

The Redskin fans jump to their feet, cheering.

In the front row, Rick Sr. and Vern remain seated, sulking.

RICK SR.

(To Vern)

Anybody could have thrown that pass. Did you see how much time he had?

VERN

He's not that good.

Jack jogs up to the sideline. The coach gives him a pat on the back as he exits the field.

COACH STROUD

That's what I'm talkin' about.

ON THE FIELD - A SHORT TIME LATER

The Redskin defense tackles the Kerman quarterback for a loss.

The Lion punter kicks the ball out of bounds.

On the Redskin sideline, Rick walks up to Coach Stroud.

RICK

When do I go back in, coach?

COACH STROUD

You don't. Not at Q.B. If you wanna help, I could use you at outside linebacker.

RICK

No thanks. I'll just wait 'till this guy screws up. It won't be long.

MONTAGE

-- Jack throws short to Javier who scampers for 20 yards.

-- Jack passes to Kurt for a long gain.

-- Jack passes to Ty for a touchdown.

END MONTAGE

Jack walks off the field with his arms in the air signalling touchdown. Ty runs towards the ref. with the ball held high then flips it to him.

SCOREBOARD - HOME:14 VISITORS:14 DOWN:1 QTR: 3 TIME:1:43

Behind the bench, the cheerleaders jump up and down.

LATER

Near the stadium entrance, Rick Sr. and Vern are leaving early.

RICK SR.

I've seen enough of this garbage.

VERN

Talk about luck.

Back on the field, Jack takes the snap and kneels as the scoreboard ticks to zero.

SCOREBOARD - HOME:20 VISITORS:28 DOWN:1 QTR: 4 TIME:0:00

The Redskin players celebrate.

EXT. C.U.H.S. MAIN CAMPUS - DAY

Jack and Kurt walk onto the campus, just like any other Monday morning, only today is different.

They see girls pointing and whispering. All around, students are giving them various congratulatory gestures.

Darla and Stacy go out of their way to talk to them.

STACY

You guys were awesome.

DARLA

Nice catch, Kurt.

KURT

Thanks.

Stacy's eyes stay on Jack as she walks away.

KURT

I think she gave you "the look."

JACK

No, she didn't give me...

KURT

Oh yeah, it was "the look."

JACK  
You think? Wow!

KURT  
So, this is what it feels like to  
be the star players.

JACK  
It's weird. Kinda what I  
expected.

KURT  
But, lame at the same time. All  
we did was win a football game.

Jack nods in agreement.

JACK  
And, if we lose next week, back to  
normal.

KURT  
That's not gonna happen. Not with  
you starting.

JACK  
You think coach will make me the  
starter?

KURT  
He better.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Jack struts confidently through the locker room toward the  
coach's office.

He sees Gilbert and Jerome dressing out next to a row of  
lockers.

A senior passing by has a towel and it looks like he's ready  
to smack Gilbert on the back of the head.

Jack stares down the senior. The boy recognizes him and  
freezes.

JACK  
Don't even think about it.

The boy quickly pulls in the towel and heads off. Jack  
keeps walking.

JEROME (O.S.)

Thanks, P.D.

Jack laughs and continues on. He's almost to the coach's office when Rick emerges visually upset. Rick sees Jack and grimaces.

RICK

I hope you're happy?

Jack shrugs ignorance.

RICK

You show up outta nowhere. You take my job.

Rick attempts to dominate the hallway, expecting Jack to step aside. He doesn't. A momentary impasse.

JACK

You talked to coach?

Jack stands his ground and Rick backs off.

RICK

Coach said you're starting against Sierra.

JACK

Sorry, man. We still need you on Defense.

Rick edges around Jack, avoiding contact, then stops for one last remark.

RICK

Don't get hurt.

Rick turns and walks away.

INT. R.V. WORLD MANAGER'S OFFICE - DAY

A newspaper slams on a desk.

The local paper headline reads, "Taylor Leads Redskins past Sierra 42-10."

Then you see who slammed the paper. It's Rick SR. at his desk with the paper in front of him next to an empty bottle of vodka. Vern sits in a chair across the room with a cocktail glass in hand.



RICK SR.  
Can you believe this crap? Not  
one word about junior.

VERN  
He made four tackles.

RICK SR.  
Stupid, small town newspaper.

Rick Sr. attempts to find the byline.

RICK SR. (CONT.)  
Who wrote this shit?

VERN  
I think it was Marty.

RICK SR.  
I'll have his ass fired.

VERN  
Have you talked to the  
Superintendent?

RICK SR.  
That son of a bitch won't do  
nothing while they're winning.

VERN  
So, what do we do boss?

RICK SR.  
We wait for the kid to step on his  
crank.

VERN  
We better hurry. The season will  
be over.

RICK SR.  
I got something in the works.

EXT. C.U.H.S - MAIN CAMPUS - DAY

The school is bustling with activity. Everywhere, you see  
team jerseys and cheerleader outfits.

The band crew walks toward Jack in matching t-shirts that  
say: "HO SQUAD" with Jack's number 12 below.

Jack, Kurt and Sarah watch as they approach.

SARAH  
Here come's your fan club.

KURT  
It's the HO Squad.

Kurt chuckles. Sarah looks confused.

SARAH  
What's a HO Squad?

KURT  
It's Jack's posse. Or in this case, his ho's, making him the...

SARAH  
Pimp, I get it.

JACK  
Honestly, I think they wear them for protection.

KURT  
You might be right. Statistics show freshman torture has dropped a record 78 percent since you arrived.

The crew stops in front of Jack.

JACK  
What's up gang? You gonna rock the house tonight?

JEROME  
(Pointing to shirt)  
So whatcha think?

JACK  
Awesome man. Where do I get one?

Jerome shoves Gilbert in the shoulder.

JEROME  
(To Gilbert)  
I told you he'd think it was cool.

GILBERT  
We came up with a new cadence.

JEROME  
You gonna love it, man. It's like this.

Jerome starts tapping it out on his leg. The rest of the crew joins in followed by Jack. Sarah rolls her eyes.

JACK  
It totally rocks.

SARAH  
You really are just a big jock  
with a little band geek inside,  
aren't you.

Jack flashes Sarah a sheepish grin.

INT. C.U.H.S. LIBRARY - DAY

Sarah and Jack sit at a corner table. Jack's HO squad is hanging out at their usual table. Bert and Bart walk by the HO's and completely ignore them.

SARAH  
So, how does it feel, Jack?

JACK  
What?

SARAH  
Come on. How does it feel to be  
the king -- the superstar?

JACK  
It feels great. I admit it.

SARAH  
I knew it.

JACK  
It's so much better than my first  
try.

SARAH  
And, now you can have your pick of  
the cheerleaders. I know Stacy  
has the hots for you.

JACK  
You really think I care?

SARAH  
You are a guy?

JACK

O.K., so I care a little, but that's not it.

SARAH

Then what. You like being popular?

JACK

No. I care about the team... the season. I always knew I could do this. I just never thought I'd get the chance. But here I am.

SARAH

Isn't it cheating? You're a cop.

JACK

Not right now. I'm officially enrolled, and I'm eligible until I turn 20. The season will be over.

SARAH

What happens if you solve the case?

JACK

I just need to stretch this thing out until the end of the semester. If I pass all my classes, I'll have enough credits to graduate.

SARAH

Don't you have a G.E.D?

JACK

Yeah, I have a G.E.D. A Good Enough Diploma. It's not the same.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

SUPER - C.U.H.S. REDSKINS V. YOSEMITE HIGH BADGERS

Jack readies the offense at the opponent 20 yard line. Kurt and Ty are wide. The new drum cadence BEATS in the background. The referee blows the whistle. The ball is in play.

SCORE BOARD - HOME: 28 VISITORS: 7 QUARTER: 4 TIME: 2:05

Jack spots the defender move up to press Kurt.

JACK

Red 19. Red 19. Set, hut hut

Kurt makes a swim move around his man and jets passed him down the sideline.

Jack launches a long pass. Kurt cradles the ball and trots in for the score.

The home town crowd jumps to their feet. Everyone is cheering and congratulating each other. Again, Rick Sr. and Vern remain seated.

Jack and Kurt run off the field pointing to the stands with index fingers signifying they're number one.

The celebration is too much. Rick Martini Sr. loses his cool.

RICK SR.

Enjoy your last touchdown pass you little shit.

VERN

How's that boss?

RICK SR.

It's time to wipe that smile off his face.

VERN

Plan B?

RICK SR.

Yeah. Before Junior misses the whole season.

VERN

You want me to call my guy?

RICK SR.

No, you knuckle head. I got it covered. Look what happened last time I let you take care of things.

Rick and Vern get up to leave, early as usual.

At the water station, Jack looks through the crowd. He makes eye contact with Sarah in the band section. She smiles and sticks out her tongue.

In the midst of the cheerleaders, Stacy waits for Jack to look her way and then he does.

STACY  
(To JACK)  
Are you going to the homecoming  
dance later?

JACK  
Yeah, maybe.

STACY  
Darla and I will be there. You  
have to come.

JACK  
I guess there's not much else  
going on.

STACY  
Great. I'll see you there.

Sarah spots Jack talking to Stacy and rolls her eyes.

SCORE BOARD - HOME: 35 VISITORS: 7 QUARTER: 4 TIME: 0:05

The clock ticks to zero, the whistle blows.

FIELD

REFEREE  
Ball game.

INT. C.U.H.S. SCHOOL GYMNASIUM - NIGHT

Jack, Kurt, Ty and Javier walk through the door to the homecoming high school dance.

Hip Hop music BLARES from large speakers. Most of the attendees sit quietly in the bleachers. A few are out on the dance floor.

The cheerleaders, now in skin tight cocktail dresses, chat in a group near the refreshments. Jack's arrival is definitely noticed by the squad as Stacy whispers in Darla's ear.

KURT  
Hey, there's Vanessa. I'll catch  
up later.

Kurt heads straight for Vanessa. Ty makes a break towards the dance floor and moves right in with a group of girls. He immediately shows off his smooth moves.

JAVIER

You thirsty? I think I'll get something to drink.

JACK

Nah, I'm good.

Jack spots Jerome and crew up in the stands and heads for them. But, Stacy has different plans and intercepts him.

STACY

Hey Jack.

Jack looks Stacy up and down. Wow! Her tight dress shows off every curve.

JACK

You look great.

STACY

Thanks.

JACK

So, this is homecoming? Somehow I thought it would be bigger.

STACY

You've never been to a homecoming dance?

JACK

No. This is my first one.

STACY

They didn't have dances where you went to school?

JACK

Yeah. They did. I just didn't go.

STACY

Well, you're here now...

A slow song.

STACY

...and I think that's our song.

Stacy takes Jack by the hand and pulls him onto the dance floor. She grabs his other hand and brings him closer. Jack, gives in to the moment.

Sarah notices Jack with Stacy and looks hurt.

The slow music transitions back to hip hop.

JACK

Thanks. That was nice.

STACY

Stay and dance some more.

JACK

I'm pretty banged up. I probably should just hang out on the sidelines.

STACY

I'll come find you when it slows back down.

JACK

Sounds great.

Jack walks off.

Stacy joins a bunch of her girlfriends on the floor.

Jack arrives at the upper bleachers where Gilbert and crew spectate.

JACK

What's up my HO's?

JEROME

You rocked out there tonight.

ALL

Great game. You were awesome.

JACK

Thanks guys.

GILBERT

We saw you with Stacy?

JEROME

(Rapping)

That girl has it going on...  
shakin' that ass... all night  
long.



JACK  
She is pretty hot.

The boys continue to stare at the hot girls on the floor.  
Bert and Bart try to move in and the girls shoo them off.

JEROME  
Look at that...

Pointing to Bert and Bart's retreat.

JEROME  
They got slammed.

Most of the crew laughs and exchanges high fives.

GILBERT  
(To Jack)  
What are you doing up here?  
Shouldn't you be down there  
gettin' busy.

JACK  
Actually, I'm good right here.

JEROME  
These are the best seats in the  
house.

The drooling continues as the girls get naughtier.

JACK  
Yes they are.

Another slow song.

From the stands, Rick is seen leading an eager freshman out  
on the dance floor.

Stacy looks up and doesn't see Jack. She looks around.

In another area of the bleachers, Vanessa and Kurt take in  
the scene as Jack approaches.

Kurt leads Vanessa past Jack revealing Sarah, gorgeous in a  
hot little, and I mean little, party dress.

Jack leaps a couple of benches and lands beside her.

JACK  
Hey partner.

SARAH  
You lose your cheerleader?

JACK  
Yeah. I ditched her. Not my type.

JACK  
What is your type, Jack?

JACK  
You are. Isn't it obvious.

Jack holds his hand out and stands up.

SARAH  
Oh. You do like smart and sexy.

Sarah reaches back, takes Jack's hand, and stands up.

JACK  
Let's get out of here.

SARAH  
Without your favorite cheerleader?

JACK  
Knock it off.

Jack and Sarah walk hand-in-hand past the whole school.

On the dance floor, Kurt sees their escape and points it out to Vanessa.

KURT  
(To Vanessa)  
Uh oh. The Colonel's not gonna  
like this.

Stacy, dancing with another football player, sees Jack and Sarah walking out and pouts, then shakes it off, and snuggles up to the guy even more.

Up in the bleachers, Jerome and the crew follow Jack and Sarah with they're eyes as they walk past.

JEROME  
That's how it's done. Right  
there.

GILBERT  
Let's see your moves Jerome.

JEROME

I'm just looking for the right opportunity. Then, I'm gonna swoop on it... swoop!

Jack and Sarah exit.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Sarah's driving down a country road toward the lake. Jack's in the passenger seat with his feet on the dashboard. A road sign reads, "Eastman lake 2 miles."

JACK

You think anyone noticed we left?

SARAH

Uh, Yeah! Just about everybody.

JACK

Oh. So you think...

SARAH

...that everyone believes...

JACK

...we're headed to the lake.

SARAH

We are headed to the lake.

JACK

Oh... Oh!

SARAH

It's O.K. I've been 18 for a week. You're not worried about what people think are you?

JACK

If we don't count your dad and my boss, then no. I don't care what anybody says.

SARAH

You do want to, though, don't you?

JACK

I do. Believe me.

SARAH  
He won't kill you for just kissing  
me.

JACK  
I'm a dude. And you do know what  
they say?

SARAH  
Bad brakes. I get it.

Sarah looks in the rear view mirror. A car is fast  
approaching from behind.

SARAH  
Jack...

Jack turns his head and looks over his shoulder.

JACK  
...It's been there a while.

SARAH  
And you didn't say anything?

The car speeds up and closes distance, then moves into the  
other lane. It's closing fast.

JACK  
We were talking.

The car moves up along side. Two men in black ski masks  
peer at them through the window. The driver of the other  
car turns the wheel toward them in an attempt to run them  
off the road. The two vehicles collide several times.

SARAH  
You're the cop. Now what?

JACK  
Hit your brakes. Let them by.

Sarah slams the brakes until the car stops. The other car  
passes them and skids to a stop 30 feet away. Jack pulls out  
his gun, pulls back and releases the upper receiver. The  
gun CLICKS into locked and loaded position.

JACK  
(To Sarah)  
You might wanna duck or something.

Jack opens the passenger door, jumps out and gets in  
position behind it. He points his gun at the car. Two burly

figures emerge and begin to walk toward them. One man has a crow bar, the other a shotgun.

JACK  
(Yelling)  
Take one more step and I'll drop  
you.

The two men continue.

Jack fires a shot at the man with the shotgun.

The bullet strikes him in the upper thigh. His shotgun goes off harmlessly into the air. He drops it and grabs his wounded leg, then limps back to the car.

The man with the crowbar quickly jumps back in the driver's seat. Once the other man gets in the car it burns rubber as it leaves.

SARAH  
Oh my God you shot him.

JACK  
In the leg. You o.k?

SARAH  
I'm fine. Let's get out of here  
before they come back.

JACK  
Good idea. But, I don't think  
they're coming back.

Sarah wheels the car around and heads for home.

SARAH  
Shouldn't we call the police?

JACK  
No. No. They'll pull me.

SARAH  
You're not ready to leave?

JACK  
No. I'm not.

SARAH  
Good.

JACK

We can't hide the damage to the car, but we don't have to say anything about a shoot out.

SARAH

Got it.

EXT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Sarah's banged up car limps on to the driveway. It's late. Kurt's car is already there. Standing by the door, again, is Bill Richardson. Jack and Sarah notice him about the same time. They look at each other.

JACK

We're not talking ourselves out of this one.

SARAH

Nope.

Jack hurries out of the car. Sarah opens her dented door. It makes an awful CREAKING sound. She attempts to shut it, but it's hanging badly. Bill stomps toward the car. He's fuming.

JACK

Bill. It's not her fault. We need to talk.

SARAH

(Sugary)  
Hey, daddy.

BILL

Go in the house.

SARAH

I didn't do anything wrong.

JACK

Let me explain.

BILL

I said...

SARAH

I'm staying. I know he's a cop.

BILL

Oh Great.

JACK  
Someone tried to run us off the  
road out by the lake.

BILL  
What were you doing...

SARAH  
Nothing daddy. I've been helping  
him with the case.

BILL  
You've been what?

JACK  
She figured it out. We can't  
prove it yet, but...

BILL  
Really? What do you know?

JACK  
It's Martini. I mean Mr. Martini.

SARAH  
He's obsessed with his son being  
the star quarterback. First he  
went after Drew. And now, Jack.

BILL  
We've suspected him all along, but  
we needed...

SARAH  
(Interrupting)  
You needed bait. Father! You  
knew this. And, you let Jack...

JACK  
(Interrupting)  
Really?

BILL  
It's his job. We figured if Jack  
could take Rick's spot, his dad  
might try something again.

JACK  
It wasn't him. He sent a couple  
of guys in masks. We got nothing.  
No license, no I.D.

BILL

At least we know we were right.  
That's a start. And you, young  
lady, need to stay clear of this.

SARAH

Oh yeah. I'll just stay home from  
school till the end of the year.

BILL

That's not what I mean't. Just no  
more late night drives...

Sarah stomps off.

BILL (CONT'D)

...Or dates.

Bill turns to Jack.

BILL (CONT'D)

I don't mind doing my part, but  
keep her out of this. We clear?

JACK

Crystal, sir.

INT. FARNESI'S COFFEE SHOP - DAY

Jack and Rod are sitting in a corner booth, away from the  
rest of the patrons. Jack is obviously angry.

JACK

So, I was just bait. Was that it?

ROD

Why else would we put a 19 year  
old rookie undercover.

JACK

You could have told me.

ROD

The Captain didn't think it was a  
good idea. Your first assignment  
and all.

JACK

Thanks a lot. I knew this was too  
good to be true.



ROD

Hey. I convinced him you could do this. And you have. You're on your way.

JACK

I got nothing. No license, no descriptions. Just a late model Chrysler.

ROD

The Captain's not gonna like that.

JACK

Those guys were pro's. And when they do come back, it could be a whole lot worse.

ROD

We'll have backup on stand-by for you.

JACK

All right, but I'm gonna need my car.

ROD

I'll drop it off at the house tonight.

EXT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack sits in the front seat of a new, cherry red Camaro. Sarah leans into the passenger window.

SARAH

Don't wreck this car.

JACK

Funny.

Sarah starts to open the door. Jack pulls it shut.

JACK

Oh no you don't.

SARAH

Awe. You gonna let my dad tell you what to do?

JACK

No. But, he's right. You need to stay away from me until this is over.

SARAH

How are you suppose to solve this case without me?

JACK

I'm just the bait, remember.

SARAH

You're more than that. Much more.

JACK

Maybe to the team. But, not to the department.

SARAH

I was talking about me.

JACK

Sarah. Those guys might come back. I couldn't live with myself if something happened to you.

SARAH

I'll be fine. It's you I'm worried about.

Jack puts the car in gear. Sarah backs away as Jack drives off. She watches the car until it turns the corner.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Jack and Kurt stroll into the Varsity locker room.

KURT

Their secondary isn't fast, so if we throw short early, we'll draw them in.

JACK

We need to look at more of their game films. I think the left side is the weakest.

KURT

I agree. Number 22 is probably...

Jack opens his locker and there is Gilbert wearing his HO shirt, squeezed in and DUCT taped.

JACK  
(Interrupting)  
Douche bags!

Kurt hurries over to see what the problem is while Jack carefully pulls Gilbert out of the locker and rips the tape off of Gilbert's mouth.

GILBERT  
They got all of us.

KURT  
Oh great.

Jack and Kurt go around opening lockers and freeing the HO squad. One by one, they are rescued, all except Jerome.

Jack opens the janitor closet revealing:

Jerome, dressed like a mummy with duct tape and gym towels hanging on the closet wall.

KURT  
(To Gilbert)  
Who did this?

GILBERT  
The Bubbas and a couple other guys.

JACK  
Was Rick one of them?

GILBERT  
No. A couple of Bart's friends.

JACK  
He never does his own dirty work.

Jack pulls the tape off of Jerome's mouth.

JEROME  
(Almost crying)  
Get me down from here. This shit ain't funny.

Kurt and Jack unhitch Jerome from the mop hanger while Gilbert and the other victims gather. Jerome is now on his feet, still encased in towels.

GILBERT

We really need a picture of this.

Gilbert snaps a picture with his cell phone while Jack and Kurt plant kisses on Jerome's terry cloth face.

Gilbert looks down at the snapshot and busts out laughing.

JEROME

You guys suck.

Jack and Kurt laugh as Gilbert shows Jerome the picture. He finally succumbs to the hilarity of his situation and joins in.

A SHORT TIME LATER

Jerome is freed from his bonds and players are wandering in. Jerome and Gilbert begin to feel a little uncertain about their presence in the holy hall.

JACK

(To Gilbert and  
Jerome)

All right guys. Get out of here  
while you can and trust me! There  
will be a reckoning.

KURT

Count on it.

Without saying a word and having no doubt in their minds, Gilbert and Jerome race from the locker room to safer grounds.

With a puzzled look on his face, Jack begins looking around.

JACK

Anybody seen my helmet?

Coach Stroud walks in with a brand new starter helmet.

COACH STROUD

Right here -

The coach tosses it to Jack.

COACH STROUD

- you've earned it.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Jack, Kurt and the Ho squad at the usual table ponder their next move.

Across the dining hall, Rick and the Bubba's, savoring their victory, do their best to rub it in by laughing overtly and retelling the story to everyone MOS.

JACK

I can probably get them kicked off the team for bullying.

GILBERT

No. No. As dumb as they are, you need blockers.

JEROME

You weren't the one hanging in the closet.

KURT

He's right. There's a better way. Besides, Rick's the one pulling the strings.

GILBERT

So what should we do?

JACK

(Beat) It depends. How much payback do you want?

GILBERT

Are we paying them back for this time only... or all the other times?

JEROME

I say we pay them back for this time, the last time, all the other times... and for all the other freshman, too.

JACK

Well, all right. This is gonna take some planning, but I have a few ideas.

The group huddles and begins planning MOS.

INT. JACK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jack's Camaro rolls out of the high school parking lot onto the city street. He is alone.

From half a block away, a sedan pulls out and begins to follow at a distance.

Jack spots the car in the rear view, reaches down, and hits a speed dial button on his cell phone. A bluetooth device sticks out from his ear. A weapon is laying on the seat beside him.

Jack turns a corner, the car is still there.

JACK

It's a late model Chrysler, same as before. I'm on 11th almost to Robertson. I'm turning right on Trinity.

ROD

(V.O.)

Calling it in now. Two patrol cars are in the vicinity. More coming.

Jack makes a turn, the car follows him.

JACK

They're closing. Where's my backup?

ROD

You should see them.

Jack speeds up and continues to look in the rear view.

Suddenly, two police cars appear behind the sedan. Lights go on.

Jack passes an intersection. Another police car cuts in behind him and stops in the intersection.

The sedan screeches to a halt. Officers converge with guns drawn as Jack drives away.

JACK

They got 'em.

ROD  
(V.O.)  
Excellent. I'll call you as soon  
as I know something.

INT. C.U.H.S. VARSITY LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

The locker room is bustling with activity as players don their uniforms.

Jack applies black grease paint in preparation for the bright lights. From his locker, a cell phone rings. Jack looks down at the caller I.D. and quickly picks it up while hitting the answer button. He hurries out of the locker room.

JACK  
Nice timing. I'm about to play a  
football game.

ROD  
(V.O.)  
The two guys we...

JACK  
(Interrupting)  
Hang on. I gotta find some  
privacy.

Jack ducks into a lonely section of the building.

JACK  
Go on.

ROD  
(V.O.)  
Anyway, they're heavy hitters out  
of L.A. We have them both in  
custody on weapons charges.

JACK  
Did they talk?

ROD  
(V.O.)  
Not much. But one of them had a  
bullet hole in his leg. You know  
anything about that?

JACK  
No. Why would I?

ROD  
(V.O.)  
Nothing you want to add to your  
report?

Players are filing by and heading out to the field. Coach Stroud looks over at Jack.

COACH STROUD  
You coming?

Points at his watch.

Jack nods at the coach and returns to his phone call.

JACK  
No it's complete. Hey I gotta go.  
This is our last game before  
playoffs. If we win, we'll have  
home...

ROD  
(Interrupting)  
I wouldn't worry too much about  
football. The Captain's pulling  
your plug.

JACK  
I just need two, maybe three more  
weeks. I know he'll make another  
move.

ROD  
It's over. Martini knows we're on  
to him.

JACK  
He's not done. I know his type.

The coach pops his head back in and sees Jack still on the phone.

COACH STROUD  
(Yelling)  
Taylor, football, now!

Jack covers the phone with his hand.

JACK  
(To Coach)  
I'm coming.



JACK  
 (To Rob)  
 Just stall him, two weeks.

Jack closes his phone and runs back to his locker.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

A football, spirals, hanging for several moments then dives toward:

Kurt running down the sideline with a defender close behind. The outstretched arms of the defender attempt to deflect the long bomb to no avail as Kurt embraces the pass in the back of the end zone.

The referee signals Touchdown.

The crowd erupts in confident cheers.

Behind the bench, cheerleaders jump up and down.

The Redskin Marching Band BLARES the school fight song.

On the field, Jack, triumphant, pumps his fist then runs off, arms in the air, echoing the referee. He knows his last pass sealed the victory.

SCOREBOARD - HOME:34 VISITORS:24 DOWN:1 QTR: 4 TIME:1:27

Jack slows to a walk as he exits the field. Coach Stroud slows him gives him a quick embrace.

COACH STROUD  
 Way to close. I knew you could do it.

JACK  
 I just throw the ball coach.

COACH STROUD  
 Yeah right.

Coach gives Jack a friendly smack on the back of the helmet.

At the water station, Jack looks past the admiring cheerleaders, up through the stands, searching for Sarah and a look of approval. Jack waits for the music to finish.

She finally looks back. Sticks her tongue out. That's all

he needed. With a smile on his face, he turns around and watches the clock tick to zero.

SCOREBOARD - HOME:34 VISITORS:24 DOWN:4 QTR: 4 TIME:0:00

The Redskin sideline erupts in a victory celebration. Players jump up and down, tackle each other, pandimonium.

The crowd is on their feet cheering.

Kurt runs up to Jack and offers a high five. Jack wraps his arms around Kurt.

KURT

We're in the playoffs baby.

JACK

Three more wins and we're Valley Champs.

KURT

We may have to face Dos Palos again.

JACK

God, I hope so.

EXT. C.U.H.S OUTSIDE BOYS LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The HO Squad, prepped for battle, stands ready as Jack approaches.

JACK

You get everything?

GILBERT

I think so.

JACK

We have fifteen minutes, so let's go.

ALL

Oh yeah. Heck yeah.

The crew enters.

INT. C.U.H.S. VARSITY LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The room is empty, except for the crew. Jack, with a master key, quickly opens lockers while each member goes to work.

One by one, locker doors close and each boy gives a thumbs up.

Gilbert is still busy applying some type of cream to an athletic supporter as Jack senses they're out of time.

JACK  
Quickly, let's get out of here.

GILBERT  
Almost finished. Got it.

Gilbert shuts the locker and sets the lock.

JEROME  
I can't wait to see the look on their faces.

The crew hurries out of the room. Jack shuts the door behind them.

LATER

The locker room is full of players dressing for practice.

Bart squeezes into dirty practice pants and lets out a loud fart.

Kent grabs his helmet and heads out the door.

Bert slams a protein drink and BURPS obnoxiously.

Jack, ready to go, sits in front of his locker watching the scene unfold with a cheesy grin on his face.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

The team, wearing practice jerseys is gathered in a semi-circle around Coach Stroud, some standing, some on knees.

In the front row of the stands, the HO squad watches and waits.

RICK  
(To Bart)  
What are those tools doing here?

BART  
You want me to run 'em off?

RICK  
You have any duck tape left?

BERT  
I do.

RICK  
Let them stay.

All three mischievously smile at each other.

COACH STROUD  
I know you want another shot at  
the Broncos, but tomorrow's game  
is the one that counts.

Something isn't right with Bart's jock. He pulls on it  
through his pants.

COACH STROUD  
Their rush defense ranked --

Bart, now panicking, repeatedly pulls at his jock.

COACH STROUD  
-- what's the problem Baker?

The HO Squad is now standing, leaning over the rail, all  
eyes on Bart.

BART  
I don't know Coach? Hot. My jock  
is hot.

ALL  
Laughs.

BART  
It's really hot.

Bart bolts out of the group and runs toward the water  
station.

BART  
(Screaming)  
My balls -- fire.

Bart arrives at the water table and furiously douses  
himself, shoving water bottles down his pants and shaking  
them vigorously.

The HO squad is now falling out of the stands laughing.

JEROME

(To Gilbert)

I told you pepper spray would work.

Bart looks up in the stands and sees the laughter. His expression changes from pain and humiliation to fury. But, the burning in his crotch is not quenched. He pulls off his pants and runs off in the direction of the locker room with his big hairy butt cheeks flapping.

The Coach attempts to refocus the team.

COACH STROUD

All right. Show's over. Eyes on me.

Now, Bert seems to be having a problem with gas. His stomach GRUMBLES loud enough for the coach to notice as he winces in pain. Coach Barnes is not amused.

COACH STROUD

As I was saying, they have one of the best defenses...

The volcano in Bert's stomach erupts in a massive fart. The team APPLAUDS. Rick shoves him.

COACH BARNES

Knock it off Baker.

RICK

Dude! Go take a crap or something.

Bert puts his hand on his backside as his bowels go off again. He begins to walk out of the mass of players, then speeds up into a penguin walk, still holding his backside. The locker room appears to be a mile away.

COACH STROUD

Anyone else need a break before we get started?

ALL

No Coach.

Bert has almost reached the locker room.

A loud butt BELCH, the back of his pants go brown.

BERT

Awe man.

Several cheerleaders hear and smell Bert as he waggles by.

DARLA

Oh, gross.

STACY

Oh. My. God.

Bert, now past the cheerleaders, walks with both hands on his backside attempting to no avail to hide the brown gravy in his pants.

DARLA

He didn't. O.M.G. He did.

The girls laugh and scream as they run off.

BACK AT THE STADIUM

Rick walks off the field and begins to remove his helmet. Jack and Kurt, already on the sideline, cringe in anticipation as it slowly comes off.

In the stands, the HO Squad breathlessly awaits the unveiling.

The helmet is off. Kent's hair is covered in pink dye.

Kurt and Jack turn away from Kent to disguise their laughter.

Rick becomes suspicious. He begins looking around and checking himself.

TY

Nice look. Who's your stylist?

Rick wipes the now pink sweat off his forehead and examines his fingers. He looks at Kurt and Jack who no longer disguise their laughter.

He sees the HO Squad in the stands, still laughing.

He wipes both hands through his hair and now they are covered in pink. Furious, he grabs his helmet and heads toward the locker room.

RICK

(To Jack)

Nobody messes with Rick Martini.  
Nobody.

JACK  
Get over yourself, Rick.

Rick takes a step toward Jack. Jack lets go of his helmet and takes a step toward Rick. Rick changes his mind, then walks away.

JACK  
(Baiting)  
What? No backup, no balls?

Rick, walking away, raises his pink hand and gives Jack the finger without turning around.

EXT. C.U.H.S CAMPUS - HALLWAY - DAY

The corridor is empty except for Jerome.

A school bell RINGS.

Jerome hurries his pace.

At the corner, Bert, in his team jersey appears and blocks Jerome's escape.

JEROME  
Ah crap.

BERT  
I did that. And, I think you know why.

Rick, also wearing his team jersey with shades of pink still in his hair, steps around the corner.

RICK  
He's mine.

Bert grabs Jerome and holds him from behind. Jerome struggles to no avail. Rick steps up and punches Jerome in the stomach.

RICK  
You wanna tell me...

Pointing at his head.

RICK  
...who did this?

JEROME  
Your gay barber?

Rick punches Jerome again. Jerome, out of breath, keels over.

Jack suddenly appears from behind the corner.

JACK

Rick! I'm amazed. You finally did your own dirty work.

Bert turns and lets go of Jerome who falls to the floor. Rick steps over Jerome.

RICK

Don't blame me. Blame yourself.

Coach Stroud now appears from behind the same corner. Rick and Bert gulp.

COACH STROUD

I'm blaming you. Martini, you're off the team. Clean out your locker.

Coach points his finger at Bert.

COACH STROUD

And you mister are one mistake away from joining him. Both of you, dean's office, now.

Coach grabs Rick by the jersey and pulls him down the hallway. Bert sheepishly follows. Jack helps Jerome to his feet.

JACK

You o.k?

JEROME

It was worth it.

EXT. EASTMAN LAKE - NIGHT

A huge celebration party is raging. Most of the high school is there. A crowd surrounds a keg on ice in the back of a pickup truck. Another group is gathered around Jack, Kurt and several of the varsity starters.

Kurt, beer in hand, high fives Ty.

KURT

One to go, baby.



Through the din of celebration, Jack presses his cell phone to his ear and listens intently. Jack closes his phone and puts it in his pocket then taps Kurt on the shoulder.

JACK  
The Broncos won. Forty-four to nothing.

KURT  
Jesus!

The smile is suddenly gone from Kurt's face.

TY  
What was the score?

Javier and several of the other players hear and the word spreads quickly.

JACK  
I said forty-four to zero.

TY  
I thought Clovis would give them a better game.

Jack stands up on the picnic table. The crowd quiets as Jack motions to gather around.

JACK  
It looks like we have a second shot at Dos Palos.

Many in the crowd groan.

JACK  
Hey. What's a Championship game without the two best teams? I wouldn't have it any other way.

KURT  
We can take those guys.

A spattering of half hearted CHEERS echo Kurt's sentiment.

JACK  
We're not the same football team they met at the beginning of the season. Not only can we win this game, we will win it.

The crowd, beginning to believe erupts in cheers.

JACK  
Who are we?

ALL  
Redskins!

JACK  
Who are we?

ALL  
Redskins!

JACK  
Redskins, Redskins...

The crowd joins in. The chanting crescendos.

ALL  
Redskins, Redskins, Redskins.

PARKING LOT

Rick, Bert and Bart walk toward the celebration. Rick, quite intoxicated but still in a hurry, outpaces them like a man on a mission.

As Rick enters the gathering, Jack steps off the table. The cheers immediately cease.

Rick stops a few feet away from Jack, and suddenly, the gaggle morphs into a circle awaiting a fight that's been a long time coming.

RICK  
(To Jack)  
You think you're the shit, don't you.

JACK  
You're drunk, Rick, go home.

RICK  
Did you think I was just gonna let you get away with this?

JACK  
I'm not going to fight you Rick.

RICK  
Yeah, you are.

Rick attempts to push Jack, but misses as Jack moves back and to the side. Rick stumbles.

JACK  
You really want to do this?

RICK  
Yeah. I'm gonna do you like I did  
your girlfriend.

Jack looks over at Sarah. She's shaking her head as in "it never happened."

Rick throws a punch that grazes the side of Jack's head and the fight is on. Rick, recklessly attacks Jack until Jack finally has enough and in a flurry of punches puts Rick firmly on his backside.

Bleeding, hurt and angry, Rick pleads with his posse.

RICK  
Finish that piece of shit.

BERT  
Not me, man.

BART  
I'm not missing the championship  
game.

Rick struggles to his feet, staggering.

RICK  
Fuck you then, you retard losers.

BERT  
You don't own me.

BART  
Yeah. Go sleep it off.

Rick staggers into the darkness. The Bubba twins stay. Both shake Jack's hand and you can tell they are apologizing MOS.

LATER ON THE DOCK

Jack and Sarah huddle by a fire pit. Most of the crowd is gone and only a few fires still burn.

Vanessa and Kurt are making out in the distance.

SARAH  
One game to go, huh?

JACK

Yeah. If they don't yank me first.

SARAH

They would do that?

JACK

They are doing that. Not enough evidence to continue. I guess I blew it.

SARAH

But, he sent those guys after you.

JACK

They're not talking.

SARAH

So, this is it then?

JACK

Pretty much.

SARAH

At least you have enough credits to graduate.

JACK

Only if I pass my finals next week.

SARAH

You'll pass them.

JACK

Not if I don't get to take them.

SARAH

Can't you do anything about it?

JACK

I'm working on that.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT - DAY

Through the windshield of his Camaro, parked in the school lot, you see Jack in a heated argument on his cell phone.

Finally, the call ends and Jack, frustrated, tosses the phone into the back seat.

Kurt walks up wearing his team jersey and gives Jack the let's go sign. Jack emerges wearing his jersey as well meaning it's Friday. Game day. The big day.

They strut into the campus and are greeted by well wishers. The school is abuzz with excitement.

JACK

Two finals to go, and I'm home free. I'll see you at lunch so we can go over the adjustments we talked about.

KURT

Just one left for me. I'm so ready for this, brother.

The two fist bump and head in opposite directions.

INT. DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ'S CAR - DAY

Rob is holding his cell phone to his ear. Beat.

INT. JACK'S CAR - DAY

The phone rings in the back seat.

INT. DETECTIVE RODRIGUEZ'S CAR - DAY

Rob gives up and pushes the end button on his phone. He sets it down and wheels his car in the opposite direction.

INT. ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICE - DAY

Rodriguez talks to the receptionist MOS then dons a visitor's pass.

INT. CLASS ROOM - DAY

Jack concentrates on a final and bubbles in an answer.

The door opens and Rob peers in, looking around until he finally spots Jack. Rob motions Jack to come outside.

Jack gives him the wait a minute sign then answers a couple more questions quickly. Finally, Jack gets up and hurries to the door.

EXT. C.U.H.S. - OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM - DAY

Jack exits the classroom, a look of irritation on his face.

JACK

I'm right in the middle of a test.  
What are you doing here?

ROD

It's over. The captain wants you  
out, now.

JACK

Just tell the captain, two more  
tests and a football game. Then I  
don't need to be here anymore.

ROD

You've been stalling two weeks. Do  
you really want to know what the  
captain said?

JACK

No. I can only imagine.

ROD

Let's go. Your debriefing is at  
one.

A nerdy looking student opens the classroom door and walks  
past Jack and Rob.

NERD

Aced it.

JACK

I'm not going.

ROD

If you don't show up -- this time  
tomorrow, you'll have no job and  
nowhere to live.

JACK

Just tell the captain, I'll be in  
on Monday. Martini may still try  
something.

ROD

Why would he?

JACK  
Revenge. Now get outta here. I  
have a test to finish.

ROD  
I'll tell him. But you may not  
like the results.

Rob turns away. Jack rushes back into the classroom.

EXT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - JACK'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Jack's closet is nearly empty as he hurriedly stuffs clothes  
into his duffle bag. Sarah enters the room.

SARAH  
I'm gonna miss you, Jack Taylor.

JACK  
Not yet. We still have a game to  
win. And, I think we may still  
have a case.

Sarah moves closer, Jack keeps stuffing clothes into the  
duffle bag.

SARAH  
What's going on?

JACK  
I was followed home. The car is  
still down the street.

Jack throws the duffle over his shoulder then gives Sarah a  
quick hug.

SARAH  
Have you called for backup?

JACK  
They pulled the plug. There won't  
be any backup.

Sarah gives Jack a big hug and holds on for an extra moment.

SARAH  
Be careful.

JACK  
I just need to make it to the  
school. If I still have a tail,  
I'll call it in.

SARAH

O.K. I'll see you at the game.

EXT. RICHARDSON HOUSE - NIGHT

Jack pulls out on to the suburban street.

A large pickup truck tails him from a safe distance.

As Jack drives through the neighborhood, the truck continues its pursuit. He makes a left turn and the truck doesn't follow. Jack gives a sigh of relief.

EXT. C.U.H.S. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Jack opens his car door and steps out. Suddenly, the butt of a pistol CRACKS Jack in the back of the head.

BLACK

EXT. LAKESHORE - BOAT DOCK - NIGHT

Jack sits in the driver seat of his car, handcuffed to the steering wheel. He's groggy, fading in and out of consciousness. Rick Sr. leans into the car to give his victim a final farewell.

RICK SR.

Looks like you're gonna miss that game tonight.

JACK

Huh.

RICK SR.

Do you have any idea how much money I've spent on quarterback camps, private coaches? A fucking fortune.

JACK

You think you'll get away with this?

RICK SR.

After you skip out on the game, who's gonna miss you?



JACK  
Killing me won't get Rick back on  
the team.

Rick Sr. slaps Jack in the side of his head.

RICK SR.  
If you don't show, what choice do  
they have?

JACK  
You're wacked, man. Coach would  
put our punter in first.

Rick Sr. releases the emergency brake.

RICK SR.  
You won't be around to find out.

The car begins to roll.

Rick spits in Jack's direction. A show of disgust.

RICK SR.  
Punk ass kid.

Satisfied with his job, Rick Sr. hurriedly leaves the scene  
in his large 4x4 truck as the car sinks into the lake.

INT. JACK'S CAR - NIGHT

Jack is wide awake as his car fills up with water. He uses  
his elbow to roll the window all the way up in an attempt to  
buy time, then struggles with the handcuffs around the  
steering wheel.

The car disappears beneath the surface of the lake as  
bubbles boil to the surface.

Inside the car, Jack continues to struggle as the water  
rises. He attempts to open the glove compartment with his  
feet to no avail. Time is running out as his air pocket  
shrinks.

Suddenly, the passenger door opens. Water rushes in,  
revealing Sarah, fully clothed in her band uniform. She  
struggles to free Jack, but his handcuffs keep him trapped.

In the murky waters, Jack motions toward the glove  
compartment. Sarah nods and quickly opens it finding a pair  
of handcuff keys. After some struggle, the handcuffs open.

At the surface, Jack and Sarah emerge from the water, gasping for air.

INT. SARAH'S CAR - NIGHT

Both dripping wet, Sarah speeds toward town passing a sign that reads, "Chowchilla 3 Miles."

JACK  
How did you know I was there?

SARAH  
When you didn't show for warm-ups,  
I had a hunch.

JACK  
You're a much better detective  
than I'll ever be.

Near the school.

JACK  
I'm out of time. Just drop me off  
and call your dad.

SARAH  
How's your head? Can you play?

JACK  
I'll be o.k. That lake water sure  
woke me up.

SARAH  
Me too.

Sarah's car pulls up to the school parking lot and skids to a stop.

Jack quickly exits. Before he closes the door, he looks back at Sarah.

JACK  
I guess I owe you one.

SARAH  
More than one, buddy.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

SUPER: PRESENT DAY - VALLEY FOOTBALL CHAMPIONSHIP

Jack looks up into the stands. Rick Sr. looks back at Jack. He panics then scurries out of the stands followed by Vern.

At the gate, police officers arrest Rick Sr. and Vern.

The other team catches the first kickoff and runs it back for a touchdown.

The extra point is good.

SCOREBOARD HOME: 0 VISITORS 7 Quarter: 1 Time: 11:37

The ball is kicked, the cougar player is tackled.

Jack heads out to the field, the huddle breaks, Jack is under center calling the play. His head is going in and out of blurred and solid vision. The ball is snapped, he passes, the ball off target into the ground in front of his receiver.

The Redskins punt.

MONTAGE

- A Bronco runner makes a good gain.
- A Bronco player catches a long pass.
- The Redskins stuff a Bronco runner.
- The down marker moves to four.
- The field goal is good.

END MONTAGE

SCOREBOARD - Home: 0 Visitors 10 Quarter: 2 Time: 1:49

Jack is at the back of the team area, looking for Sarah in the band section. She finally shows up. She sees him. She sticks her tongue out. All is well.

On the sideline, the Redskin coaches stand together talking MOS. The camera moves in.

COACH STROUD

I don't know what's wrong with him. He's just off.

COACH BARNES

He didn't exactly get a warm-up.  
He'll come out of it.

COACH STROUD

Let's hope so.

The Redskin player is tackled on the kick-off. Jack stands by the coach listening to directions. He's got his focus back.

COACH STROUD

We need to exploit that left corner. Run the out, the X post then the shake.

JACK

Got it.

MONTAGE

-- Jack completes the out - Kurt runs out of bounds.

-- Ty catches the post and is immediately tackled.

-- Coach calls a time out.

END MONTAGE

On the sideline, Jack and Coach confer MOS.

SCOREBOARD - HOME: 0 Visitors 10 Quarter 2 Time: 00:46

On the field, the ball is snapped. Jack overthrows a ball to Javier on the right sideline.

The home crowd groans.

Next play, Jack hits Ty for a short gain. The clock is down to 7 seconds.

Coach calls signals time out.

The teams are lined up. The ball is snapped.

Jack fades back.

The clock ticks down.

Jack hits Kurt in the end zone for a touchdown.

The kick is good.

SCOREBOARD Home: 7 Visitors 10 Quarter: 2 Time: 0:00

INT. C.U.H.S. VARSITY LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

It's half-time. The team sits on benches in the locker room. The coach is at the head of the mass of players drawing on a white board.

A door bursts open revealing Captain Smith and two Sheriff's deputies.

The whole team looks surprised.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Coach, I'm gonna need to talk to one of your boys. He knows who he is.

Coach Stroud brushes past several players to face the Captain.

COACH STROUD

What's this all about?

JACK

It's me coach --

Jack stands up and walks toward the door.

JACK

-- he wants to talk to me.

COACH STROUD

What have you done, son?

JACK

I'll be right back.

To the coach and the team.

JACK

I haven't done anything.

Jack walks out the door with the Captain.

CAPTAIN SMITH

We've got Martini in custody. It's over. And we're fishing your car out of the lake at this very moment.

Jack lets out a sigh of relief.

JACK

The department's gonna pay for it right?

CAPTAIN SMITH

Don't worry about your car. These guys will escort you back to headquarters.

JACK

I'm not going anywhere.

CAPTAIN SMITH

Excuse me, deputy.

JACK

About that. I quit. And if you want my testimony, you'll get out of here and let me finish my football game.

CAPTAIN SMITH

You're throwing away a promising career, son.

JACK

I don't see it that way, Captain. I'll be there after the game.

The Captain stands there dumbfounded as Jack exits.

The locker room door opens. Jack walks in and gives a thumbs up. The team erupts in cheers. Jack jumps up on a bench and quiets the team.

JACK

Just so you all know. I do believe. In you, myself and our coaches. Let's go win this football game.

The whole team erupts in cheers and excitement.

EXT. C.U.H.S. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

MONTAGE

-- Jack throws - Kurt catches a long pass and scores.

-- Ty runs across the goal line, the referee signals

touchdown.

-- Javier scores a touchdown.

-- Kurt scores a touchdown.

END MONTAGE

SCOREBOARD - Home: 35 Visitors: 10 Quarter: 4 Time: 0:07

The clock ticks down. The cheerleaders scream, the home town fans erupt in cheers and storm the field as the clock hits zero. The players jump up and down and hug.

The losing team, solemnly walks away.

Jack runs off the field looking for someone. Through the crowd, Sarah appears. They embrace. Finally, they kiss. Bill Richardson spots them from the stands and jumps over the front rail.

He walks up to Jack and Sarah, his arm still around her waist. He reaches out his hand to Jack.

Kurt runs up and jumps on both of them. All three go down in a heap laughing.

BILL

Excellent work son. I just want to tell you -- the room's still yours if you need it.

JACK

As a matter of fact, I do.

BILL

I will, of course, be putting double locks on my daughter's door.

Sarah gives her dad the "not funny" look.

EXT. FRESNO STATE CAMPUS - DAY

Sarah, wearing a Fresno State marching band uniform, walks into the stadium and takes a seat in the front row of the stands with her sax in hand.

On the field, the Bull Dog football team is practicing. A quarterback runs to his right and passes the ball as he steps out of bounds. He looks up at Sarah. It's Jack. He smiles.

She flashes a quick grin then gives him the tongue. He laughs and shakes his head.

FADE OUT.