

THE BEAUTIFUL GAME

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Rewrite
7.24.14

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FADE IN:

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - EARLY MORNING

A mist hangs over the field. Dew-slicked grass waiting for the start of the day.

A SNEAKER comes crunching down. It belongs to MATT PARKER (18) but he could pass for 22. Good looking in a wholesome, sun-kissed Midwestern kind of way.

MATT (V.O.)
For the first time in nine years we
won the section two divisional
class A semifinal soccer game.

He runs laps alone. Then suicides. Backwards sprints. A serious routine.

Matt stops at a row of BANNERS hanging from a small press box. Soccer championships for Southeast Missouri University High School. The wins stop at 2004.

MATT (V.O.)
That's a fancy way of saying that
in two weeks we'd be playing for
the state championship.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - MORNING

Matt pounds out a set of 225 on the bench press. He strains for the last rep. Gets it. Writes the number of reps in a notebook.

He throws on another 20 pounds and turns to a KID (14), 120 pounds soaking wet, holding a 10 pound dumb-bell and looking at him in awe.

MATT
Can I get a spot?

The Kid looks down at his feeble arms.

MATT (CONT'D)
That's cool. I got it.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - MORNING

Matt showers, exhausted. His eyes are closed as water streams down his face.

MATT (V.O)
Missou had been recruiting me for a
little over a year. I was on the
goal-line waiting for my offer.

INT. SOUTHEAST MISSOURI UNIVERSITY HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Matt walks the halls in his blue SMUHS Soccer Warm up pants
and hoodie. People give him space. Watch him pass with a
level of reverence.

MATT (V.O)
But with just one game to go I
still wasn't in.

MISTER COOMBS (40), a schlubby but enthusiastic teacher gives
Matt a fist pound.

MISTER COOMBS
Great game yesterday, Matt. Your
swag was totally off the chain.
Very boss-like.

MATT
...Thanks Mister Coombs.

MISTER COOMBS
Some better touches with your left
and you would've had two goals.

MATT
Yes, sir. I'll work on that.

MISTER COOMBS
I still remember the last time we
won it all. On that day, sixteen
boys became men. Accomplished men.
Men who made a mark.

MATT
Mmmhmm.

MISTER COOMBS
Get that banner and they'll
remember you forever. You'll own
these halls.

INT. MATT'S BEDROOM - AFTERNOON

Matt lies naked atop his girlfriend ELAINE THAMES (17), cute,
girlish, with a glint of crazy in her eyes.

THEY MAKE LOVE.

It's slow. Rhythmic. More rote than passionate. They've clearly done this many times before.

MATT (V.O)
Then it happened.

Elaine lets out a low deep sigh as Matt rolls off of her and sprawls on his back. She curls up next to him, her arm in a vice grip around his waist.

ELAINE
I love you.

Matt's eyes go large and we:

CUT TO:

A MONTAGE.

- Matt and Elaine meet eyes on a sweaty dance floor.

MATT (V.O)
Elaine transferred to SMUHS the day
of the junior year snow-scapades
dance.

- They dance together awkwardly. Then come together for a slow song.

MATT (V.O) (CONT'D)
I still don't know what a snow-
scapade is but I remember thinking
she had pretty eyes and a nice
smile.

- Matt and Elaine MAKE OUT under the bleachers of the high school soccer field.

- Matt and Elaine lie under a blanket watching a movie. The blanket rises steadily up and down.

MATT (V.O.)
Two months later she gave me a hand-
job while we watched Armageddon.

CLOSE ON: Matt's open mouth.

SMASH CUT TO:

- The opening scene of ARMAGEDDON. An asteroid hits the earth with a shower of fire.

MATT (V.O)
What a great movie.

CUT TO:

- Matt, in a tux, and Elaine, in a billowy prom dress, pose in front of a cheesy photo cutout.

MATT (V.O) (CONT'D)
We did prom.

- Matt and Elaine, in bed, have sex for the first time. It's not awkward. They look comfortable with one another. Happy.

MATT (V.O.)
...And after-prom.

- Matt and Elaine pose in a photo booth. The photo flashes, freezing on the image of Elaine, clutching Matt around the neck, not letting him go as he subtly pulls back from her.

- Matt and Elaine sit next to each other in bed reading and doing their homework. They look very domesticated. Like a 60 year old couple.

- Matt stands and walks out of the room. Elaine grabs his phone and starts furiously scrolling through it. She tosses it back down right before he walks back in.

MATT (V.O)
She was my rock.

SMASH BACK TO:

MATT'S BED

Matt stares up at the ceiling.

ELAINE
Matt?

MATT
Yeah?

ELAINE
Did you hear what I said?

MATT
Yeah.

ELAINE
...And?

MATT

And...

ELAINE

Do you have something you want to say back?

MATT

I...I dunno.

ELAINE

You don't know.

MATT

I love youtube?

ELAINE

Matt!

MATT

Sorry. I mean... I think you're really great and...um-

MATT (V.O) (CONT'D)

It's rare that you can pinpoint the exact moment where your life changes...

Elaine gets out of bed and hurriedly starts putting on clothes.

CUT TO:

INT. GREY ROOM

CLOSE ON:

Matt's face. He speaks into camera, a blank wall at his back.

MATT

Then again, my life changed a lot in those weeks. And, you know, Elaine saying she loved me ended up being part of a much larger equation.

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON:

Elaine's fingernails typing on a cell phone screen. The message reads: 'He didn't say it back'

A different set of fingers reply: 'OMG fuck him! Are you okay??'

Those fingers drop the phone and shift immediately to a computer keyboard.

CLOSE ON:

A facebook message: 'Matt doesn't love her. He didn't say it back'. Message sent.

CLOSE ON:

An email: 'Are they breaking up?'

The reply: 'I hope so. He's at the top of my fucklist'

CLOSE ON:

An AIM chat bubble. 'So he's single now?'

The reply message: '95%'

From the first chat: 'Good enough for me'

CLOSE ON:

A twitter message: 'Game on'

CLOSE ON:

Another email: 'Mine'

Another text: 'Nuhuh bitch'

Another facebook message: 'Dibs'

Another twitter message: 'I am gonna own that dick'

CUT TO:

INT. SOUTHEAST MISSOURI HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Matt stands at his locker with RICK EVANS (17), a happy-go-lucky jock in SMUHS blue.

Students walk through the halls with their faces buried in their cell phone screens... Literally everyone. They bounce off each other like bumper cars.

LISA GREGORY (18) pretty, casually walks by and hands Matt a slip of paper.

LISA

I think you dropped this.

Matt opens it up. It's her phone number, twitter handle, AIM screenname, Instagram name and 'message me'.

RICK

Lisa Gregory? You cocksmith.

MATT

What the hell is this?

RICK

Uh, dude?

MATT

What?

RICK

Everyone knows.

MATT

Everyone knows what?

RICK

I love youtube?

MATT

What?! How?!

RICK

I heard from Mark who heard from Alison who got it from Tammy who heard it straight from that cripple girl Georgine who overheard Beth talking about it in the bathroom. There's already a facebook group with a rebound pool.

MATT

No.

RICK

Oh yeah. Pot's up to eighty bucks. You're back on the market, champ.

Off Matt's look of dread:

RICK (CONT'D)

Hey. Chill. Life is good.

MATT

Easy for you to say. You're already into school.

RICK
It'll happen.
(glancing at the clock)
C'mon, Golden Boy. We're gonna be
late to practice.

CUT TO:

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - AFTERNOON

The JV GIRLS SOCCER TEAM scrimmages.

Wherever the ball gets kicked a gaggle of GIRLS runs for it, kicking futilely in the blob-like scrum.

The beautiful game this is not.

NEVE ALLEN (30's), athletic-pretty, bored out of her skull, watches impassively.

NEVE (V.O)
It's not that I didn't like soccer
anymore. I did. I still kept in
touch with girls from my college
team and would watch Chelsea games
at Odonnell's, the English bar in
town.

A girl tries to kick the ball, misses entirely, and her cleat comes flying off.

Two GIRLS walk to the sidelines.

One of them takes a pack of cigarettes out of her shin guard and lights up.

NEVE (CONT'D)
Samantha! Where do you think you're
going?

Samantha flips Neve off without a second look.

NEVE (CONT'D)
(to herself)
Yep. Fuck me.

Neve turns and looks over to the adjoining field where the boy's team practices.

Matt takes a pass at the top of the box, does a pirouette and slots a perfect shot into the corner of the goal.

NEVE (V.O) (CONT'D)

The highlight of my day was watching him play. The way he moved when he had the ball, it was like he was a bull fighter. He just seemed to dance with it. And so calm and collected. He had a game that was years beyond his age.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Neve teaches a class full of girls.

NEVE (V.O.)

I was teaching health to the girls in the tenth grade. I guess they thought since I was a soccer coach I'd be good at it.

THERESA (15) raises her hand.

THERESA

Ms. Allen, is it true that you can get pregnant from sitting on a toilet seat?

NEVE

A toilet seat?

THERESA

Yeah. Like if a boy's... penis touches the seat and then a girl's... vagina touches that same spot right after... Could that make her pregnant?

NEVE

I've never heard of anything like that.

THERESA

My mom said that's how my sister got pregnant.

NEVE

Your mom said that?

Theresa nods.

NEVE (CONT'D)

Is your sister married?

THERESA

No.

NEVE

Then your mom is a liar.

INT. NEVE'S HOUSE

This may as well be a college dorm room. Clothes on the floor. Beer bottles scattered. A faded Mia Hamm poster hanging off the peeling wall.

Neve drinks a beer on her couch as she peruses facebook.

NEVE (V.O.)

I don't remember exactly where I
heard he was single.

She sees an update on her facebook feed. 'Elaine Thames changed her relationship status to single'

She clicks to Matt's profile and looks at the posts on his wall.

Melaine Glass: 'Heard the news. Call me if you want to talk'

Sandra Smith: 'Poor baby. I'm here for you'

Hannah Leonard: 'One door closes another opens'

Samantha Jones: 'Hi cutie'

CUT TO:

INT. GREY ROOM

CLOSE ON:

Neve's face.

She speaks into camera, that same blank wall behind her.

NEVE

But I doubt I paid much attention
to it when I did.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

INT. MATT'S ROOM - MORNING

Matt on the phone. He listens for a beat. Then gulps.

MATT

Ok... Thanks Coach. Yeah. I'll try
my best. Uhuh. I'll see you then.

INT. MATT'S KITCHEN - MORNING

Matt stares at his breakfast with his parents WILL and JULIE
(50), WASPY, sitting next to their luggage.

WILL

Well? What did he say?

MATT

He wants to watch the Championship
game in person. Then he'll decide.

WILL

(to Julie)

See?! We can't go. Not now.

JULIE

We talked about this. We have to
maintain our own social lives.
Doctor Casey said-

WILL

I know what Doctor Casey said. I
also know she self medicates. What
if we miss the game?

JULIE

We won't.

WILL

How can you be sure?

JULIE

Will-

WILL

People are getting beheaded in
Mexico.

JULIE

We've been over this. We're not
going to get beheaded.

WILL

You don't think everyone says that?

MATT (V.O)

Since I was turning 18, my parents let me stay home alone while they took their annual trip to Mexico. Sometimes they were pretty cool like that.

JULIE

Enough. We're going and that's final.

(to Matt)

Are you getting through everything else ok?

MATT

What do you mean?

JULIE

You know... the whole 'I love you' thing.

MATT (V.O.)

Other times, they really got on my nerves.

JULIE

I'm sorry if you don't want to talk about it. It came up at the PTA meeting yesterday and I just want to make sure you've thought everything through. Did you make a list of pros and cons?

MATT

...About Elaine?

JULIE

Just so you have it all down on paper. It may help.

MATT

Mom. I'm fine.

JULIE

Ok, Honey. I know you are. But maybe you should make the list.

Matt stands to clear his uneaten food. Julie touches his arm.

JULIE (CONT'D)

You're so close to having everything you've ever wanted. College. The scholarship. It's all happening.

MATT
I'm gonna be late for school.

JULIE
We'll see you soon.

WILL
...If we don't get beheaded.

EXT. SCHOOL PARKING LOT

Matt drives up and parks his car next to a red Camaro. Rick steps out of it and gives Matt a fist bump.

RICK
First day of the rest of your life?

MATT
Hope it's not my last.

EXT. SCHOOL - MORNING

Matt and Rick walk up together to the old, prison-like structure.

MATT (V.O)
The breakup? I dunno. I was sad, sure, but with the call from coach Perkins and the game upcoming I hadn't even had time to really digest it.

CUT TO:

INT. ELAINE'S BEDROOM

Elaine lies on her back staring up at her ceiling.

ELAINE (V.O)
I was devastated.

LATER

Elaine facetimes on her computer with GRO, a 19 year old Norwegian girl. She's fighting to keep it together.

ELAINE
I just had it all planned out, you know? How to say it. What to wear. How he'd react.
(MORE)

ELAINE (CONT'D)
We dated for ten months. I
swallowed his come. Who does that
without saying I love you, right?

GRO
Ja.

Elaine's mom EMILY (40's) - we see where Elaine gets her
crazy streak - cracks the door.

EMILY
Elaine?

ELAINE
I gotta go.

Elaine clicks out of facetime.

EMILY
Who were you talking to?

ELAINE
My friend Gro.

EMILY
I don't know Gro.

ELAINE
She's a Norwegian on gap year. We
kik'd last month. Now we're
facetiming. We wanna do a spring
break IRL meet.

EMILY
(she understood none of
that)
...Uhuh. Is everything okay?

ELAINE
What do you mean?

EMILY
You know. With Matt.

Elaine's lip starts to quiver.

EMILY (CONT'D)
Oh, honey. I'm sorry.

Elaine breaks down in her mother's arms.

INT. SCHOOL - HALLWAY

Elaine walks down the hall. Tries her best to ignore the whispers of students around her.

She opens her locker and sees an old photo-booth photo of her and Matt pasted to the door. She tears it off.

ELAINE (V.O)
It was hardest at school.

INT. SCHOOL CAFETERIA

Elaine checks her phone. She has 12 new text messages from RANDOM NUMBERS. All of them read something like:

'I'd love you. Call me?'

ELAINE (V.O)
Boys I'd never talked to got my
number and starting texting...

Then a picture message of a student's PENIS with the message:

'Love this'

INT. CLASSROOM

Matt stares down at a big red '71%' at the top of his math test. He rubs his forehead.

Elaine glances over and sees a hot girl, CHRISSY (17), leaning over Matt's desk, revealing her ample cleavage.

CHRISSY
If you ever want a study buddy, I
know some great techniques... You
know, for absorbing material. I'm
really good at internalizing.

MATT
Thanks Chrissy.

ELAINE (V.O)
And girls who I thought were my
friends... They just turned out to
be such cunts.

An ADMINISTRATOR walks in and hands the TEACHER a slip of paper.

TEACHER

Elaine?

CUT TO:

INT. GREY ROOM

CLOSE ON: Elaine's face. Speaking into camera. The blank wall behind her.

ELAINE

I mean, I'm a feminist. I hate that word. But really. They were cunts.

CUT TO:

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE

DR. BARRY ASTLE (30's), naively self satisfied in an elbow patch blazer, stands in the threshold of his office door, watching Elaine walk down the hall towards him.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)

I called Elaine into my office when I heard she'd broken up with Matt. She was popular. Smart. Never had any problems at school. But I could tell she was really hurting. Problems at that age, they just feel so amplified.

CUT TO:

INT. GREY ROOM

CLOSE ON:

Dr. Astle's face, haggard, unshaven. He looks like he's aged five years from the last shot. He stares wistfully into camera, lost in a thought.

DR. ASTLE

Sorry. Where was I?

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE

Elaine sits across from Dr. Astle.

DR. ASTLE
Your mom called and said you could
use someone to talk to.

ELAINE
I dunno. I guess.

DR. ASTLE
Well that's what I'm here for.
Whenever you want, my door is
always open.

ELAINE
Is it always like this?

DR. ASTLE
Like what?

ELAINE
Like, does every relationship just
crush your soul?

DR. ASTLE
When you're young it may seem like
that but over time-

ELAINE
It's just such bullshit. I mean we
were happy. We are happy.

DR. ASTLE
Elaine... for a lot of guys his age
happy isn't enough.

ELAINE
What else could he want?

DR. ASTLE
Excitement, variety. It could be
anything. You can't beat yourself
up over it.

ELAINE
What do I do?

DR. ASTLE
You're both graduating soon. Maybe
this is a nice opportunity to start
fresh. Try new things.

ELAINE
I don't want to try new things.

DR. ASTLE

Let me show you something.

Dr. Astle pulls out a PICTURE of himself from when he was in high school. In the picture he looks ridiculous, wearing a BEAR MASCOT SUIT and holding the costume head.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

That's me in high school. Check out that hair.

Elaine doesn't react.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I wanted to play soccer but I didn't make the team. So instead I offered to be the mascot. And it was fun! I tried something new and it worked out.

Freeze on Dr. Astle's face.

ELAINE (V.O)

Everyone at school thought Dr. Astle was pathetic. I mean, if he was a real psychologist he would've gone into private practice and charged 300 dollars an hour, not become some shitty guidance counselor, right?

DR. ASTLE

Just give Matt some space. If it's meant to be, he'll come back to you, right?

ELAINE (V.O)

And his relationship advice? He was so far in the closet he might as well have been a garment bag.

EXT. BROWMAN'S BLUFF - DAY - FLASHBACK

Police tape cordons off a patch of dirt at the bottom of a tall cliff. Lying on the ground, in a blood-stained Princeton hoodie, is the dead body of a TEENAGER.

Officers take notes. A MOM cries into DAD's shoulder.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)

Seven years ago a student got wait-listed at his first choice college.

(MORE)

DR. ASTLE (V.O) (CONT'D)
He mixed up a cocktail of
prescription medication, wrote a
note, and jumped off Browman's
Bluff.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S GRAD SCHOOL APARTMENT - FLASHBACK

A younger, goateed Dr. Astle sits on his twin bed reading a
news article about the suicide.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
With his grades and scores
Princeton was an obvious reach.
Unfortunately, without a guidance
counselor or college advisor, he
had no idea.

Dr. Astle's roommate DAN (20's), awful, peeks his head in.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)
Dan what's-

DAN
Hey asshole. Rent's due. Also I'm
throwing a party this weekend.

DR. ASTLE
...We've got midterms.

DAN
Yeah. You should probably find
another place to stay.

DR. ASTLE
Where am I supposed to go?

DAN
You'll figure it out.

Dr. Astle looks back to the newspaper as Dan closes his door.
He reaches for his phone.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
I made the call then and there.

INT. SMUHS - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - FLASHBACK

Dr. Astle shakes hands with PRINCIPAL ERIC PELMAS (40's),
exhausted from the suicide ordeal.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE - FLASHBACK

Dr. Astle arranges furniture. His office phone rings.

DR. ASTLE
(into phone)
This is Dr. Astle.

DAN (V.O)
(muffled laughter)
Doctor asshole? The proctologist?

DR. ASTLE
Who is this?

DAN
Assshooooooooole.

DR. ASTLER
Dan? Is that you?

Click.

EXT. STREET - DAY

Dr. Astle's shitty Ford Focus is stopped at a red light.

CLOSE on the bumper. 20 SMUHS bumper stickers are pasted to it.

Dr. Astle glances over. Sees a psychiatrists office and Dan exiting out the front door with a BOMBSHELL on his arm. They step into a parked Porsche.

Dr. Astle tries to wave. The light turns green and the car behind him starts HONKING. Dr. Astle throws his car into gear then has to immediately slam on his brakes as Dan cuts him off.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
Most of my university colleagues
had made the leap to psychotherapy
and psychiatry but that wasn't for
me.

INT. SMUHS - HALLWAY - PRESENT

Dr. Astle leans against a locker and watches students walk to class. A FRESHMAN drops his books. Dr. Astle leans over and helps him pick them up.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
I liked high school.

EXT. BROWMAN'S BLUFF - EVENING

Dr. Astle stands at the top of the bluff watching the sun set.

At his feet is a small MEMORIAL. A cross with a picture of the dead teenager and some potted flowers.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
For a lot of kids it was a
difficult journey. And I got to be
the one helming the ship.
Navigating them through choppy
seas... Steering them towards
success and happiness. That was
what made me happy...

INT. DR. ASTLE'S PIECE OF SHIT APARTMENT - NIGHT

Dr. Astle opens his freezer. Pulls out a tv dinner and sticks it in the microwave.

MR. WHISKERS, a tabby, rubs up against Dr. Astle's leg.

DR. ASTLE
Mr. Whiskers!

Dr. Astle pulls out a tin of gourmet cat food, pours it in a bowl, mixes it with cottage cheese, sprinkles a pinch of spice on it, and sets it down. Mr. Whiskers devours it.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)
Hungry huh? Yes you are. Yes you
are. Who's my favorite kitty?

DR. ASTLE (V.O.)
...Well, that and Mr. Whiskers.

KNOCK KNOCK

Dr. Astle opens the door. In the threshold is MORT MORRISON (60's), grizzled, scowling.

DR. ASTLE
Hi neighbor-

MR. MORRISON
Your fucking cat shat on my welcome
mat again, Astle.

DR. ASTLE
I'm sure he didn't mean anything by it-

MR. MORRISON
If the little bastard does it again I'm gonna put him in a sack and throw him over the bluff.

DR. ASTLE
That feels like a bit of an over-reaction.

Mr. Morrison continues to stare daggers at Dr. Astle.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)
Do you think this may be indicative of some larger feelings of anger-

Mr. Morrison slams the door in Dr. Astle's face.

LATER

Dr. Astle sits on his computer. He scratches Mr. Whiskers' chin beside him.

He checks Matt's, Rick's and a few other guys on the teams' facebook profiles, twitters and instagrams.

Then he goes to a high school soccer message board and posts: 'One more game, Trojans. Let's do this!'

DR. ASTLE (V.O) (CONT'D)
At SMUHS soccer really was a way of life. All the team stuff. The discipline, the training, the camaraderie. Plus it looked great on college applications. I told every freshman, boy or girl, that they should try out.

Dr. Astle lies down in his bed. We pan up to his wall to find framed team photos, action shots of soccer players, and a big blue SMUHS Trojans banner.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)
I guess you could say I was their biggest fan.

CUT TO:

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

A visual assault of beige walls and furniture. A few TEACHERS drink coffee and grade papers silently.

Dr. Astle walks in. Sees Neve on the couch drinking a diet coke and typing on her phone. He walks right up to her. Too close.

DR. ASTLE

Hi Neve.

NEVE

Shit. Barry. You scared me.

DR. ASTLE

How's my favorite teacher-coach?

Neve looks back at her cell phone as Dr. Astle plops down next to her.

NEVE

Hungover.

DR. ASTLE

Can I get you an advil?

NEVE

Do you have percocet?

DR. ASTLE

Ha! Good one.

Neve doesn't react. She's not kidding. Back to her phone.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

You know, if you ever wanted to team up I bet we could teach a heck of a class together. My advanced degree, your kinship with the students-

Neve gets a text message. Laughs.

NEVE

(ignoring Dr. Astle)

That's good.

DR. ASTLE

Just say the word. You know where my office is-

NEVE

Fuck. I'm late.

Neve hurries out. Dr. Astle watches her go.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
Neve? She and I were friends from day one. Sure there was flirtation but at that point nothing had materialized. I was just waiting for my moment.

FADE OUT.

FADE IN:

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Matt finishes drying his hands. His phone vibrates. A text message from Dad: 'Did coach call? Fill me in'

Matt pockets it without responding. Takes a breath and a long look in the mirror.

MATT (V.O)
I had people over for my birthday. Nothing crazy. Just a few close friends.

He opens the door into:

A RAGER

100 kids packed wall to wall. A keg in the corner. People playing beer pong. Dancing to house music.

Suddenly a NAKED GUY in a HORSE MASK comes galloping through the living room on all fours. He rises to his feet and NEIGHS.

People scream and cheer, taking photos and videos with their cell phones.

The guy pulls off the mask revealing: It's RICK. He grabs a beer and chugs it on the spot.

LATER

Matt, Rick (now wearing boxers and swaying) and a few other TEAMMATES all take shots together. A few take BODY SHOTS off of FEMALE STUDENTS.

Each moment of teenage stupidity is memorialized by someone snapping a photo on their iPhone.

MATT (CONT'D)
I can't believe you did it!

RICK
A bet's a bet.

Matt wraps his arm around his best friend.

MATT
I love you man.

Rick beams.

RICK
I love you too.

MATT
God. 4 more years of this. Can you imagine?

RICK
Wait. You got your offer?!

The guys all turn to Matt. Peer pressure. He puts on a fake smile. Holds up his beer.

MATT
Got the call today. Missou class of 2018!

Cheers all around. Rick pulls Matt off his feet with a hug and spins him around.

Matt's smile falters. Then altogether disappears when he sees Elaine standing in the doorway.

She meets eyes with Matt. Beelines over to him.

Heads turn on a swivel.

ELAINE
Can we talk?

Matt looks out at the rest of the party. In synch, every head turns to look away as if nobody was eavesdropping.

MATT
(to Rick and co.)
I'll catch up with you guys in a bit.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

Matt and Elaine are lit by the light of the moon. We see them in shadow.

ELAINE
So about the other night...

MATT
Yeah.

ELAINE
Maybe I shouldn't have said what I said.

MATT
Yeah.

ELAINE
But I did.

MATT
Yeah.

Beat.

ELAINE
Why don't you love me?

MATT
I don't not love you.

ELAINE
But you don't love me either.

MATT
It's just... a bad time right now.

ELAINE
Why?

MATT
Lots of reasons. The game. College.

ELAINE
...But you got your offer? We're both going to be at Missou.

MATT
I dunno. It's just a lot of stuff all coming up at once and I'm trying to keep my head above water, you know?

ELAINE

So let's do it together. That's what couples do.

MATT

Elaine-

ELAINE

I know you're worried about the future and all the soccer stuff but why deny something good?

MATT

Elaine. I don't think I can give you what you want. At least not right now.

She stops for a beat. Seems to internalize this. Then:

ELAINE

Fine. Then let's just forget about it and go back to where we were, ok?

MATT

I need some space. Some time to figure things out. I'm not saying it's forever but I think it'll be good for both of us.

ELAINE

You're making a mistake.

MATT

I'm sorry.

ELAINE

Me too.

INT. ELAINE'S CAR - NIGHT

Elaine sits behind the wheel and CRIES quietly to herself.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S APARTMENT - MORNING

Dr. Astle browses facebook on the computer. He comes to a series of PHOTOS of Matt's party. Shots of naked Rick in the horse mask. Team members taking shots. General debauchery.

DR. ASTLE

Oh... Oh no.

He clicks on the naked pictures of Rick. Saves them to a flash drive.

INT. PRINCIPAL PELMAS'S OFFICE

Dr. Astle paces around the room while Principal Pelmas looks through the pictures from the party.

DR. ASTLE

These were posted to a student's facebook account Saturday night.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

So what? It happened at a house, not on school grounds.

DR. ASTLE

You know our social media policy.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

We have a social media policy?

DR. ASTLE

"Any pictures or messages depicting illegal activity will be subject to the school's disciplinary code regardless of time or location"

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

Can't you just tell them to take the pictures down?

DR. ASTLE

That would be a violation of trust.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

Damnmit, Barry. The state championship game is in a week. I don't need this.

DR. ASTLE

I'm just looking out for the boys.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

Yeah. I know you're looking out for the boys.

Beat.

DR. ASTLE

What the hell is that supposed to mean?

PRINCIPAL PELMAS
Oh come off it. It's the 21st
century. Nobody cares.

DR. ASTLE
I don't like what you're implying.
And this conversation borders on
sexual harassment.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS
See? This is exactly what I'm
talking about. You sound like a
little girl.

Dr. Astle composes himself. Lets it slide.

DR. ASTLE
If a news outlet were to get a hold
of these it could mean suspensions,
expulsions. Potential revoking of
scholarships. The boys have come
too far. They're too close-

PRINCIPAL PELMAS
What do you want me to do?

DR. ASTLE
A week long seminar. Drugs,
alcohol, sex-

PRINCIPAL PELMAS
Again?! Barry, you ask for this
every year.

DR. ASTLE
And this time you need to say yes.

Principal Pelmas sighs. Looks back through the photos.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)
We nip it in the bud now and if
things get out we can say we're
already handling it.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS
What about the parents? They won't
be happy.

DR. ASTLE
We'll tell them it's a team related
exercise. Nothing on their records.
No calls to colleges.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

Ugh. Fine. As long as it doesn't interfere with their practice schedule.

DR. ASTLE

Great... I'll tell Ms. Allen.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

Who?

DR. ASTLE

Neve Allen. The girls soccer coach. She teaches health. I think the two of us will really be able to get through to them.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

Just keep it quiet. I want that banner.

INT. NEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Neve talks on her cell as she throws on clothes.

NEVE

(into phone)

I can't. Sorry... I'll be there for Man U next week. Promise. First round's on me... And bring pot!

She takes a hit from a half smoked JOINT sitting in an ashtray then grabs a leftover slice of pizza sitting out and heads for the door.

NEVE (V.O) (CONT'D)

They told me I had to teach some after-school seminar to the soccer players who got caught drinking.

INT. NEVE'S OLD HONDA CIVIC - DAY

Neve cranks the key in the ignition. The car whines before finally starting.

NEVE (V.O.)

I was fine with it. Happy, even. Anything to get me away from the little shits on the girls team.

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Matt, Rick, GUNNAR (18) big as a house, dumb as a rock, TODD (16) another goon, and a handful of other PLAYERS sit before Neve and Dr. Astle.

DR. ASTLE
I assume you all know why we're here.

GUNNAR
Uh. I don't.

Dr. Astle passes around the printed photos of Matt's house party.

DR. ASTLE
This type of behavior not only sets a bad example for the rest of the students, it's illegal and dangerous. You boys know better.

Gunnar takes a look at the photo of Rick in the horse head.

GUNNAR
That could be anyone's horse.

NEVE
Shut up Gunnar. Look, just bear with us until the game then this all goes away, all right?

MATT (V.O)
Neve- Ms. Allen was pretty cool as far as teachers went. She never talked down to us and didn't really sweat the small stuff. Also, she was a total smoke show. With these big blue eyes and an ass that-

DR. ASTLE
You're all about to enter an exciting time in your lives, whether it's now or in a few years, college is right around the corner. We want to make sure you're prepared. Think of us as parents. I'm dad, Ms. Allen is mom. And you can ask us anything without feeling awkward.

NEVE
(under her breath)
Jesus.

Neve presses a button on a computer and projects a slide onto the wall. It's a 1980's style list of drugs with slang terms and corresponding pictures.

NEVE (CONT'D)

These are some of the substances
you may have encountered or might
encounter when you get to college-

GUNNAR

Quaaludes?!

EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Neve, carrying a duffel, and Dr. Astle walk to their respective cars.

DR. ASTLE

I'd say that went well.

NEVE

No problems on my end.

DR. ASTLE

Just wait 'til you see what I have
in store for the rest of the week.

NEVE

(I don't care)

Uhuh.

DR. ASTLE

Hey, we should grab dinner and go
over some of the lesson plans.
There's this great new joint on
Jefferson that has nickel wings.

NEVE

I can't Barry. I'm sorry. I've got
a thing.

DR. ASTLE

Ok. Maybe later then?

She looks over at his dopey smile. Almost pities him.

NEVE

Sure. Maybe later.

She quickly steps into her car to escape. Dr. Astle raps on her window. She winces and rolls it down.

NEVE (CONT'D)

Yes?

DR. ASTLE

If you change your mind I'll be in my office. Burning the midnight oil. You know where my office is, right?

NEVE

Yes, Barry.

DR. ASTLE

Good. Ok. Talk to you (later)-

She rolls up the window to cut him off. He waves again and walks back towards the building.

Neve turns the key in her ignition. The engine whines but doesn't turn over.

NEVE

Oh you mother fucker.

She tries again. Nothing.

She turns and looks back at the building. Dr. Astle, walking back to his office, gives a lame high five to Matt, who is exiting alone.

Neve steps out of her car.

NEVE (CONT'D)

Hey!

Matt stops and turns.

NEVE (CONT'D)

My piece of shit- my car won't start. Can I bum a lift?

INT. MATT'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Matt drives. Neve in the passenger seat.

NEVE

Thanks again.

MATT

No problem.

Matt turns on the radio. It's a crude rap song. He quickly turns it off.

MATT (CONT'D)

Sorry.

Matt glances at the beat up duffel by her feet. It's got a KU Soccer logo on it.

MATT (CONT'D)

Did you play?

NEVE

Went to the Final 4 my junior year.
First team all Big 12. I'm, like, a
pretty big deal.

MATT

No shit?

NEVE

Yep. And look at me now.

MATT

I think it's cool.

NEVE

Sure you do.

MATT

No really. You ever play against
Mia Hamm? Brandi Chastain?

Neve pauses. Surprised at his interest.

NEVE

Abby Wambach knocked out my tooth
on a corner kick once.

MATT

...Bitch.

NEVE

(smiles)

She was dirty. So much skill and
she wanted it more than anyone.

MATT

Guess that's what it takes.

NEVE

Whatever it is, I didn't have it...
I thought I did. Tried out for
nationals and everything. That was
the first in a long line of
failures... Why am I telling you
this?

MATT

I like it. All I ever hear is the fantasy version.

NEVE

Well I hear you got your offer. You're on your way.

MATT

...Coach wants to see how I do in the Championship game first. Then he'll decide.

NEVE

Oh. Shit.

MATT

Yeah. No pressure, right?

NEVE

You'll be fine. I've watched you play. You're good.

MATT

Thanks... You're pretty much the only one who knows so don't tell people, ok?

NEVE

Our little secret.

MATT

...You ever wish you'd hung up the cleats before college? Focused on something else?

Neve shrugs.

NEVE

Fear of disappointment is a powerful motivator.

MATT

That's why you moved to the middle of nowhere to be a JV soccer coach?

Neve looks over. Sees Matt grinning.

NEVE

You didn't just say that.

MATT

It sounded better in my head.

NEVE
(smiles as she shakes her
head)
...Hang a left at the light.

Matt pulls in front of Neve's little house.

NEVE (CONT'D)
This is me.

MATT
Nice place.

NEVE
It sucks. But thanks anyway.

MATT
Try living with your parents.

NEVE
Not if you paid me.

MATT
Alright. Guess I'll see you
tomorrow after school. Can't wait
for some more life lessons.

Neve looks over at Matt. Cool. Confident. His whole life
ahead of him. And despite herself she blurts out:

NEVE
You wanna come inside?

MATT
What?

NEVE
I mean, only if you want. Or not.
Whatever-

MATT
Ok.

NEVE
Cool. I'll show you my final four
medal.

Matt shrugs. Steps out of the car.

CUT TO:

INT. NEVE'S BEDROOM

Neve, wearing her final four medal around her neck, RIDES Matt with utter abandon.

She knocks things off her bedside table. Pushes him up against the wall.

NEVE

Fuck me! Fuck me! Fuck me! YES!

Matt smiles big. He's loving every second.

Neve thrusts one last time and slides off of him.

NEVE (CONT'D)

Hat trick.

MATT

What?

NEVE

I came three times. Which is good.
There's a life lesson.

LATER

Matt lies in bed, spent. Neve, in underwear, roots around in her drawers. She pulls out a joint and lights it.

Matt eyes her skeptically.

NEVE (CONT'D)

What?

MATT

Nothing.

NEVE

Shut up.

MATT

Wasn't pot one of the drugs on your
powerpoint presentation?-

NEVE

You should question your educators.

Neve offers him the joint. He refuses.

MATT

You really don't give a shit, do
you?

NEVE
About what?

MATT
Any of this.

NEVE
What did you expect?

MATT
I dunno. I just thought adult life
was different.

NEVE
Oh, so I'm an adult now?

MATT
I said I was sorry.

NEVE
What do you mean, different?

MATT
Like, you get on a path and it all
just clicks or something.

NEVE
It clicks?

Matt shrugs sheepishly.

MATT
You know. Cup of coffee and a
newspaper. Nine to five job. Dinner
and a drink. Tuck the kids in to
bed then do it all again.

NEVE
Did you time travel here from the
1950's?

MATT
Ha.

NEVE
Seriously, that's what you're
looking forward to?

MATT
I just thought it was what
happened. I mean, it's what my
parents do.

NEVE

Fuck that. My parents do it too and they're miserable. We want what we want. Young or old that doesn't change. Some people are just better at getting it.

MATT

Are you getting what you want?

NEVE

Enough questions.

Beat.

NEVE (CONT'D)

(as she hits the joint)

Please don't tell anyone about this. Ok?

MATT

I won't.

NEVE

Seriously. I could lose my job. I know you're 18 but nothing to your friends. No facebook. No twitter. I'm trusting you to be an adult.

MATT

I know. I am... Although technically I don't turn 18 until Wednesday.

NEVE

...Fuck. If this were ever to get out-

MATT

Which it won't.

NEVE

-I didn't fuck you 'til Wednesday. Right?

MATT

Right.

NEVE

And you should probably go. Like, now.

Matt gets out of bed. Starts to put on his clothes.

MATT

...If you need a ride tomorrow I
can grab you on the way to school.

NEVE

If I stepped out of your car
tomorrow morning that would kind of
defeat the purpose.

MATT

Good point.

Matt waits awkwardly for a beat. Like, what comes next?

NEVE

Don't over-think it. It was fun.
You're fun. First guy in years who
didn't look at me like a piece of
meat. You don't know how important
that is.

MATT

Ok.

INT. MATT'S CAR - EVENING

Matt drives. He shakes his head like he can't even believe
it.

INT. GREY ROOM

Matt speaks into camera.

MATT

Happy fucking birthday, right?

CUT TO:

INT. ELAINE'S ROOM - AFTERNOON

Elaine lies in bed in a sea of COSMO's and 17's. She reads an
article: '50 Ways to Please Your Man'. Another: '10 Keys To
Relationship Longevity'.

ELAINE (V.O)

Lisa Bullington, senior columnist
at Cosmo, says that the secret to
keeping your man happy is
surprising him every day. I had
gotten complacent. Comfortable.

(MORE)

ELAINE (V.O) (CONT'D)
Letting our love wilt like an
unwatered flower.

She rips the pages out of the magazines.

INT. VICTORIA'S SECRET

Elaine browses through lingerie. Grabs a little white slip
then hangs it back up.

A SALESWOMAN comes over.

SALESWOMAN
What are we looking for today?

ELAINE
Something special.

SALESWOMAN
Special, huh? What's the occasion?

ELAINE
I'm trying to get my boyfriend
back.

SALESWOMAN
I see.

ELAINE
He's worried about the future. I
need something to remind him to
live in the present.

The Saleswoman raises an eyebrow.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
Basically, the sluttier the better.

CUT TO:

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Elaine walks in with a Victoria's Secret bag under her arm.

EMILY (O.S)
Elaine?

INT. ELAINE'S LIVING ROOM

Emily sits at her computer, Elaine hovering behind her. On the computer screen are three nearly identical pictures of Emily and a newly created match.com profile.

ELAINE

Left.

EMILY

Left?

ELAINE

Definitely.

EMILY

Elaine, I don't know. With everything you're going through right now maybe this isn't the best time.

ELAINE

That has nothing to do with it, Mom. You should be dating.

EMILY

Are you sure?

ELAINE

Of course I'm sure.

EMILY

What if I don't get any matches?

ELAINE

You will. You're a catch.

EMILY

I'm an old boot.

ELAINE

Shut up. You're beautiful.

Emily squeezes Elaine's hand. Selects the picture on the left.

EMILY

But these "interests"...

The 'interests' field is filled with: 'Dancing', 'The Cardinals' and 'Rock climbing'.

EMILY (CONT'D)

I don't like any of these things.
I've never even been rock climbing.

ELAINE

This is what guys want to see. An
active life. Shared interests.
After they get to know you it won't
even matter what you wrote.

EMILY

It just feels dishonest.

ELAINE

We're in the 50 Shades Of Gray
generation. The black and white
rules of love that you grew up with
just don't exist any more.

Emily reluctantly presses 'accept' on the profile.

EMILY

I just hope I get one good date out
of it. Lord knows I'm not getting
any younger.

Elaine stares at the match.com web page, thin lipped. She
doesn't want this for herself.

ELAINE

You will.

EXT. PARKING LOT - EARLY MORNING

Neve stands by her car as a greasy AAA GUY (40), gives her
battery a jump.

NEVE (V.O)

I expected to feel more guilt. It
was my first time with a student
and I assumed I'd have some crisis
of conscience. Some moment where I
broke down and started hating
myself for what I did.

The AAA Guy hands her a receipt and smiles lasciviously. On
it is a scribbled phone number.

AAA GUY

I wrote my cell number on there. If
it happens again, call me and I'll
give you a jump.

NEVE

Thanks.

AAA GUY

Or if not, same offer... With the jump. If you know what I mean... I also flush hoses.

He winks. Then winks again when Neve doesn't react.

NEVE (V.O)

But honestly that never happened. He was 18. That made him an adult in the eyes of the court. Plus he fucked better than the other losers in town and didn't lay any stupid pickup lines on me. That counts for something, right?

EXT. SOCCER FIELD - AFTERNOON

Practice.

Matt runs through drills with the team but his mind is clearly elsewhere.

MATT (V.O)

I tried not to over-think it, I really did. But that was like giving a starving African kid a hamburger and telling him not to touch it.

Rick passes Matt a ball. He takes a bad touch out of bounds. He gets another pass. Turns and fires a shot on goal. Misses badly.

COACH RUSTY (50's) former All-American, current asshole whistles him over.

RUSTY

Parker!

MATT

Sorry. Sorry. I know.

RUSTY

We go to war next week. Where's your killer instinct?! Your drive?!

MATT

I'll do better-

RUSTY

Everyone is counting on you. This town. This school. Your teammates. Everyone. Do I have to remind you what this game means?

MATT

No Sir.

RUSTY

Take a lap and get your shit together. It's go time.

Matt starts to run. Gunnar pulls briefly up alongside him.

GUNNAR

Hey, man. We're all fighting battles. Sometimes you just gotta face shit head on.

MATT

What?-

But Gunnar is already sprinting back into the field of play.

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY

Matt daydreams as Mr. Coombs writes notes on the blackboard.

Matt looks down at his notebook. Sees that he's been doodling sketches of Neve's naked body, her final four medal hanging from her neck.

MISTER COOMBS (O.S)

Matt?

Matt doodles some more. Not listening.

MISTER COOMBS (O.S) (CONT'D)

Matt? Are you with us?

Matt suddenly looks up. Realizes he's been called on.

MISTER COOMBS (CONT'D)

Lost in the world of Napoleon or are we thinking about a little upcoming soccer game?

The class laughs. Matt blushes and quickly covers the page with his drawings.

MATT

Sorry Mr. Coombs.

MISTER COOMBS
It's ok. I get it. YOLO. Who can
give Matt an assist?

Elaine, a few seats over, steals a glance back at him.

INT. CLASSROOM

Neve and Dr. Astle teach their health seminar.

NEVE
Today we're talking about the male
anatomy and the risks of unsafe
sex.

Neve has a slide of the male genitalia front and center.

CLOSE ON: her bright red lips. From this angle it looks like
the slide of the penis is going right in her mouth.

Rick passes Matt a note. 'I'd kill to feel those lips around
my anatomy'

Matt smiles weakly as Rick closes his eyes and pantomimes a
blowjob.

DR. ASTLE
Rick! This is not the time for
blowjobs. Show Ms. Allen some
respect.

TODD
(under his breath)
Fag.

GUNNAR
(fake cough)
Homo erectus.

Dr. Astle's eyes narrow.

CUT TO:

INT. GREY ROOM

CLOSE ON: Dr. Astle's face, the blank wall behind him as he
speaks into camera.

DR. ASTLE
How the rumor started? I have no
idea.

(MORE)

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)
But to make a thing out of it would
have just added fuel to the fire.
(almost smugly)
That's how kids are. It's simple
psychology.
(beat)
How is this relevant?

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Matt walks, still in a daze. He passes a row of tables manned
by GIRLS selling blue-glazed BAKED GOODS.

GIRL
Support our boys in battle!

GIRL #2
Cookies, donuts, cake. All proceeds
go to the men's soccer team!

GIRL 1&2
Go Trojans!

He ignores them and stops at his locker. Elaine sidles up
next to him.

ELAINE
Hi.

MATT
Oh. Hey.

ELAINE
Are you gonna be home later
tonight?

MATT
Why?

ELAINE
I'm gonna drop off some of your
stuff if that's all right.

MATT
Oh. Yeah. Sure. I'll be around...
You doin' ok?

ELAINE
(batting her eyes)
I'm good... You look really nice
today by the way.

MATT
...Thank you.

ELAINE
(touching him on the
shoulder)
Ok. I'll see ya.

Matt gives her a look as she walks off.

TRACK BACK TO Dr. Astle, who stands in the threshold of his office, watching and eating a bake-sale donut.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
Edgar Award winning novelist James
Patterson wrote: "what's worse than
knowing you want something, besides
knowing you can never have it?"

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE

Dr. Astle stares out the window as students file off into busses and cars. Some hold hands. Others kiss. Others stare longingly at the girls/boys they'll never date. He keys in on all of them.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
It's almost as if he was speaking
directly to the students at SMUHS.

EXT. FRONT OF THE SCHOOL - CONTINUOUS

Neve walk up towards the building. She passes by Elaine who walks purposefully towards her car.

Neve can't help but glance at the girl who's ex-boyfriend she just bedded. They make brief eye contact before Neve breaks it.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
What I saw in Elaine, it was
tragic. She lacked the self
awareness to realize her love for
Matt was unrequited. And despite
what I told her, I doubt anything
could have convinced her otherwise.

INT. CLASSROOM - AFTERNOON

Dr. Astle arranges furniture. Drags a couch into the center of the room.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
 But that came with the territory.
 It was part of the job. Not
 everyone could be a success
 story... And at that moment I was
 just focused on making a difference
 in those boys' lives.

CUT TO:

LATER

CLOSE ON: A POCKET-WATCH SWINGING FROM A CHAIN.

It moves back in forth in front of Rick's eyes.

Matt, Gunnar, the other players, Neve and Dr. Astle watch as
 a HYPNOTIST (50's), fat, bearded, puts Rick under his spell.

Dr. Astle leans into Neve. Puts his hand on her arm.

DR. ASTLE
 (whispering)
 Watch this.

Neve pulls her arm away.

MATT (V.O)
 For our last seminar Dr. Astle
 hired a hypnotist to prepare our
 subconscious minds for the game.
 Given how messed up I'd been all
 week I was actually looking forward
 to it.

HYPNOTIST
 Your eyes are getting tired. Your
 lids heavy. You are being lulled to
 a resting state by the sound of my
 voice.

Rick's eyes close.

HYPNOTIST (CONT'D)
 Are you there, Rick? Nod if you can
 hear me.

Rick nods lucidly.

HYPNOTIST (CONT'D)

Good. You are now under my complete control. Nod again if you understand.

Rick nods again.

HYPNOTIST (CONT'D)

Now I want you to go somewhere for me. Are you ready to take a journey?

Rick nods.

HYPNOTIST (CONT'D)

I want you to go to your place of truth. A place where all external forces have been stripped away. Can you do that?

Rick's eyebrows furrow.

HYPNOTIST (CONT'D)

In this place there's no pressure to conform. No need to fit in. It's just you. Just Rick.

Rick subtly rocks back and forth. He's becoming exceedingly uncomfortable in this exercise.

The Hypnotist looks over at Dr. Astle, who smiles and nods. Neve glances over at him, disturbed.

HYPNOTIST (CONT'D)

...You are a soccer player. A leader. A role model. You don't take drugs. You don't drink. That is your truth.

(beat)

When I clap my hands you will awaken. You will live out your truth and carry your team to victory.

CLAP

Rick comes out of his trance and stumbles back next to Matt. He's white as a sheet.

MATT

Dude, are you okay?

Rick looks hard at Matt. Then turns and looks away, like he's ashamed to even make eye contact.

MATT (CONT'D)
Talk to me.

DR. ASTLE
Matt?

Matt hesitantly sits down in the chair across from the Hypnotist.

HYPNOTIST
Your eyes are getting tired. Your
lids heavy...

The Hypnotist's voice fades out as we:

DISSOLVE TO:

MATT'S SUBCONSCIOUS

HYPNOTIST (O.S)
Go to your place of truth.

INT. KITCHEN

A scene right out of the 1950's.

Matt and Neve sit at a kitchen table drinking coffee and reading the newspaper.

Matt looks down and realizes that they're both NAKED and wearing medals around their neck (Neve's is her Final 4 medal and Matt's is a State Championship medal).

NEVE
Will you pass the sports?

Matt hands her a section of the paper.

NEVE (CONT'D)
Thanks, dear.

MATT
Did you see the latest on the West
Bank?

NEVE
Horrible.

MATT
I wonder if they'll ever reconcile.

NEVE

Not at this rate. Do you mind picking the kids up after school today? I have a meeting that's going to run late.

MATT

No problem.

NEVE

You're the best. Dinner's in the fridge... Oh, one last thing:

Neve carefully lays the paper down on the table and lies down on it on her back.

NEVE (CONT'D)

Fuck me?

Matt climbs on top of her.

They fuck on the kitchen table. Their medals clank off each other with every thrust.

Neve's MOANS get deafeningly loud. Then:

CLAP

CUT BACK TO:

THE CLASSROOM

All eyes are on Matt. He steps out of the chair.

DR. ASTLE

How do you feel?

As Matt walks back towards his seat he has to pass by Neve. Their hands just barely graze as they make momentary eye contact.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

Matt?

MATT (V.O)

Something had to be done.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S FORD FOCUS - AFTERNOON

Dr. Astle drives a few cars back from Neve's Honda, following.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
The hypnotist was a real success. I mean, the expressions on the guys' faces when they got out of that chair? The change was palpable.

Neve parks her car. Dr. Astle follows suit up the block.

EXT. STREET - AFTERNOON

Dr. Astle peers through the dusty front window of O'DONNELLS, a crummy little sports bar.

Neve is inside sharing a pitcher of beer with a group of 20-SOMETHINGS.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
And while I hadn't yet gotten Neve to go out with me, I was making progress. Or at least, it seemed that way.

INT. O'DONNELL'S - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Astle walks in and heads for the bar. Neve's eyes stay glued to the TV.

DR. ASTLE
(to the bartender)
Can I see your wine list?

BARTENDER
On the board.

He points up to a chalk board. It reads "wines: red and white"

DR. ASTLE
I see. Is the white a chardonay? Zinfandel? I usually like something on the drier side.

The Bartender pulls out a dusty bottle of white wine. The label just reads "white". Clearly it's never been ordered.

BARTENDER
It's a white.

DR. ASTLE
...One please.

NEVE'S TABLE

She watches a Manchester United player break towards goal.

NEVE
C'mon... tackle. Tackle him you
piece of shit-

DR. ASTLE (O.S)
Neve Allen!

Neve turns, horrified to find Dr. Astle, sipping his glass of white wine, sitting right behind her.

The 20-Somethings all groan.

ANNOUNCER
GOOOOOOOOOOOOAL!

NEVE
Fuck! I missed it! Fuck you
Rooney!!!

DR. ASTLE
I didn't know you came here. Are
these people your friends? Can I
buy you a drink?

20-SOMETHING
Who's the narc?

Neve looks over at her judgmental 20-Something friends staring at Dr. Astle and her. She quickly stands and pulls him aside.

NEVE
Barry... Now isn't really a good
time. You understand? We'll talk
tomorrow. Maybe figure out a night
for that dinner. Ok?

DR. ASTLE
(beaming)
You got it.

He exits. Neve sits back down and goes back to her drink.

20-SOMETHING
Friend of yours?

NEVE
Just some teacher.

EXT. O'DONNELLS - ALLEY - LATER

Neve slips out the side door into the alley. She lights a joint. Exhales a long plume of smoke. She hears voices around the corner. Two of her 20-something friends.

VOICE (O.S)
So do it, man. Ask her out.

VOICE 2 (O.S)
Nah. I mean she's hot and all but she's, like, 35. For all we know that dude was, like, her husband.

VOICE (O.S)
Yeah. It's kind of pathetic.

VOICE 2 (O.S)
Fuck it. Let's get another drink.

Neve takes another long pull from her joint.

EXT. O'DONNELL'S - LATER

Neve, piss drunk and stoned, comes stumbling out of the bar. She waves off her friends, fumbling for he keys.

Dr. Astle waits in his car parked down the street, watching her go.

EXT. NEVE'S HOUSE - EVENING

Neve parks her car two feet off the curb and staggers into her house.

Dr. Astle watches from his car.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
She was lonely. It didn't take a master's degree in developmental psychology to see that.

Dr. Astle drives off.

INT. FLORIST - EVENING

A FLORIST (28), stoned, wraps a bouquet of flowers.

FLORIST
What do you want on the card?

DR. ASTLE

Dear Ms. Allen- No wait. Dear Neve,
Congrats on a great seminar. Your
dedication and vision never cease
to amaze me. All the best, Barry.

The Florist looks skeptically at Dr. Astle, who smiles to himself, then hands over the bouquet and card.

CUT TO:

INT. ELAINE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Emily sits on the couch with a box of tissues and a bottle of wine watching reality tv. Elaine, wearing a trench-coat walks down the stairs, keys on her mom.

ELAINE

Mom?

Emily quickly wipes the tears from her eyes.

EMILY

I'm sorry, honey. Was I being too
loud?

ELAINE

What happened with Albert?

EMILY

(with a fake smile)
He was great. It was a great date.

Elaine sits down next to Emily. Pulls her in for a hug.

ELAINE

Mom...

EMILY

It's fine. I'm fine.

ELAINE

You're not fine. Talk to me.

Emily chokes up. Starts crying again.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

It's ok...

EMILY

He's... he's married. We didn't
even go out. He just took me to a
hotel room and asked me...

(MORE)

EMILY (CONT'D)
he asked me to sodomize him with a
broom handle!

ELAINE
What?!

EMILY
I couldn't do it. I tried but I
couldn't get it to go in.

ELAINE
My God.

EMILY
I don't think I can do it anymore.
You've been so supportive but I'm
gonna take down the profile. My
dating days are over.

Elaine pats her mom on the back and steels herself.

ELAINE (V.O)
If I had any second thoughts about
what I was doing that night they
were quickly pushed aside.

INT. MATT'S ROOM - NIGHT

Matt stares at his computer screen. On it, his parents are
fiddling with the camera. They are both standing, their heads
cut off at the neck.

WILL
How the fuck does this work? Is
this the microphone or is this?

MATT
Dad.

JULIE
(to Will)
He's on. He's on!
(to Matt)
Hi Matty!

MATT
Hi Mom.

JULIE
(waving at the screen)
Can you see us? Do you see me
waving?

MATT

Both of you need to sit down.

Will and Julie sit down into frame. Will's face is horribly sunburned.

JULIE

Happy birthday, honey!!

MATT

Jesus, dad. What happened to your face?

WILL

Just getting my base tan on.

MATT

I don't think that's how it works.

WILL

I'm pretty sure it is.

JULIE

This is so exciting! How are you?!

MATT

I'm... I'm ok.

WILL

How are you playing? You gonna get that offer or what?

Julie elbows him.

JULIE

Will. You promised.

WILL

What? It's a fair question.

JULIE

Can we just have a nice conversation for 30 seconds? He doesn't want to talk about it.

WILL

Quit babying him. This is important.

JULIE

I'm not babying him. I'm being a supportive mother!

WILL

Julie-

Matt looks up at the ceiling as his parents argue, no longer paying attention to him on screen.

JULIE

(to Will)

We can discuss it when we get home.

MATT

Hey, I gotta go. I have work to do.

JULIE

Wait, wait. How's everything else?

WILL

Good.

JULIE

And Elaine?

MATT

She's fine I guess.

JULIE

Have you two talked?

MATT

A little.

JULIE

Did you make the list?

MATT

(sighs)

No, Mom.

JULIE

Ok. We just wanted to see your face and make sure everything was fine.

MATT

It is.

JULIE

We'll see you in two days. We're going straight from the airport to the field.

MATT

Ok.

WILL
And text me if you wanna talk more
about Missou-

The doorbell rings, interrupting Will. Matt turns.

JULIE
Was that the doorbell?

MATT
...Yeah?

JULIE
Who's coming to the house at this
hour?

Matt suddenly pops up off his bed.

MATT
I gotta go. Love you.

JULIE
Wait-

He cuts off the call and rushes downstairs.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE - FOYER

Matt opens the door to find Elaine, dressed in that same trench-coat.

MATT
Elaine?

ELAINE
Hello handsome.

MATT
What are you doing here?

ELAINE
I was going to drop off some of
your stuff... But I decided on this
instead.

She drops the trench-coat revealing her Victoria's Secret purchase: a corset and sexy garter belts. She looks good. Jailbait good.

MATT
...Oh my god.

She twirls. Matt pulls her inside out of view of his neighbors.

ELAINE
Do you like it?

Matt is speechless.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
I know the secret to keeping a man
happy is surprising him every day.
This is just the beginning.

She moves in close to him.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
We're going to get through this,
Matt. I know we will. Because
that's what love is about. Hard
work. Sacrifice. Adaptation. In the
end? It's all gonna be worth it. I
promise.

Matt says nothing.

Elaine gets on her toes and nibbles his ear.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
This is the part where you invite
me upstairs.

MATT
...You need to go.

ELAINE
What?

MATT
Please. I can't do this.

ELAINE
If I walk out that door I'm not
coming back.

Matt says nothing. Keeps the door held open. Elaine stares at him for a beat. Then:

ELAINE (CONT'D)
Fuck you.

She storms out and slams the door behind her.

INT. MATT'S HOUSE

Matt leans back against the wall and sighs deeply.

INT. ELAINE'S CAR - NIGHT

Elaine drives, white knuckling the steering wheel, a scowl pasted to her face.

ELAINE (V.O)

I was done. I had given myself to him, opened up fully, and he cast me out in the cold like a bag of trash. All I could think about was my poor mother alone on the couch... And hurting him as bad as he hurt me.

She pulls out her phone. Writes a text message:

Elaine: 'Can I come over?'

The reply: 'Is everything ok?'

Elaine: 'Please'

Elaine turns onto a residential street and parks her car.

EXT. RICK'S HOUSE - MOMENTS LATER

Elaine rings the doorbell. It's immediately answered by Rick.

RICK

What's wrong?-

ELAINE

Rick.

Elaine pulls him into a hug.

INT. RICK'S ROOM

Elaine lies on Rick's bed. He sits awkwardly in his desk chair.

RICK

...Do you want something to drink?

ELAINE

He's never going to change. I tried but nothing goes through.

RICK

Elaine-

ELAINE

No. It's fine. I'm fine. Really.

RICK

Look. Matt's my best friend. I don't know if I should be the one talking about this-

ELAINE

I know. I'm sorry for putting you in this position. I just didn't know where else to go.

RICK

...I'm sure he didn't mean to hurt you.

Elaine snorts a histrionic laugh.

RICK (CONT'D)

But maybe it's good you're here. I mean, I've been going through some stuff too and I could use someone to talk to-

ELAINE

Remember when Mike Lowell called me a whore and you punched him in the nose?

RICK

...I got suspended for a week.

ELAINE

It was the sweetest thing anyone's ever done for me.

Rick nods.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

You've always been there for me Rick. I guess I took it for granted but I want you to know that I know that.

RICK

...Ok.

ELAINE

And I appreciate it.

RICK

That's what friends do. Like I was saying, I've been-

ELAINE

There's one thing I need to ask of you, Rick. Can you do one thing for me?

RICK

What?

ELAINE

Please. Just promise me you'll say yes. I'm very fragile.

RICK

Elaine.

ELAINE

Please.

RICK

...Ok.

Elaine stands and again drops her trench-coat to reveal her lingerie.

ELAINE

Kiss me.

RICK

Jesus. Elaine, no-

Elaine sits down on him, straddling him.

ELAINE

I can't take another 'no'.

Rick turns away. He looks like he's going to be sick.

She grabs his head and pulls his lips to hers, kisses him hard. At first he resists. Then he scrunches his eyes closed and kisses her back.

Elaine pulls him to his bed. Practically rips off his pants and climbs on top of him.

As Elaine grinds up on him Rick keeps his eyes glued to a framed PHOTO by his bed: a shot of him and Matt, arm in arm in their soccer uniforms.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

Oh Jesus. I'm sorry.

Rick looks up at her, hopeful.

She grabs the framed photo and turns it face down.

ELAINE (CONT'D)
There. That's better.

Rick shudders as she goes back to grinding.

INT. ELAINE'S CAR - NIGHT

Elaine pulls away from Rick's house. She looks up and sees him watching her out of his window.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - DAY

Rick walks quickly down the hall towards his class, deeply mind-fucked. Matt, equally mind-fucked, passes by the other way. They accidentally bump into each other, momentarily snapping them both out of their dazes.

MATT
(holding out his fist)
First day of the rest of our lives?

Rick fidgets. Doesn't meet his eyes or his fist bump.

RICK
What's up?

MATT
Nothing. What's up with you?

RICK
Nothing.

Beat.

MATT
You cool?

RICK
What's that supposed to mean?

MATT
What?

RICK
I mean why would you ask that?

MATT

I dunno. Just you've been in deep space since that hypnotist came in.

RICK

You're one to talk. I haven't seen you in days.

MATT

I've been busy.

RICK

So have I.

MATT

...You're sure nothing's wrong?

RICK

Leave me alone, dude. I said I was fine.

MATT

Ok... Jesus.

They eye each other awkwardly then move off.

INT. LOCKER ROOM

The soccer players are all gathered together in their warm ups, juggling and horsing around. Rick is noticeably absent.

Matt checks his watch then turns to Gunnar.

MATT

You seen Rick?

GUNNAR

Yeah.

MATT

Where?

GUNNAR

Tons of places. Yesterday at practice. Oh, in class the other day too.

MATT

I mean recently. Like today.

GUNNAR

Oh. Then no.

MATT
He been acting strange to you too?

GUNNAR
Strange?

MATT
You know. Like he's on edge?

GUNNAR
On the edge of what?

MATT
Never mind.

GUNNAR
Guess what.

MATT
...

GUNNAR
Signed my letter today.
Northwestern here I come.

MATT
Congrats, man. That's great.

GUNNAR
Thanks dude. I mean it's not
perfect but it'll be ok.

MATT
What do you mean?

GUNNAR
Their school color is purple. Ours
is blue. Means I gotta buy all new
shit...

Matt stares at Gunnar in disbelief.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE

Dr. Astle carefully applies BLUE FACE PAINT in his office
mirror.

His bouquet of flowers for Neve rests on his desk.

KNOCK KNOCK

DR. ASTLE
Come in.

Rick steps through the open door.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

Rick! Why aren't you with the rest
of the team?

Rick stands awkwardly as Dr. Astle continues applying his
paint.

RICK

Dr. Astle-

Dr. Astle interrupts and hands Rick his brush.

DR. ASTLE

Hey, real quick, can you get my eye
lids?

Dr. Astle closes his eyes and Rick leans in and paints his
eye lids blue. It's an oddly intimate moment.

RICK

I need to talk to someone. I
just... I need-

DR. ASTLE

Is this about the game? College?

RICK

Yes. No...I dunno. I mean, it's a
lot of stuff. There's just
something I really need to get off
my chest and I'm afraid if I don't
say it...

Dr. Astle suddenly gets serious. Puts his hand on Rick's
shoulder.

DR. ASTLE

Whatever you need. I'm here for
you.

Rick opens his mouth to speak. Then Todd passes by the open
door. He double takes on Astle with his hand on Rick's
shoulder. Eyes narrow.

TODD

Why you touching Rick like that?

DR. ASTLE

What?

TODD

C'mon. It's rally time.

Rick stands, defeated. Goes to follow Todd.

DR. ASTLE
Hey. Come in first thing tomorrow.
8AM. I'll open my office and we can
talk. No stone unturned. Ok?

Rick swallows and nods as Todd pulls him into the hall.

CUT TO:

BLUE

Then suddenly the blue slides back and we're:

CLOSE ON: Dr. Astle's eye.

Pull back further. We're in the:

INT. SMUHS GYMNASIUM

And the gym is rocking.

Dr. Astle, in his blue face paint and a blue jumpsuit, sits
in stands filled with students dressed in SMUHS blue.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
It was a school tradition to hold a
pep rally the day before big games.
To get the students more
involved... But I'd never seen a
turnout like that.

The BAND sits off to the sides, waiting for their cue.

A line of CHEERLEADERS shakes their pom poms with
anticipation.

Principal Pelmas steps up to a mic.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS
Nine years. Nine years we've
waited. Every near miss. Every
heartbreaking loss. Those years of
famine made us strong. Resilient.
They taught us what it means to
want. To struggle... But this is
not one of those years. This year
we feast!

The students in the stands erupt.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS (CONT'D)

Never before have I seen a stronger group of men. Men who know the meaning of sacrifice. Of duty to a cause larger than themselves. They have overcome adversity. Defied the odds. And for that this school, this whole town, could not be prouder. Without further ado I give to you, the 2014 men's soccer team!

The SOCCER PLAYERS, led by Coach Rusty, run into the gym. The band kicks into overdrive, playing Queen's 'We Will Rock You' as students stand and scream and cheerleaders dance.

MATT

(to Rick)

Where have you been?

Rick says nothing.

Rusty steps to the mic. The crowd settles.

RUSTY

Thank you Principal Pelmas. Tomorrow night is the biggest night of these boys' athletic careers. Hell, maybe even their lives. But they won't be out there alone. No. When you're all cheering your hearts out, we're gonna feed off that energy. Like lions hunting gazelle. We're gonna run faster. Hit harder. We will stalk and maim our competition... And when those 90 minutes are over we're gonna hang that fucking banner on the fieldhouse wall where it belongs!

The crowd goes bat-shit crazy.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Matt, Rick, Gunnar. Get up here.

The three seniors come forward. Rusty pulls them all together in front of the mic.

RUSTY (CONT'D)

Our seniors. The leaders of this squad. And the closest, most loyal group I've ever coached. Let's show 'em some support and help us get that win tomorrow!!

The crowd stands and cheers as the band picks up again and the cheerleaders call out a S-M-U-H-S cheer.

A BATON TWIRLER (15) runs out to the center of the floor and begins performing her routine.

Matt scans the cheering audience. Then:

CLOSE ON: Matt's face. His eyebrows raise.

MATT (V.O)
I saw her standing by the door.
Apart from it all. I remember
thinking how cool she looked. Per
usual.

PULL BACK TO:

DR. ASTLE

Who's positioned directly behind Matt, staring right through him at Neve, wearing all white and standing by the exit door.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
She looked like an angel in white.
Practically floating against the
sea of blue...

Neve meets eyes with Matt. She smiles. He smiles back.

DR. ASTLE (V.O) (CONT'D)
...And she was staring right at me.

Neve takes a quick glance around. Everyone nearby cheers, paying her no mind.

NEVE (V.O)
I know I said it was a one time
thing but he looked fucking good up
there. I was turned on and I didn't
really give a shit. The school
setting made it that much hotter.

Neve blows Matt a kiss.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
That was what did it. The kiss.
That was what ultimately convinced
me that she was ready. That it was
my moment.

RUSTY
Tomorrow night! Eight PM! We will
see you there! Go Trojans!

With one last loud cheer the pep rally ends and STUDENTS begin to stream towards the exits.

Rick breaks apart from Matt. Starts to walk out in the opposite direction with the team.

Matt considers following, then sees Neve give him one last come-hither look and a motion to follow her before stepping out the opposite door.

INT. HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER

Matt walks amongst the throng of students, being high fived and back patted as he pushes through. They all fade away from his peripheral vision.

He passes by a hallway and sees Neve standing there, just off from the rest of the crowd. She is the only thing in focus.

NEVE
Training room. Five minutes.

Neve turns and walks down the hall, unaware that she is being followed by Dr. Astle.

He watches her step into the training room then turns and runs down the hall in the other direction.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Dr. Astle pops a mint in his mouth.

He grabs the bouquet of flowers for Neve and steps back into the hall.

He walks down the hallway towards the training room. Stops just outside it and takes a deep breath.

Then he hears: the sound of FAINT MOANS.

He cracks the door ever so slightly and peeks in to find:

Matt, sitting on an ice machine moaning while Neve, on her knees, GOES DOWN ON HIM.

Neve grabs an ice cube and pops it in her mouth as she continues to service Matt.

MATT

Holy... fucking... shit. Neve. You
are amazing.

Dr. Astle backs away from the door, mouth hanging open.

He slumps against the back wall, knees turned to jelly.

He looks at the bouquet of flowers in his hand, squeezes them
into a fist and tosses them to the floor.

EXT. PARKING LOT - AFTERNOON

Dr. Astle wanders aimlessly around the parking lot, bumping
into cars.

INTERCUT WITH:

INT. TRAINING ROOM

Matt and Neve in the throes of ecstatic, perfect sex. Every
position. Fast. Slow. On the training table. In the hot tub.
Against the wall. It seems never-ending.

EXT. BROWMAN'S BLUFF - SUNSET

Dr. Astle stands at the edge of the bluff watching the sun
set.

He looks down at the suicide memorial then angrily KICKS one
of the potted flowers, BREAKING THE POT.

EXT. DR. ASTLE'S APARTMENT

Mr. Whiskers struts through his cat door. He parks himself on
Mort Morrison's welcome mat and starts taking a shit. He
looks up to find Mort staring down at him.

LATER

Doctor Astle stumbles up the stairs.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S APARTMENT

Dr. Astle looks around at the pathetic display that is his
life.

DR. ASTLE

Mr. Whiskers? Mr. Whiskers?!

Mr. Whiskers is nowhere to be found.

Dr. Astle steps to his wall. Stares at an old soccer team photo. He tears it off the wall. Then he tears down the rest of the posters and photos, crumpling them in a ball on the floor.

He slumps to the ground.

INT. TRAINING ROOM

Matt peeks out the door as Neve rearranges the room and picks up her discarded clothes.

MATT
Coast is clear.

NEVE
Good.

MATT
...You doing anything now?

NEVE
No. Why?

MATT
C'mon.

EXT. KELLY SOCCER FIELD - NIGHT

Matt and Neve lie on their backs and look up at a sky full of stars.

NEVE
I bet you take all the girls here.

MATT
Just you.

NEVE
Liar.

MATT
Seriously. I've never taken anyone here.

NEVE
Why me?

MATT

It's a place where no one can judge you. Just a universe full of infinite stars... Infinite possibilities.

NEVE

Fuck.

MATT

What?

NEVE

I like you. I actually like you. That's so sick.

MATT

Why?

NEVE

You're 18. I'm 32.

MATT

Who cares?

NEVE

Probably everyone else in this stupid town.

MATT

Yeah. But they're sheep.

They stare up at the stars in silence. Then:

NEVE

Baaaaaaah.

MATT

Did you just baaah at me?

NEVE

It sounded better in my head.

Matt takes Neve's hand. Their fingers wrap around each other.

NEVE (CONT'D)

You excited for tomorrow?

MATT

What if I say no?

NEVE

Then you say no.

MATT

I don't know if I even want it.
College. The offer. I know that
sounds crazy...

NEVE

You say that now but things change
when it's for real. Four years. Big
man on campus. Girls all over you.
That's hard to pass up.

MATT

But if I didn't go...

NEVE

What would you want to do?

MATT

That's the thing. I have no idea...
I'm not that smart. I mean I'm
interested in stuff but I've never
had a chance to figure out what I
like the most. I guess I always
just did what came easy.

NEVE

(me too)

Yeah.

Beat.

MATT

All I know is, whatever it is,
wherever I go, I want to be with
you.

NEVE

Matt...

MATT

What?

NEVE

(sighs)

I wish I'd met you ten years ago.

MATT

But you met me now.

NEVE

But I met you now.

MATT

So let's not waste any more time.

He pulls her head to hers and kisses her. She hesitates then kisses him back.

FADE OUT:

FADE IN:

INT. SMUHS HALLWAY - MORNING

Rick waits nervously outside of Dr. Astle's office. He checks his watch. 8:03AM. He's about to walk away when Dr. Astle, red eyed from crying and/or a lack of sleep, turns the corner.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE

Dr. Astle looks out his window, lost.

RICK (O.S)
Dr. Astle?

Dr. Astle turns back to Rick, sitting across from him.

DR. ASTLE
Sorry.

RICK
Are you okay?

DR. ASTLE
(detached)
I'm fine. I'll be fine. Big game today huh?

Beat.

RICK
So I guess the reason I'm here-

DR. ASTLE
What would you think about a teacher dating a student?

RICK
...What?

DR. ASTLE

Sorry. I don't know where that came from. Totally off topic. What were you saying?

RICK

Well. It's just... Some things have happened lately. And I don't know who else I can talk to. But I think you-

DR. ASTLE

It's wrong, right? A teacher and a student. It's disgusting... Is it disgusting?

Rick fidgets uncomfortably.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

Even if the student was 18. And it was consensual-

RICK

(blurts out)

I'm in love with someone.

This shuts Dr. Astle up.

RICK (CONT'D)

Not you... Sorry. I'm confused... About a lot of things. Sexual things. Like I was saying. I like... someone. Maybe I even love them. But I don't know if they feel the same way. And even if they did... I don't know what to do. That's why I'm here.

DR. ASTLE

Have you told them?

RICK

...No.

DR. ASTLE

You should.

RICK

It's not that simple-

Dr. Astle sighs and leans back in his chair.

DR. ASTLE

Rick. Listen to me. I know where you're coming from. I was in the same situation.

RICK

You were?

DR. ASTLE

(nods)

I was. And I waited. I wanted to say something but I didn't. And I missed my chance. What's the worst that could happen? They say no. Not interested. And everything goes back to the way it was. But if you don't ask, you'll never know. And you'll always wonder about what could have been.

Rick takes a deep breath. Then nods.

EXT. KELLY FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Matt sits alone on the bleachers holding a soccer ball and looking out at the field.

MATT (V.O.)

It was game day. I should've been in the zone.

Matt turns to the fieldhouse and the championship banners. Then looks down at the ball.

EXT. STREET - MORNING

Neve jogs.

NEVE (V.O.)

For the first time in as long as I could remember I didn't smoke pot when I woke up. I felt good about myself. Like things were finally starting to look up. I made a pledge that I would reevaluate my life. Find a new job in a new town. Start over.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S OFFICE - MORNING

Dr. Astle sits and stares at the front page of the local paper. On it is a picture of Matt and the headline 'Parker leads Trojans to State Championship Soccer Game'

He throws the paper in the trash.

INT. SMUHS BATHROOM - MORNING

Elaine looks at herself in the mirror. She stands up straighter. Nods to herself.

ELAINE (V.O)

Rick was a mistake, but being with him told me all I needed to know. There are plenty of fish in the sea and I had a hook with fresh bait. It was time to cut the cord.

INT. SMUHS HALLWAY - DAY

Matt at his locker. Elaine approaches.

ELAINE

Hey.

MATT

Hi.

ELAINE

Look. It's going to get out anyway and I figure it's better you hear it from me and not someone else.

Matt closes his locker. Suddenly all ears.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

The other night, after you turned me down, I went over to Rick's.

MATT

...

ELAINE

We had sex. Me and Rick.

MATT

What?!

ELAINE

Matt, please. I'm trying to be an adult about this and adults don't keep secrets. They take ownership of their actions.

MATT

Are you fucking kidding me?! He's my best friend.

ELAINE

I hope we can still be friends.

She leans in for a hug. Matt jerks away from her.

ELAINE (CONT'D)

You need time. I understand.

INT. HALLWAY - LATER

Matt walks with purpose down the hall. He approaches Rick at his locker.

RICK

Hey-

MATT

You fucked Elaine?!

Everyone in the hallway turns to the commotion.

MATT (CONT'D)

We were broken up for like, a week.

RICK

It's not like that.

MATT

I thought we were friends. Is this why you've been avoiding me?

Rick stares at Matt for a beat. Panicking. Then, as if overcome by an other-worldly force, he leans in and KISSES Matt on the mouth.

Matt pushes him back.

MATT (CONT'D)

Woah, man.

Rick's eyes go wide. Like he's come out of his trance. He glances around the hallway at all the STUDENTS staring at him and he realizes what he's done. He takes off running.

MATT (CONT'D)

Rick. Wait!

INT. TEACHER'S LOUNGE - DAY

Dr. Astle eyes Neve, sitting alone and drinking a diet coke. He approaches two other TEACHERS.

DR. ASTLE

Who wants wings tonight? I'm buying.

TEACHER

Are you kidding? Everyone's going to the game.

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

The whole team sits together in their blue warm ups. The chair next to Matt is noticeably unoccupied. He takes out his phone and opens his text history with Rick. He tries to think of something to write. Nothing comes to mind.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S FORD FOCUS - AFTERNOON

Dr. Astle drives.

RADIO

...And at 8:00 PM tonight our SMUHS
Trojans will be taking on the
Bulldogs-

Dr. Astle slams the button, turning off the radio.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - AFTERNOON

Players dress. Matt looks around. Still no Rick. He checks his phone. Nothing.

Coach Rusty walks in. Matt beelines for him.

MATT

Coach.

RUSTY

You ready for battle, soldier?

MATT

We have a problem.

RUSTY
What kind of problem?

MATT
Rick is gone.

RUSTY
Gone?

MATT
He's... I think something's really
wrong.

Rusty frowns. Looks over Matt's shoulder at the rest of the
players.

MATT (CONT'D)
We gotta do something.

RUSTY
You're right. Ramirez!

RAMIREZ (15) perks up.

RUSTY (CONT'D)
Rick's gone awol. You're starting
at left forward.

INT. DR. ASTLE'S FORD FOCUS

Dr. Astle parks in the Browman's Bluff parking lot.

EXT. BROWMAN'S BLUFF - AFTERNOON

Dr. Astle hikes up a dirt path. He approaches his usual spot
next to the suicide memorial.

Standing right at the edge is Rick.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
He was the last person I expected
to find there. Hunched over like
the weight of the world was forcing
him down.

RICK
It's pretty isn't it? Mr. Thompson
said it probably took millions of
years to form.

DR. ASTLE
Rick-

RICK
I wonder what it was like back
then. Before there were people.

DR. ASTLE
What are you doing here?

RICK
I did what you said.

DR. ASTLE
She said no.

RICK
He. Matt.

DR. ASTLE
Parker?

RICK
I think I always knew. I just tried
pretending it all away. But then
that hypnotist came in and when he
put me under... I saw myself in the
boys locker room. And all the other
guys on the team were there. But I
was naked and they were having
their way with me. And I liked it.
I loved it.

DR. ASTLE
I see.

RICK
I can't go back. Not now.

Dr. Astle realizes the implication. And that Rick is serious.

DR. ASTLE
You can always go back.

RICK
You don't know my life. My family.
They won't understand.

DR. ASTLE
I understand.

Beat. This is Dr. Astle's moment.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)
We all get dealt a hand of cards.
Some good, some bad. My hand? It's
shit. I'm 34. No friends.
(MORE)

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

No girlfriend. People walk all over me. They think I'm a joke. I failed out of grad school. A high school guidance counselor is all I'll ever be. I've been on that same ledge thinking the same things you're thinking right now.

RICK

What stopped you?

DR. ASTLE

My cat. The sunset. The feeling I get when one of my students gets into the college of their dreams. Little things that happen each and every day.

(beat)

You got dealt a good hand. Good cards. You're smart. Athletic. You have friends. People like you. Hell, if I could've traded for your cards in high school I'd have done it in a heart beat.

RICK

Yeah?

DR. ASTLE

Yeah. You've got your whole life ahead of you. This is just a speed bump.

Rick sniffs back a tear. Nods. Dr. Astle opens his arms wide.

DR. ASTLE (CONT'D)

'Cmere.

Rick steps towards Dr. Astle, his arms out wide.

Dr. Astle steps towards Rick --

-- And SLIPS on the pieces of broken flower pot that he earlier destroyed. He tumbles forward, knocking into Rick and accidentally pushing him right over the edge of the cliff!

Dr. Astle scrambles to the edge of the bluff. Looks down at the hundred foot drop, his eyes impossibly wide.

CUT TO:

EXT. KELLY FIELD - NIGHT

The score is 1-1. Minute 87 of 90. Sitting in the front row of the stands is COACH PERKINS (50's), decked out in full Missou gear. Matt can't help but glance over at him.

MATT (V.O)

It was the hardest we'd been pushed all year. And without Rick we were getting eaten alive up front.

An OPPOSING PLAYER takes a pass in the center circle and is tackled by an SMUHS player. He goes down clutching his leg.

The REFEREE runs over and pulls out a RED CARD, sending the SMUHS player off.

CLOSE ON: The faces of the FANS in their slow motion reactions. Cringes all around.

Principal Pelmas screams out a silent 'Fuck you' to the ref.

The SMUHS Trojan mascot throws his hands in the air.

Rusty stomps along the sideline, apoplectic. He throws his clipboard, which hits a student in the side of the head, dropping him to the ground.

Coach Perkins shakes his head. Writes something in his notebook.

MATT (V.O) (CONT'D)

In the 87th minute we went a man down. We weren't going to survive an overtime.

The ref blows the whistle. Play resumes. The opposing team passes around, getting closer and closer to goal. Their STRIKER lines up a shot but Gunnar intercepts it and kicks it up to Matt.

CLOSE ON: The game clock. Minute 89 of 90.

Matt dribbles. He spins around one defender. Then another. Two more crash into each other trying to dispossess him. He's one on one with the goalie. He jukes. Has an open shot. Rears back --

-- And gets SLIDE TACKLED HARD FROM BEHIND.

CLOSE ON Matt.

Sound cuts out.

He lies on his back looking up at the lights. It's just like he was when he was out there with Neve.

He stares up. As if he's found a rare moment of peace.

MATT (V.O) (CONT'D)

That was a nice moment. One of the last I'd have during the year. For about ten seconds I was able to just zone out. No parents. No screaming coaches. No stupid expectations from stupid people who think they know you but really have no idea... You forget how valuable a few seconds alone can be. Looking back on it, I think that was when I finally found some clarity.

Sound roars back as:

Gunnar and another PLAYER pull him to his feet.

THE REF points to the middle of the box.

Penalty Kick.

MOMENTS LATER

The ball rests on the penalty spot. Matt stands ten feet back. The GOALIE jumps back and forth, arms out, doing all that he can to rattle Matt.

Matt glances at the stands. Keys in on various familiar faces:

ELAINE, sitting next to her mother. She looks at him impassively.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS, eyes closed, hands together in prayer.

COACH RUSTY, eyes wide, mouth open in a twisted half-scream half-cheer.

WILL & JULIE, sunburned skin peeling off their faces, smiling big dumb smiles.

NEVE, nodding encouragingly.

DR. ASTLE, stumbling along the sideline on the verge of a breakdown. He isn't watching the game.

COACH PERKINS. It all comes down to this.

The whistle blows.

Matt stares at the ball. At what it represents for him.

He runs up to it, strikes it clean, and BANGS IT OFF THE SIDE POST.

More gasps from the crowd. Agonized screams.

The ball bounces right back to Gunnar who winds up, kicks, and BURIES IT IN THE BACK OF THE NET.

The referee blows the whistle again.

Game over. Trojans win.

The crowd rushes the field, TRAMPLING Dr. Astle who still hasn't found a seat. Students and teachers mob Gunnar and his celebrating teammates.

Neve pushes her way through the mass of bodies. Stares at Matt.

Matt looks at her. Then over at Coach Perkins who waits expectantly. Matt walks to Neve.

MATT (CONT'D)

I missed.

Then Matt smiles.

MATT (CONT'D)

I missed.

Neve plants a big KISS on him.

IPhones flash as people take photos of the kiss.

TRACK TO ELAINE, who's staring right at them. She knocks people out of the way, runs over --

ELAINE

That's my boyfriend you geriatric bitch!

-- and COLD COCKS Neve in the face.

More iPhones flash as Neve is knocked horizontal before landing on the ground.

MATT (V.O)

They call soccer the beautiful game. But that? That was just ugly.

FREEZE ON: Matt and Elaine staring at each other, Neve lying flat on her back between them like the classic Ali/Frazier photo. Elaine's Mom is in the background, her mouth open in shock.

The coloring of the shot distorts, becoming SEPIA FILTERED.

PULL BACK:

We're in

PRINCIPAL PELMAS'S OFFICE

And he's staring at a printout of the instagrammed photo. Right below the image is the hashtag: #knockoutbitches and 504 'likes'.

Neve with a full black eye sits on the couch. Rusty stands cross-armed by the door.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

What a clusterfuck.

NEVE

I don't know what to say. I made a mistake.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

You kissed a student in front of four thousand people. Mistake doesn't begin to cover it.

NEVE

It's not illegal. He's 18.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

You're his teacher! It's beyond unethical. Rusty, have you talked to him?

RUSTY

We won state. He's fine.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

What about the girl?

RUSTY

I'm talking to the mother. She knows what she did was wrong and is asking for leniency.

Principal Pelmas sighs. Looks at the picture then back at Neve.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS

This is everywhere. All the students have seen it. The parents too. What the hell am I supposed to do?

INT. NEVE'S CAR - LATER

Neve drives, a box of her belongings in the passenger seat next to her.

NEVE (V.O)

In exchange for not pressing charges they agreed to wipe the incident from my record. All in all I'd say I came out ok.

INT. MATT'S ROOM - MORNING

CLOSE ON: THE STATE CHAMPIONSHIP MEDAL hanging from Matt's bedpost.

Matt lies in bed, staring at the ceiling.

KNOCK KNOCK

Will and Julie step inside and both sit on the edge of the bed.

JULIE

Matty...

MATT

I don't want to talk about it.

JULIE

Right. We know that. But I think we should.

MATT

Stop. Please stop.

WILL

Coach Perkins called. He's making you an offer. Full ride.

Matt sighs and turns on his side away from his mom and dad.

JULIE

You don't need to keep it bottled up inside, honey. If she forced you into something-

MATT

She didn't force me into anything!
We're adults. We had fun. Nobody
got hurt. I don't see what the big
deal is.

JULIE

It's just... well... I mean. It
just is.

MATT

You can't even tell me what's so
wrong about it! You just want to
see me as your kid, not as a real
person.

JULIE

Oh Matt. Don't be so dramatic.

MATT

Has anyone heard from Rick?

JULIE

Not yet.

MATT

What did the police say?

WILL

They need 48 hours before he can
officially be listed as a missing
person.

Matt sighs.

JULIE

I'm sure he's fine. He'll probably
show up tomorrow at the parade-

MATT

Who cares about the fucking
parade?!

EXT. STREET - DAY

The whole town lines the streets as a marching band leads a
procession of blue convertibles filled with medal-clad SMUHS
soccer players.

Behind that is a big blue school bus filled with cheering
students.

Rusty stands in the front car, proudly holding up the State Championship banner.

Principal Pelmas sits next to Rusty in a convertible holding a mic.

PRINCIPAL PELMAS
S-M-U-H-S! S-M-U-H-S!

The crowd screams out the letters with him.

MATT (V.O)
Of course he didn't show up. The police were all there cheering along with Principal Pelmas. Worshipping the almighty banner.

TRACK TO:

THE SIDEWALK

Dr. Astle, bruised, still unshaven, and wearing the same clothes from Friday, drinks straight from a flask of vodka. People step back from him as he approaches the street.

PARENT
Dr. Astle?

He mutters something unintelligible and pushes forward.

DR. ASTLE (V.O)
I hadn't slept or eaten in 36 hours and my brain felt like it was going to explode out of my skull.

As the bus full of screaming students approaches, Dr. Astle takes a final gulp of liquor.

DR. ASTLE (V.O) (CONT'D)
I just wanted it all to stop.

He steps out in front of the bus.

The BUS DRIVER sees him, swerves at the last moment.

The bus clips Dr. Astle, knocking him to the pavement, then RUNS OVER HIS ARM, snapping it like a twig.

The crowd screams. Dr. Astle screams. The students in the bus scream.

CLOSE ON:

Dr. Astle's face twisted in pain.

DR. ASTLE (V.O) (CONT'D)
It didn't work. At that point I
don't know why I expected anything
would.

INT. NEVE'S HOUSE - DAY

Neve's things are haphazardly packed in boxes. A moving truck
is outside.

NEVE (V.O)
Part of my deal with Pelmas was
that I wouldn't show up at the
parade. That was fine. Most of the
people there hated me anyway. What
hurt was that I promised to cut off
contact with Matt.

INT. O'DONNELL'S

Matt and Neve sit together at a back table.

MATT
I'm sorry.

NEVE
No. I did it to myself.

MATT
I don't regret it, you know.

NEVE
Me neither. I had more fun with you
than the past 7 years combined.

MATT
Yeah.

NEVE
So what's next?

MATT
Second semester... Then I guess
I'll figure it out.

NEVE
You got the offer, huh? For real
this time.

MATT

Yeah... I just need some time to think.

NEVE

Take it. Don't take it. But make sure whatever you do, you do it for yourself.

MATT

Thank you.

He puts his hand on hers. She smiles and lets it rest there.

MATT (CONT'D)

When do you leave?

NEVE

This afternoon. Going back to Kansas for now. It's been so long since I've been home.

MATT

You ever come back... Give me a call?

NEVE

I'll do that.

Neve pulls out her final four medal and lays it on the table. Matt pulls out her state championship medal and does the same.

They trade.

NEVE (V.O) (CONT'D)

There's a tradition in soccer. At the end of the game you trade jerseys with the person you played against as a sign of respect.

MATT (V.O)

It was nice to know we'd have something to remember each other.

Neve's 20-Something friends enter the bar, see Neve and Matt. They give Neve dirty looks and immediately backtrack.

Neve watches them go, straight faced. Then turns and gives Matt a hug.

NEVE

Fuck this place, right?

MATT
Fuck it so hard.

INT. ELAINE'S ROOM - DAY

Elaine throws stacks of Cosmos and 17 magazines in the trash.

ELAINE (V.O)
I guess it wasn't all bad. I got a
two day suspension which wasn't
reported to colleges and 20 hours
of community service.

The doorbell rings.

On the stoop is Coach Rusty, holding a bouquet of flowers.

Emily steps out and gives him a hug.

ELAINE (V.O) (CONT'D)
In the aftermath of the game my mom
had to talk to the boys soccer
coach about the incident. He ended
up asking her out.

Elaine watches from the door as her mom and Rusty walk down
to his car. He opens the door for her like a gentleman.

ELAINE (V.O) (CONT'D)
Maybe there's some hope in this
world after all.

EXT. BROWMAN'S BLUFF - DAY

A SHIRTLESS HIKER climbs around the rocks below the bluff.

He takes a sip of water soaking in the beauty of his
surroundings.

Suddenly: A COUGH and a DRY WHEEZE.

The Hiker turns to the base of the cliff. His eyes go wide.

LATER

Police tape cordons off the area. EMT's load Rick, lying
prone on a stretcher, into the back of a waiting ambulance.

2 POLICE OFFICERS (BEAN and IKE) watch the ambulance speed
off. At their feet is a LUMPY BLACK SACK.

BEAN
(looking up)
Hell of a drop.

IKE
Dejavu all over again.

BEAN
How long did they say?

IKE
A day. Two at the most. Any longer
and he'd a been gone.

BEAN
Jumper?

IKE
Looks like it.

Bean takes out a prod and peels the black sack back.

Inside is the CORPSE OF MISTER WHISKERS.

IKE (CONT'D)
Hmmm.

BEAN
Thought they always landed on their
feet.

IKE
Shut up, Bean. What's the tag say?

BEAN
Mr. Whiskers.

IKE
Check the back.

BEAN
If found please return me to Dr.
Barry Astle.

IKE
Damn. Hell of a week for Barry.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY

Dr. Astle lies on a hospital bed, his arm in a massive cast.
He's cleaned up. Sober. Contrite.

Officers Bean and Ike step in.

BEAN
Hey Barry.

DR. ASTLE
Officers.

BEAN
How ya doin?

DR. ASTLE
They say I'll heal.

IKE
That's good.

DR. ASTLE
Yeah.

Beat.

BEAN
(to Ike)
You wanna tell him?

IKE
Not really.

BEAN
Well I don't.

DR. ASTLE
Tell me what?

BEAN
...Look. Barry. The reason we're
here...

IKE
We were over at the bluff.

Dr. Astle takes a breath. Then:

DR. ASTLE
I did it.

BEAN
...Did what?

DR. ASTLE
I pushed him.

BEAN
Pushed who?

DR. ASTLE

Rick Evans. I pushed him off the edge. It was an accident but that doesn't matter. He's dead because of me.

BEAN

That right?

Dr. Astle nods. Bean and Ike look at one another.

IKE

Barry. Rick's alive. EMT's brought him in an hour ago.

Dr. Astle struggles to pull himself free of his IV and hospital bed.

DR. ASTLE

He's here?! He's ok?!

IKE

Settle down. He's in ICU. A lot of broken bones and some head trauma but they say he'll come out.

BEAN

...Probably.

Dr. Astle takes a deep sigh of relief.

BEAN (CONT'D)

We also found your cat. Mr. Whiskers.

DR. ASTLE

Where was he?

BEAN

At the bottom of the bluff. In a sack next to Rick Evans.

IKE

You do that too?

Dr. Astle shakes his head. Keeps his eyes closed for a second as he pulls himself back together. When he opens his eyes he sees both officers still staring down at him.

IKE (CONT'D)

We're gonna have to take you down to the station and get a full statement.

DR. ASTLE

Ok.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Ike and Bean lead Dr. Astle into the back of a squad car.

CUT TO:

INT. DEPOSITION ROOM

The grey room. The place where all of our character testimonies are being recorded.

Pull back from Dr. Astle's face. We see now he is in shapeless prison garb, sitting at a metal table across from a video camera and the deposing lawyer: RICHARD FELLOWS (40).

DR. ASTLE

So like I said, it was an accident.
A terrible accident but an
accident. And he's all right now.
That's all that matters.

FELLOWS

The state is pushing for attempted
murder.

DR. ASTLE

...But I told you- I slipped. Just
ask Rick. He'll tell you-

FELLOWS

Rick was in a medically induced
coma for three days. He doesn't
remember anything.

DR. ASTLE

But, but-

FELLOWS

There's testimony from some
students... soccer players, that
you showed predatory interest in
Rick.

DR. ASTLE

Predatory interest?! That's absurd!
I was only trying to help him.

FELLOWS

And then there's the matter of the
naked pictures of him we pulled off
your computer. The horse head
shots?

Dr. Astle stares at him open-mouthed.

MATCH CUT TO:

DEPOSITION ROOM

FELLOWS

Is there anything else you want to
add to your statement?

The camera rotates and now we see that he's talking to Elaine
who's wearing a Missou sweatshirt.

ELAINE

I have a new boyfriend.

FELLOWS

Excuse me?

ELAINE

When you talk to Matt. I assume
you'll talk to Matt? Tell him I
have a new boyfriend and I'm happy.

FELLOWS

...Right.

ELAINE

His name is Bill. I met him in
orientation. He's a chemical
engineering major.

FELLOWS

Ok. I mean anything else about the
case? About Rick or Dr. Astle?

ELAINE

No. That's all.

FELLOWS

Ok.

ELAINE
What's gonna happen to him? Dr.
Astle I mean?

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DEPOSITION ROOM

FELLOWS
State's offering a second degree
assault charge in exchange for a
guilty plea.

Now it's Matt across from him.

MATT
Is he gonna take it?

FELLOWS
If he's smart. He'll get two years.
Probably out in one and a half with
good behavior.

MATT
He was a good guy, Dr. Astle.
Misunderstood but I'm pretty sure
he meant well. I don't think anyone
cared as much as he did.

Fellows nods.

FELLOWS
I was there, you know. The state
championship game.

MATT
Yeah?

FELLOWS
My brother's kid plays for North
Central. Midfielder.

MATT
Is he gonna play in college?

FELLOWS
Doubt it. He wants to be a dance
major or something. Go figure.

Matt smiles.

MATT
Good for him.

FELLOWS
How about you? Still playing?

MATT
Haven't touched a ball all spring.

FELLOWS
Just enjoying the summer?

MATT
Something like that.

FELLOWS
Thanks for coming in.

MATCH CUT TO:

INT. DEPOSITION ROOM

Now it's Neve sitting across from him.

NEVE
Of course. Hope I was helpful.

FELLOWS
You were. If we need to contact you
for any further testimony-

NEVE
You've got my number.

Fellows looks down at his notes sheet.

FELLOWS
212?

Neve nods.

FELLOWS (CONT'D)
New York, right?

NEVE
That's right.

FELLOWS
Been out there long?

NEVE
Just moved. Taking some classes.
Exploring. You know.

FELLOWS
Sounds nice.

NEVE

We'll see.

Fellows stands. As does Neve. They shake hands.

FELLOWS

Oh. One last thing. You stay in touch with anyone from your time out here? Students? Teachers?

Neve smiles.

NEVE

Nah.

INT. DEPOSITION OFFICE

Fellows carried the video camera into a main bullpen area.

BOYKINS (50), another lawyer, comes up behind him.

BOYKINS

You get what you need?

FELLOWS

More or less.

BOYKINS

High school, huh?

FELLOWS

High school.

BOYKINS

Hey, Jenny must be what, 12 or 13 now?

FELLOWS

14.

BOYKINS

Starting freshman year?

FELLOWS

Yep.

BOYKINS

Aint that a trip.

FELLOWS

Yeah... I'd rather not talk about it.

INT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Rick lies in traction in a hospital bed, his jaw wired shut.

A soft knock on the door as it opens, On Matt, carrying a paper bag.

MATT

Hey man.

He takes a seat next to the bed.

MATT (CONT'D)

Doctor says you're doing well.
Gonna be out of here in a few weeks.

Beat.

MATT (CONT'D)

I wanted to say goodbye. I'm taking
off for a while... Oh. And I
brought you something.

He reaches into the bag and pulls out Rick's horse head mask,
then tucks it into Rick's sheets.

MATT (CONT'D)

A surprise for your nurse.

Matt smiles. And even though Rick's jaw is wired shut it's
clear he's smiling too.

Rick wags his finger at a pen and pad on the side table.

MATT (CONT'D)

You want the pen?

Rick gives a thumbs up.

Matt puts the pen in Rick's hand. Holds up the pad of paper
as Rick sloppily writes 'I'm sorry'.

MATT (CONT'D)

No, man. Don't be.

Rick starts writing again. Finally stops and makes a fist.
Matt looks at the text:

'First day of the rest of your life?'

MATT (CONT'D)
 (as he gives him a fist
 bump)
 Hope it's not my last.

EXT. HOSPITAL - DAY

Matt walks out towards a double parked car, a familiar looking BLOND in sunglasses in the passenger seat. Some suitcases in the back. He opens the driver side door.

INT. CAR - DAY

The Blond holds her arm out of the car window, letting it roll up and down in the wind of the interstate.

As we pass a road sign reading: 'New York 239 miles' we:

FADE OUT.