

"A PAYROLL TO MEET"

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Based on the book "A Payroll to Meet," written by David Whitford

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FADE IN:

\*

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE.

EXT. OWNBY FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

Before a packed **CROWD, MUSTANG HORSES** and **dozens of SMU FOOTBALL PLAYERS** stampede toward us in slow motion.

**WALTON PORTER JR., our story's anti-hero**, begins --

WALTON (V.O.)

'Money can't buy happiness.' Fuck you. Money buys wins, and winning makes you happy. I would know. Look at my boys. Best years of my life they gave me. Now, those years didn't come cheap. But see me now and you'd see me grinnin' ear-to-fuckin'-ear. And you know what that means? I'm happy.

END DREAM SEQUENCE.

\*

INT. OFFICE BUILDING - NIGHT

A half-built, skeletal office building.

\*

A **team of five, black-uniformed ARSONISTS**, snake upward from floor-to-floor, coating the building in gasoline.

\*

As the Arsonists near the top of the building, **LEAD ARSONIST** sets fire to his team's gasoline trail.

The building ignites.

\*

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING - ROOFTOP - CONTINUOUS

As the Arsonists emerge onto the roof, a Little Bird Helicopter lands on the roof and picks them up.

As they ascend, we see the office building ablaze.

**IN THE DISTANCE**

Highways flowing vein-like across North Texas flatland.

EXT. HELIPAD - LATER

**WALTON PORTER JR. (40's)** leans against his Cadillac.

\*

Walton carries a linebacker's burliness and a cobra's temper; \*  
wears an Italian bespoke suit and the grin of an over- \*  
confident prick.

The Little Bird Helicopter emerges from the near-distance and  
lands on the helipad.

The Arsonists exit the helicopter and bypass Walton, one-by- \*  
one.

Walton hands each Arsonist a fat, cash-filled envelope.

As Walton hands Lead Arsonist his envelope --

WALTON

Who pays better: me, or Ross Perot?

LEAD ARSONIST

(Opening envelope)

Mr. Porter, we burnt you a \*  
building. Mr. Perot had us invade  
Iran.

Lead Arsonist looks in the envelope and looks back up at \*  
Walton.

LEAD ARSONIST (CONT'D)

(Confused)

Sir, this is more than -- \*

WALTON

You didn't just burn me a building. \*

Walton heads to the driver's door of the Cadillac.

LEAD ARSONIST

Sir?

WALTON

Take care, Colonel.

Walton enters his car; Lead Arsonist walks away. \*

### **INT. WALTON'S CADILLAC - CONTINUOUS**

Walton sits in the driver's seat and stares out the window.

### **IN THE DISTANCE**

Downtown Dallas' glittering skyline.

### **ON WALTON**

His face serious; meditative.

WALTON (V.O.)  
My father was a good man.

**BEGIN FLASHBACK.**

**INT. PORTER HOME - BATHROOM - DAWN**

**SUPER: Dallas. 1961.**

**CLOSE ON WALTON PORTER SENIOR, (late-30's), Walton's abusive-alcoholic-father.**

We hear Walt Sr. pissing into a pot and singing Hank Williams "A Home in Heaven."

WALT SR.  
(Singing)  
*Around me many are building/homes  
of beauty and wealth...*

Walt Sr. finishes peeing, reaches down and grabs the pitcher of piss; with his other hand he lifts and drinks from an Old Granddad bottle. \*

WALTON (V.O.)  
He taught me how to live. \*

We **FOLLOW** Walt as he leaves the bathroom --

WALT SR.  
(Singing)  
*But what of a home in heaven...* \*

**INT. PORTER HOME - WALTON'S BEDROOM - CONTINUOUS**

-- And enters Walton's bedroom.

WALTON (V.O.)  
He taught me how to work. \*

WALT SR. (O.C.)  
(Singing)  
*Where will you live after death...*

**ON YOUNG WALTON (12)**

Asleep on a crummy mattress.

The room resembles the bedroom of an itinerant farmer.

Walt Sr. dumps fresh piss onto his sleeping son.

WALT SR. (CONT'D)

Up.

Young Walton awakes shocked; terrified.

WALT SR. (CONT'D)

Move, or the niggers'll beat us.

**INT. PORTER HOME - KITCHEN - LATER**

Walt Sr. and Walton, dressed in farming clothes, leaving.

**NELLE PORTER (30), Walton's mother,** cooks at the stove.

WALT SR.

Grab another Old Granddad before  
we're back.

NELLE

Got hominy and links on the table.

Walt Sr. and Walton leave.

**INT. TRUCK (MOVING) - DAWN**

Sunrise over Texas cottonland.

Walt Sr. drives with his knees as he pours whisky into a tin  
coffee mug.

**EXT. COTTON FIELD - MORNING**

Walt Sr. and Walton and **FARMERS, all black,** picking cotton.

**ON WALTON**

Struggling; his hands, bleeding.

**LATER**

Walton and Walt Sr. take their cash payments.

Walton spots Cadillacs and Buicks passing on the highway.

Each car carries **white, affluent FAMILIES.**

**INT. SCHOOL - CLASSROOM - DAY**

Walton at his desk, so burly he barely fits in it.

Walton inspects his cotton-scabbed hands.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Now, some kids're made for school.

A **TEACHER (30's)** gives the class a lesson on English grammar.  
Classmates throw wadded up paper at Walton and tease him.

TEACHER  
Walton Porter --

Walton looks up at the teacher.

TEACHER (CONT'D)  
Read back the sentence.

WALTON (V.O.)  
I wasn't one of those kids.

Walton stands. His eyes squint.

**ON THE BLACKBOARD (WALTON'S POV)**

The words twisting and bending, revealing Walton's dyslexia.

WALTON (O.C.)  
(Struggling)  
Because Johnny had three eggs --

TEACHER  
*Friends*, Walton -- not eggs.

CLASSMATE  
Walton doesn't have *friends*!

**ON WALTON**

The class laughs while Walton grows embarrassed and angry.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Laugh at a kid, you break his  
heart.

**INT. PORTER HOME - TV ROOM - NIGHT**

Walt Sr., drinks beside Nelle; they watch TV.

Walton passes by --

WALTON \*  
What's for dinner? \*

WALT SR. \*  
Dinner you gotta earn, son. \*

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
Do worse, you seed a monster. \*

**INT. SCHOOL - PLAYGROUND - CONTINUOUS**

Walton's Classmates, playing.

Walton sits alone on a bench, looking out onto a highway. \*

CLASSMATE #1  
Hey, Walton -- you fucking retard.  
How 'bout you pick me some cotton  
like your nigger friends?

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
Keep laughing, you make him a \*  
monster. \*

Walton stands and approaches his Classmate.

In one smooth, violent punch he breaks Classmate #1's nose. \*

**INT. SCHOOL - PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY**

Walton sitting across from **MRS. HANOVER (50's), the school principal.**

Walton is flanked by his mother and father.

MRS. HANOVER  
You don't throw punches, Walton.  
It's not Christian.

NELLE \*  
We don't need a lecture on what's \*  
Christian -- \*

WALT SR. \*  
Nelle -- \*

WALTON \*  
(V.O.) \*  
Now, some folks find fortune -- \*

MRS. HANOVER  
You'd be on the bus to juvy,  
weren't for Mr. Hanover's charity --

WALTON  
Charity?  
(V.O.)  
Others fortune finds. \*

MRS. HANOVER  
He's putting you on the football  
team, giving that anger a home.

WALT SR.  
Football won't pay our bills.

MRS. HANOVER  
I've seen Walton's kind.

NELLE  
(Controlled, but irate)  
And what's my son's kind? \*

Walt Sr. flashes Nelle a look; she stops. \*

Walt Sr. gathers himself and turns to Walton. \*

WALT SR.  
Well done, son.

WALTON (V.O.)  
And with my father's approval --

We hear the sound of football pads crashing as we move to -- \*

**EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY**

In quick succession, Walton crushes **TEAMMATE**-after-**TEAMMATE**.

WALTON (V.O.)  
-- It began. \*

Walton delivers one hit on a **TEAMMATE**. \*

WALTON (V.O.)  
No drug on God's green earth can  
free and feed the spirit like a  
proper hit. \*

Walton looks down at the injury.



WALTON  
(Mouthguard in mouth)  
Whoa.

We see the Teammate's ankle twisted in the wrong direction. \*

Teammate howls in agony.

WALTON (V.O.)  
I mean, you take an animal like  
yours truly, have him do what on  
the streets would get him locked up  
and *cheer* him for it? \*

**COACH HANOVER (50's)** rushes over.

COACH HANOVER  
Fellas, pick him up and take him  
in.

**PLAYERS** pick up the injured Teammate and haul him away.

WALTON (V.O.)  
That's not football -- that's  
fuckin' warfare.

Coach Hanover approaches Walton.

COACH HANOVER  
Damn, Walton --

WALTON (V.O.)  
And I loved it.

Coach Hanover hawks up some phlegm and spits.

COACH HANOVER  
We found you a calling.

**EXT. WOODROW WILSON HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM - NIGHT**

**High school WALTON (18)** runs wild from sideline-to-sideline,  
delivering gravity-bending hit-after-hit.

With every tackle, Walton looks to the bleachers.

**IN THE BLEACHERS**

We see Walt Sr., drinking as he sits next to Nelle. \*

**ON WALTON**

Swelling with rage and insecurity.

WALTON (V.O.)  
 Folks think high school's for  
 chuggin' beer and chasin' tail. I  
 preferred breaking bones. It took  
 me further.

Walton nearly decapitates the **opposing QUARTERBACK**. \*

**INT. PORTER HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Walton, Walt Sr. and Nelle sitting on the couch.

The Porters sit across from an **SMU ASSISTANT COACH (40's)** and  
 an **SMU BOOSTER (50's)**.

The Booster is dressed to the nines in a bespoke suit and  
 shined, ostrich-skin cowboy boots.

SMU ASSISTANT  
 Walton, SMU wants to make you a  
 Mustang.

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
 Like any Southern boy, raging \*  
 beneath the *yes sirs* and *God bless* \*  
*you, ma'ams* was a hunger for \*  
 something else -- \*

WALT SR.  
 Ya'll gonna race him?

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
 Something big -- \*

SMU ASSISTANT  
 Oh, we're gonna give your boy room  
 to gallop, Mr. Porter.

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
 Something I couldn't put my finger \*  
 on -- \*

NELLE \*  
 I want him educated. \*

WALT SR. \*  
 Excuse my wife, fellas -- she has a \*  
 talking problem. \*

Laughter; men. \*

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
 An empire of my own -- \*

SMU BOOSTER

Son, I've seen you lay hits like  
God's thunder. But if you come to  
SMU, we won't just develop your  
ball skills. We'll develop you as a  
man and as a Christian.

WALT SR.

Maybe he'll learn work.

Walt Sr. crosses himself; Walton thinks.

WALTON (V.O.)

For most, recruiting is the  
pinnacle of love and affection. For  
me, recruiting was a lesson.

WALT SR.

Lord knows he doesn't know honest  
labor.

Walton stands, extends his hands to the Booster.

WALTON (V.O.)

'Cause right then and there, I  
learned how empires are built --

SMU Booster and Walton shake hands.

We **FOCUS** on --

Their handshake: the Booster hands Walton a neatly folded  
\$100 bill.

We **FREEZE** on the bill --

WALTON (V.O.)

-- You fuckin' pay for them.

And then **UN-FREEZE** as Walton's eyes widen and alight.

**EXT. OWNBY STADIUM - NIGHT**

**SMU** in a bloody game against **TCU**.

**Walton (now 20)** delivers hit-after-hit.

WALTON (V.O.)

Shit, I said football's like  
warfare? Fuck that. You can't fuck  
a cheerleader in a foxhole.

Walton delivers a massive hit that leaves a **TCU PLAYER** unconscious.

**TRAINERS** tend to the fallen player.

Walton removes his helmet and looks to the bleachers.

WALTON (V.O.)  
And you don't get to line your  
pockets neither. Well...

**IN THE BLEACHERS**

We focus on **BOOSTERS**, standing out like sore thumbs, dressed to the nine and sporting golf tans.

**ON WALTON SR.**

Drinking from a flask, looking totally unimpressed.

**EXT. OWNBY STADIUM - LOCKER ROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT**

**SMU PLAYERS** celebrate their win, but Walton looks subdued.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Shit, I loved the game. But I was a  
kid without a nickel to my name.

Suddenly, Boosters flow into the locker room.

**WHIT HAYES (50's), a Highland Park banker**, approaches Walton.

HAYES  
Son, I'm White Hayes. Class of '59.  
I've been watching you all year.

**ON THE HANDSHAKE**

A \$100 bill exchanged from Hayes to Walton.

**ON HAYES & WALTON**

HAYES (CONT'D)  
I want you to come work for me this  
summer. If you can handle oil like  
you can handle a pullin' guard --

Walton beams.

**INT. HAYES OIL - DAY**

Walton, in an awkward-fitting suit, sits in a corner cubicle.

Hayes approaches Walton's cubicle.

HAYES  
Lunch. Petroleum Club.

WALTON  
Mr. Hayes, I gotta crunch these  
numbers for the Bakersfield buy.

HAYES  
That oil's going nowhere, and I'm  
too hungry and too sober.

\*

**INT. WHITE HAYES' CADILLAC (MOVING) - DAY**

Hayes at the wheel; Walton in the passenger seat.

They drive through Highland Park: cradle of Dallas' oldest,  
most extreme wealth.

Walton marvels at the homes' sizes and luxury.

HAYES  
What do you think, son?

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
What do I think?  
(To Hayes)  
Sir?

HAYES  
The homes.

WALTON (V.O.)  
I grew up in an East Dallas shack  
gettin' drenched in my dad's piss --  
(To Hayes)  
They're beautiful, Mr. Hayes.

HAYES  
A man needs a home. Women, sure;  
cars -- but a home?

WALTON (V.O.)  
What do I think? I was a cotton-  
pickin' nobody riding a Cadillac to  
the Petroleum Club for a steak  
lunch --

HAYES  
Man needs a home.

WALTON

I agree, sir.

WALTON (V.O.)

What do I think? Fuck you. That's  
what I think.

**INT. PETROLEUM CLUB - DAY**

Old school, highfalutin club on the top floor of a skyscraper  
overlooking downtown Dallas. \*

**BUSINESSMEN** power-lunch over steaks and martinis. \*

Hayes escorts Walton through the club; Walton looks star-  
struck. \*

Hayes shakes hand and back-slaps with **BUSINESSMAN-after-  
BUSINESSMAN**. \*

**LATER** \*

Walton devours a Porterhouse.

Accompanying Walton and Hayes is **VINCE KERRY (40's)**, Hayes'  
**lawyer. Vince will prove to become an important player in our  
story.**

HAYES

-- 'Cause no one can negotiate like  
you, Vince. \*

VINCE

So the NFL's your next stop,  
Walton? \*

At the adjacent table, two **BUSINESSMEN (30's)**, have a heated  
conversation that catches Walton's ear.

BUSINESSMAN #1

-- Real estate *is* the new oil,  
Pete. With a 6% broker's fee you  
become -- \*

BUSINESSMAN #2

Yeah, an overnight millionaire.  
Bullshit.

Walton's ears perk up. \*

BUSINESSMAN #1

My two houses and two Cadillacs say  
otherwise. \*

VINCE

Walton?

Hayes downs a martini.

HAYES

Shit, son -- come up for air.

WALTON

(Embarrassed)

Yes, sir --

HAYES

Now, I know I said a man needs a  
home. But a man also needs a  
lawyer; so Walton, I want you and  
Vince here --

\*  
\*

A **WAITER** bypasses the table; Hayes nearly grabs him.

\*

HAYES (CONT'D)

(Re. Walton)

He'll do that again.

WAITER

Yes, sir.

WALTON

(Embarrassed)

Mr. Hayes, you don't --

HAYES

-- And get the kid a Gibson.

\*

WAITER

Yes, sir.

Waiter leaves.

WALTON

Mr. Hayes, I don't drink.

HAYES

You do when you celebrate.

WALTON

Sir?

HAYES

Your new job, assuming you wanna be  
an oil man.

\*  
\*

WALTON

Yes, sir --

\*  
\*

HAYES

Get your degree and we'll get to  
work -- 'long as you beat Texas'  
ass next year.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

**EXT. OWNBY STADIUM - NIGHT**

SMU taking on TCU. Walton's last game as a Mustang.

\*

**ON THE SCORBOARD**

TCU: 24 - SMU: 21.

TCU QUARTERBACK drops back to pass.

Walton intercepts the pass and returns it for a touchdown.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Now, most would dread the end of  
their playing days. But I saw no  
point grinding my body to dust.

\*  
\*

SMU wins; bedlam; Walton, joyous, looks to the bleachers.

\*

**ON THE BOOSTERS**

Thrilled; high-fiving.

**EXT. OWNBY STADIUM - TUNNEL - LATER**

Walton, congratulated by FANS and BOOSTERS, is approached by  
HAYDEN FRY (50's), SMU's Head Coach.

\*  
\*

MARK GREGORY (50's), scout for the Dallas Cowboys walks with  
Coach Fry.

\*

HAYDEN

Walton, this is Mark Gregory --  
scout with the Dallas Cowboys.

\*

Gregory and Walton shake hands.

GREGORY

Tex Schramm and Coach Landry are  
big fans of yours, Walton.

\*  
\*

WALTON

Thank you, sir.

(V.O.)

Like I gave a shit.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*



GREGORY  
How'd you like to be a Cowboy?

**WE FOCUS ON**

**EX-SMU FOOTBALL PLAYERS (40's; 50'; 60's)** limping about the stadium, congratulating players. \*

WALTON (V.O.)  
(Laughing)  
Be a Cowboy. I'd rather be able to walk in my forties. \*

**INT. WALTON'S CAR OLDSMOBILE (MOVING) - THAT NIGHT**

Walton driving home.

**INT. PORTER HOME - TV ROOM - LATER**

Walton enters to find his mother, cigarette-in-hand, on the floor beside Walton Sr.

Walton Sr. is collapsed face-down on the floor.

Walton stops in his tracks. \*

NELLE  
You know what his last words were?  
"Fuck." Thirty years I knew him.  
Twenty nine married. "Fuck." His will and testimony. \*

Nelle shakes her head.

Walton kneels down besides his dead father.

NELLE (CONT'D)  
Shoot, even dead he's an asshole:  
I'm gonna have to drag his ass off the carpet myself. \*

**EXT. CEMETARY - MORNING**

Walton and Nelle standing beside Walt Sr.'s fresh grave; they're the only mourners. \*

NELLE  
I wish I had some pearl to offer you, love; something to set you and your heart right. I can't. He was a son of a bitch. \*

WALTON

Let's go.

Walton and Nelle turn to walk away.

**INT. HAYES PROPERTIES - WHITE HAYES' OFFICE - LATER**

Walton enters Hayes' office in his mourning clothes.

Hayes sits behind his desk.

WALTON

Mr. Hayes --

HAYES

You dressed for the prom, son?

WALTON

Sir, I was hoping to discuss my  
start date here.

HAYES

Walton, I hate to do this, but your  
job's been filled.

WALTON

Filled?

HAYES

Mr. Hunt rec'd someone just a bit  
more qualified.

Walton looks over to the SMU Grad at his desk; looks back at  
Hayes.

**THROUGH HAYES' OFFICE WINDOW**

A **blonde SMU GRAD** sitting at Walton's old cubicle.

WALTON

Qualified.

(V.O.)

Out of a father, out of a job --

**INT. WALTON'S CAR (MOVING) - DUSK**

Walton driving down Dallas' 'Magic Corridor,' which leads us  
north from the city to farmland.

Walton stops his car in front of a tract of ugly farmland.

Walton exits his car and surveys the farmland.

WALTON (V.O.)  
A man needs a home.

\*

He sees a **CONSTRUCTION CREW** building a highway.

Walton approaches the Construction Crew.

WALTON  
What're ya'll working on?  
(V.O.)  
Women, sure; cars, maybe.

\*

\*

CONSTRUCTION WORKER  
They're expanding north.

WALTON (V.O.)  
But a home?  
(End V.O.)  
Who's they?

\*

\*

\*

CONSTRUCTION WORKERS  
Dallas.

Walton looks out again into the farmland.

WALTON (V.O.)  
A man needs a home.

Walton has an idea.

WALTON  
Hey, whose land is that?

\*

**INT. JERRY DON STILES' OFFICE - DAY**

Walton sits across from **JERRY DON STILES (50's)**, a burly Texan home builder.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Now, I knew dick about real estate--

\*

\*

STILES  
Son, do you have *any* experience  
selling real estate?

\*

\*

WALTON  
Mr. Stiles, with a simple broker's  
fee, I can help you build on the  
Ballinger land --

STILES  
Assuming they're fine with *building*  
on their land.

WALTON

Well, sir, you know what 'assume'  
stands for --

STILES

Yeah, means you're yankin' my nuts.

\*

**INT. BALLINGER MANSION - DAY**

Walton pitching **MR. and MRS. BALLINGER (60's), a Highland Park blue-blood couple** who owns the land that inspired Walton.

\*

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Now, Mr. and Mrs. Ballinger, with  
Mr. Stiles signing on --

\*

MR. BALLINGER

He's signed on?

WALTON

Shoot, he'll start digging  
yesterday he's so eager. Dallas is  
primed for the largest suburban  
expansion in the lower forty-eight,  
and with your land --

MR. BALLINGER

Son, what the fuck --

Mrs. Ballinger slaps Mr. Ballinger's knee in disgust.

MR. BALLINGER (CONT'D)

Son, what the heck do you know  
about suburban expansion?

\*

WALTON

(Stumbling)

Uh -- well, sir --

**INT. JERRY DON STILES' OFFICE - DAY**

Walton spots a black and white photo of a younger Stiles in  
an SMU football uniform.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Some have smarts --

\*

(End V.O.)

\*

See, Mr. Stiles, when I played ball  
at SMU, I figured --

\*

Stiles' ears perk up; he smiles --

STILES

I thought that was a linebacker's  
neck on ya' --

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

But I'm as dumb as they get.

\*

\*

**INT. BALLINGER MANSION - DAY**

Walton continuing his pitch to the Ballingers.

WALTON

See, when I was playing football  
for SMU --

MR. BALLINGER

A Mustang!

WALTON (V.O.)

Doesn't take a genius to get  
leverage.

\*

\*

\*

MRS. BALLINGER

(Re. Walton's hand)

An unmarried Mustang.

\*

MR. BALLINGER

What's that gotta -- ?

\*

\*

MRS. BALLINGER

Young man like this: unattached and  
working too hard --

WALTON

Well, ma'am, between work and  
church --

\*

Mrs. Ballinger smiles.

**EXT. BALLINGER LAND - DAY**

**CONSTRUCTION CREWS** building fresh real estate on empty land.  
Walton overlooks the entire operation.

WALTON (V.O.)

I had no fucking clue what I was doing, but I had a \$6 million piece of property plus a standard brokerage fee of 6%, which got the Ballingers enough cash for a second house in Aspen, Stiles enough cache to make him North Texas' hottest home builder, and myself enough dough to turn me from broke to wealthy overnight. I'd call that a win.

**INT. HOME BUILDER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Walton sitting across from another **HOME BUILDER #1 (50's)**.  
Walton holds a map of North Texas up for the Home Builder.

WALTON (V.O.)

And you know what feels better than your first win? Your second.

(To Home Builder #1)

These tracts of land --

Walton points to green on the map --

WALTON

-- Used to sprout corn. Now, they'll sprout houses.

**EXT. FARM - DAY**

**BUILDING CREWS** turning a farm into a real estate development.

**INT. FARM HOUSE - DAY**

Walton sitting across from a **FARMER (60's)**, negotiating for new land to build on.

WALTON

My broker's fee aside, you stand to make --

Farmer laughs.

FARMER

Son, my daddy chased the Red Man off this land, and I'm fixin' to do the same to you.

WALTON

Yes, sir.

Walton stands, buttons his jacket and turns to leave.

**EXT. FARM HOUSE - ROADSIDE - DAY**

Walton waiting inside his new Cadillac.

WALTON (V.O.)

I was a step away sittin' in that  
farmer's shoes. Difference between  
me and him was I woulda done  
anything to stay out of 'em.

Farmer drives off of his land in a pickup truck.

Walton turns on his car and drives towards the Farmer's home.

**INT. FARM HOUSE - LATER**

Walton stands outside the farmhouse holding two canisters of  
gasoline, watching it burn.

WALTON (V.O.)

Understand: I didn't care who owned  
the land, where it was --

Walton turns and walks away.

**EXT. HIGH RISE OFFICE - DAY**

Walton shaking hands with **REALTOR #2 (50's)**.

WALTON (V.O.)

I wanted it --

REALTOR

This your first high-rise, Mr.  
Porter?

WALTON (V.O.)

And I wanted to build on it.

Walton gestures over Realtor #2's shoulder.

**ACROSS THE HIGHWAY**

A trio of high rises.

**ON REALTOR #2 & WALTON**

WALTON  
(Gesturing)  
My fourth.

\*  
\*  
\*

**INT. NEIMAN MARCUS - SUIT SECTION - DAY**

Walton wears a slightly ill-fitting suit. He leafs through a rack of Italian-made suits.

A **SALESWOMAN (30's)** approaches Walton.

\*

SALESWOMAN  
These're hand sewn in Naples.

WALTON  
I'll take the rack.

\*  
\*

SALESWOMAN  
The rack?

WALTON  
And your phone number.

**INT. NEIMAN MARCUS - DRESSING ROOM - LATER**

\*

Walton fucking the Saleswoman.

**EXT. CADILLAC DEALERSHIP - DAY**

Walton sitting across from a **CAR SALESMAN (40's)**.

\*

WALTON  
I want two of your most expensive  
model.

\*

CAR SALESMAN  
Two?

\*

WALTON  
One for the week, one for the  
weekend.

\*

CAR SALESMAN  
(Taken aback)  
And the, uh, color?

\*

WALTON  
Night-black.

CAR SALESMAN  
Night-black?

\*



WALTON

No --

(Beat)

Pre-dawn black.

CAR SALESMAN

Pre-dawn black.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - DAY**

Walton being shown around an empty mansion on Strait Lane,  
Dallas' most prestigious street to live on, by a **female**  
**REALTOR (30's)**.

REALTOR

Now, you understand, Mr. Porter --

WALTON

Walton.

Walton smirks; his gaze says they're already fucking.

REALTOR

You understand, *sir*, that with this  
sorta home comes a sorta --

\*

WALTON

Status?

\*

REALTOR

That's putting it one way.

WALTON

Putting it another way -- this  
place got a bedroom fit for a king?

\*

REALTOR

Depends -- who's the king?

\*

\*

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - BEDROOM - DAY**

Walton aggressively fucking the Realtor.

\*

**THROUGH THE WINDOWS/ONTO THE STREET**

\*

A Cadillac carrying a **FAMILY of four** stops before the house.

\*

**CHILDREN** in the backseat spot Walton and Realtor fucking  
through the window.

Walton flashes a cocky smile and flashes a thumbs-up.

\*

The kids' eyes bug.

\*

**EXT. HAYES OIL - NIGHT**

Walton, angry and determined, approaches the front door of the company that rejected him.

\*

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
I'm told anger's poison. Shit, I  
like anger. Keeps me alive.

\*

\*

\*

The streets are dead.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
Not yet, Walton --

We then hear cheering in the distance.

Walton turns his head towards the cheering.

**EXT. OWNBY STADIUM - NIGHT**

SMU taking on NORTH TEXAS STATE.

**IN THE STANDS**

Walton, alone; he looks over at the cluster of Boosters.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
-- Not yet, but soon enough.

Walton smirks at the Boosters, and then returns his attention to the game.

\*

**INT. PETROLEUM CLUB - DAY**

\*

Walton enters the club and spots among the crowd --

\*

**THE ROUNDTABLE**, at which is seated **major PLAYERS in our story**: SMU BOOSTERS and MEMBERS of THE BOARD OF GOVERNORS.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
The Roundtable. Every pound of  
power and influence in the State of  
Texas confined to one table of  
empty martini glasses and half-  
eaten New York Strips.

At The Roundtable are:

**KENNY YATES** (60's, portly, leathery skin), Walton's mentor-to-be;

the once-and-future **TEXAS GOVERNOR BILL CLEMENTS** (60's);

**MARTY SCHULTZ** (50's), an **SMU Booster** and political insider in Texas and national politics;

**BOB HITCH** (50's), **SMU Athletic Director**;

**HENRY LEE PARKER** (50's), **SMU's Recruiting Coordinator**;

and **BOBBY STEWART** (40), **Chairman of the SMU Board of Governors**.

Seated conspicuously beside Kenny Yates, we see Vince Kerry -- Whit Hayes' lawyer.

Kenny Yates missile-locks on Walton.

Kenny leans to Vince and asks --

KENNY

That him?

Vince nods, Yes.

Walton walking among the **Petroleum Club ARISTOCRACY** with unmistakable swagger. He looks down at a newspaper.

**ON THE NEWSPAPER**

Ron Meyer: UNLV Football's Magician

**ON WALTON**

Pursing his brow.

Walton spots Whit Hayes at a table.

WALTON

Whit --

Walton slaps Whit on the shoulder. Like a man.

HAYES

Walton, I was just singing your praises --

WALTON

Were you.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

HAYES

Well, not just singing. I was  
thinkin' you and I --

\*  
\*  
\*

Kenny whistles through his teeth.

Walton turns to Kenny.

Kenny waves Walton over; Walton approaches.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

When that fat fuck called me over  
like a dog --

\*  
\*

KENNY

(Gesturing to Vince)  
Little birdie told me you was  
Walton Porter.

WALTON (V.O.)

-- I was in.  
(To Kenny)  
Still am.

\*

VINCE

I was telling Mr. Yates here --

Kenny snaps his finger.

A **WAITER** rushes to the table.

VINCE (CONT'D)

-- You're about my hungriest  
client.

\*

KENNY

(To Waiter)  
Grab Mr. Porter a chair, will ya'?

WALTON

Oh, I don't wanna interrupt --

KENNY

You wanna offend?

Waiter returns with a chair and pushes it behind Walton.

\*

Kenny extends his hand; Walton shakes.

KENNY (CONT'D)

Kenny Yates.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Think I didn't know?  
(Sitting)  
Didn't you and H.L. Hunt -- ?

\*  
\*  
\*

KENNY  
Hit oil a couple times?

\*

SCHULTZ  
We were discussing --

KENNY  
Walton, this gang of fuck-ups is  
the backbone of SMU and its  
football program. Russ Potts, our  
AD; Bobby Stewart, Chairman of the  
Board of Governors --

\*

STEWART  
You that boy buying up all that  
office space off 635?

WALTON  
I got a couple buildings.

KENNY  
-- Henry Lee Parker, our Recruiting  
Coordinator; 'course you know  
Governor Clements.

\*  
\*

Walton shakes hands with Clements.

CLEMENTS  
Heard you played some ball for us.

\*

**L. DONALD SHIELDS (30's, boyish), President of SMU,**  
approaches the table.

SHIELDS  
Excuse my tardiness --

KENNY  
The Honorable L. Donald Shields,  
University President --

\*

SHIELDS  
(To Walton)  
I think you're in my chair.

KENNY  
He's not, Donny.

\*

SHIELDS  
Well, I'll -- uh --

\*

Shields signals for a Waiter to bring him a chair.

KENNY

Walton, we've been batting around  
names for a new football coach, but-

CLEMENTS

(To Walton)

You confuse me, son.

WALTON

Sir?

CLEMENTS

You're parta that hippie  
generation, but word is you can  
outwork anyone. What's your  
generation want in a head coach?

\*  
\*

COLLINS

He means: what's your generation  
want in a Governor?

\*

KENNY

Or a President.

\*  
\*

A **WAITER** brings Shields a chair.

WALTON

Well, recruiting beats scheme --

Shields sits, squeezed between Schultz and Governor Clements.

COLLINS

That mean I gotta fork over *more*  
cash for this program, Walton?

WALTON

I'm just saying' --

KENNY

That we need USC money, Notre Dame  
prestige --

STEWART

Which we got in spades.

CLEMENTS

That right, Bobby?

HENRY LEE PARKER

If ya'll wanna best the Hebes and  
Catholics --

\*

Chortles.

\*

PRESIDENT SHIELDS  
Gentlemen, I don't think we have  
the money to hire that kinda coach.

Everyone looks annoyed with Shields.

\*

KENNY  
(Eating)  
Chicken shit duhn't make chicken  
salad --  
(belches)  
-- scyooze me -- and shit coaches  
make shit programs.

SCHULTZ  
Woody Hayes.

STEWART  
He ain't leavin' Ohio State.

SCHULTZ  
Barry Switzer.

Chortles.

\*

SCHULTZ (CONT'D)  
All right -- Bear Bryant.

CLEMENTS  
Now you're fuckin' with us.

Kenny turns to Walton and flashes a look that says, *See?*

WALTON (V.O.)  
They had money and ambition. Any  
asshole can have that. But rage?  
Now it was Jack Krause's turn to  
help in 3, 2, 1 --

\*

In steps **JACK KRAUSE (50's), a portly Texas A&M Booster.**

KRAUSE  
Fellas --

The Roundtable looks up at Krause.

KENNY  
Jack, either you're ignoring my  
calls, or you're tired of me  
kickin' your ass by the 12th hole.

KRAUSE

I'll take a golf loss to the ass-  
whoopin' my Aggies served your  
Ponies last Saturday.

The Roundtables' faces turn from polite to murderous.

\*

KRAUSE (CONT'D)

Do us a favor and sport a team that  
can hang with us, hm?

\*

Krause walks away.

WALTON (V.O.)

And like that --

Clements, looking down at his afternoon martini, begins --

CLEMENTS

We're gonna find ourselves a new  
coach.

\*

\*

HENRY LEE PARKER

And a new program.

\*

The Round Table begins to break off and kibbitz in small  
groups.

Kenny leans in to Walton.

KENNY

My wife's throwin' a little some'n'  
tonight at our home. Stop by. Got  
some folks in the Mustang community  
who'd love to shake your hand.

Walton smiles. He can hardly contain himself.

**EXT. KENNY'S MANSION - NIGHT**

A home befitting a plantation owner's.

WALTON (V.O.)

All his house lacked was a cannon  
pointed north --

\*

\*

\*

Walton exits his Cadillac; he's dressed to the nines.

Walton hands his keys to a **VALET PARKER** and enters --

\*



INT. KENNY'S MANSION - FOYER - CONTINUOUS

Southern grandiosity. Kenny approaches Walton. \*

KENNY

You lost? \*

Walton smiles and shakes Kenny's hand. \*

A **WAITER** with a tray of whiskeys passes them by.

Kenny picks up a whiskey and hands one to Walton.

WALTON (V.O.)

You sure about that, Walton? \*

Walton eyes the whiskey nervously but sips. \*

KENNY

Follow --

With the sip, Walton looks pained, relieved and elated; the drink, for Walton, is dangerous. \*

Kenny escorts Walton to **ROBERT FOLSOM (late 50's), Dallas' Mayor.**

KENNY (CONT'D)

Mayor Folsom, I want you to meet  
Walton Porter --

They shake hands.

MAYOR FOLSOM

I remember when you snapped  
quarterbacks' necks --

KENNY

Walton just joined the University  
Board of Governors --

Walton's eyes light up.

MAYOR FOLSOM

Just don't run for Mayor.

Kenny escorts Walton away from Mayor Folsom; they then near  
President Shields. \*

KENNY

Keep walking. \*

SHIELDS

Hey, Kenny -- can we -- ?

KENNY

Later.

**ALBERT CASEY (40's), CEO of American Airlines**, approaches Kenny.

ALBERT CASEY (O.C.)

Kenny --

KENNY

Albert, I've offered you pussy,  
houses, and a state without an  
income tax. I got nothing left.

\*

CASEY

Last request --

KENNY

When's the last time New York *acted*  
like it valued American Airlines?

CASEY

Ten year wait for a Dallas Country  
Club membership. If you can cut it--

\*

KENNY

That's your line in the sand?

Casey pops a cocktail olive into his mouth; smiles.

CASEY

It's a stunning course.

Kenny walks away; Walton follows.

\*

**INT. KENNY'S MANSION - DINING ROOM - LATER**

**GUESTS** vulturing about the tables.

Walton finds his name tag at a table near a grand fireplace.

\*

Next to Walton's is a name tag that reads: **ANNA WALLACE.**

\*

Walton picks up the name tag.

ANNA (O.C.)

You must be Anna Wallace.

Walton turns to find --

**ANNA WALLACE, his beautiful wife-to-be.**

\*

Walton flashes an arrogant grin.

WALTON  
I'm Walton Porter Jr.

ANNA  
Walton Porter Jr.

WALTON  
Yes, ma'am.

ANNA  
Someone thought it wise to name a  
child Walton Porter not once but  
twice.

\*  
\*

WALTON  
That's right.

ANNA  
Oh, dear.

WALTON  
And you are?

ANNA  
Stuck with you, apparently.

\*

**LATER**

\*

Guests eating; Anna and Walton kibbitzing.

\*

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Moved down in '73 to open my  
boutique --

Walton gestures for another whiskey.

\*

WALTON  
Boutique?

\*

ANNA  
You ever had a girlfriend?

\*

WALTON  
A what, now?

\*

ANNA  
Or been laid?

WALTON  
My mother kissed me on the cheek  
once.

\*

**ON KENNY & BEVERLY**

Noticing Anna and Walton hitting it off.

**ON ANNA & WALTON**

ANNA

Who are you?

A waiter hands Walton another whiskey.

WALTON

Sorry?

ANNA

Whiskey and wine?

WALTON

I've ambition.

(Sips)

You were asking --

ANNA

(Smirks; gestures)

Well, those fellas with skin  
thicker than Tuscan leather --  
those are your reformed roughnecks.

(Gestures)

The white collared's with their  
secretaries' perfume on their necks--

WALTON

Priests?

ANNA

Bankers. About half the State  
Legislature's here. City Council.  
John Birchers. Stanley Marcus. The  
entire oil and gas industry.

(Gestures)

And those women who smell like  
gardenias? All melancholy and done  
up like marionettes --

WALTON

Lemme guess --

ANNA

Don't. Those're the wives.

(Beat; sips wine)

Then there's you. Now -- who are  
you?

Walton smiles, cuts and eats his steak.

WALTON  
Pennsylvania, you said?

\*

ANNA  
Schuylkill County.

WALTON  
Your father was a miner; your  
mother a maid. You grew up eating  
scraps at the knees of parents who  
spoke no English, and now you're  
eating filet --

ANNA  
I had the salmon --

WALTON  
-- Sipping French wine with the  
wealthiest families in Texas. Anna  
Wallace, I'm here for the same  
reason as you.

\*

ANNA  
And what's that?

WALTON  
The food.

Anna smiles; she's hooked.

\*

KENNY  
Sorry, Anna, can I grab your date  
for a jiff?

\*

\*

\*

ANNA  
God help me.

\*

\*

Laughter.

\*

**EXT. KENNY'S MANSION - STATUE GARDEN - CONTINUOUS**

\*

A statue garden thick with an assortment of statues imported  
from the Soviet Union of Lenin, Marx and Stalin.

\*

\*

Walton clutches his whiskey as he walks with Kenny.

\*

KENNY  
What's the difference between me  
and a Comanche?

\*

\*

\*

WALTON  
Smallpox?

\*

\*

KENNY

My scalps are made of concrete.

Walton spots an actual Soviet T-26 tank.

WALTON

This a scalp, too?

KENNY

Concrete and iron.

(Beat)

Walton, this city deserves more  
than fresh high rises and golf  
courses. I wanna give Dallas  
something to root for.

WALTON

Ever heard of the Cowboys?

KENNY

They own Sundays; I wanna own  
Saturdays.

(Beat)

The fellas and I are old farts a  
half-step away from a chestnut box.  
We can't hustle like you.

WALTON

I can give last rights, Kenny.

KENNY

Gimme a coach.

(Quick beat)

Gimme a coach and you'll have  
something that pays greater than  
any tract of land north of Plano.

WALTON

What's that?

KENNY

My loyalty.

WALTON (V.O.)

That's how I found Ron.

**EXT. UNLV - PRACTICE FIELD - DAY****BEGIN FLASHBACK.**The **UNLV FOOTBALL TEAM** practicing in desert heat.

**RON MEYER (30's), UNLV Head Football Coach -- and a pivotal player in our story --** coaches the team.

WALTON (V.O.)

UNLV was about the sorriest program  
in the country.

\*

**PLAYERS** hit each other again-and-again.

WALTON (V.O.)

But Ron could give two-shits. He  
wanted to be a head coach, didn't  
matter where --

\*

\*

\*

MEYER

Hit that motherfucker!

\*

**EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT**

**UNLV** getting its ass kicked by **BOISE STATE**.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

But you can only do so much at a  
mid-tier program, competing against  
mid-tier programs --

\*

\*

\*

\*

Meyer, pained by losing, struts the sideline.

\*

**EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY**

\*

A **PLAYER** collapses with heat-stroke.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

-- Not to mention desert heat.

\*

\*

**TEAMMATES** and **COACHES** encircle the Player.

\*

MEYER

Call the ambulance.

(Quick beat)

Again.

\*

\*

\*

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Now, you couldn't have paid *me* to  
play in 100+ degree heat, but --

\*

\*

**INT. MGM GRAND - DININGROOM - EVENING**

Coach Meyer eating surf 'n' turf with **UNLV BOOSTERS**, all  
decked out in gaudy 70's menswear.

\*

**GLAMOROUS WOMEN** with fake breasts; **MEN straight out of a mob flick** chomping down on steaks at surrounding tables. \*  
\*

UNLV BOOSTER #2

How much?

MEYER

How much what?

UNLV Booster #2 sucks air through his teeth to dislodge a piece of meat.

UNLV BOOSTER #2

To sign better recruits? \*

MEYER

How much money? \*

UNLV BOOSTER #1

That's criminal. \*

UNLV BOOSTER #2

We're in a building built on crime  
that houses a business built on  
crime in a city built on crime.  
Besides, who gives a shit? \*

(to Meyer)

We'll put something together:  
monthly stipends, cars; better gear- \*

UNLV BOOSTER #1

Cars?

MEYER

Fellas, don't tell me about the  
labor -- just show me the baby. \*

**INT. RECRUIT'S LIVING ROOM - AFTERNOON**

An **OFFENSIVE LINE RECRUIT (black)**, sits in a living room  
across from a **UNLV BOOSTER (50's)**. \*

The Offensive Line Recruit is flanked by his **MOTHER** and  
**FATHER (both 40's)**.

UNLV BOOSTER

'Course Alabama promises a great  
future. But UNLV promises you a  
great here-and-now.

OFFENSIVE LINE RECRUIT

Here-and-now?



UNLV Booster slides and envelope across the table. \*

The Recruit opens the envelope; his eyes widen. \*

**INT. UNLV FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

A **HORDE OF RECRUITS** follow Coach Meyer into the locker room.  
New UNLV football jerseys hang in their lockers. \*

**EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT**

UNLV BEATING one **OPPONENT after the next** into submission.

WALTON (V.O.)  
It's not that Ron learned 'bout the  
payroll at UNLV and brought it to  
Dallas -- \*

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

From **COPS** to **BUSINESSMEN**, everyone excitedly watching grainy  
TV broadcast of UNLV football. \*

WALTON (V.O.)  
-- He just knew good as any how to  
win. \*

**INT. NCAA HQ - MANKOWITZ'S OFFICE - LATER**

**MIKE MANKOWITZ (30's, clean-cut), Associate NCAA Director of  
Infractions, important to our story.** \*

Seated across from Mankowitz: **DOUG (20'), Mankowitz's  
subordinate.** \*

WALTON (V.O.)  
And what happens when you start  
winning, 'cause what happens --  
(Sighs)  
-- What happens is Mike. \*

MANKOWITZ  
What's UNLV's record?

WALTON (V.O.)  
Mike --

Subordinate looks at his records.

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
12-1.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Fuckin' --

MANKOWITZ  
And their head coach?

Subordinate looks down again; he keeps his head down.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
Mankowitz.

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
Ron Meyer.

MANKOWITZ  
Year before?

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
8-3.

MANKOWITZ  
Head coach?

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
Ron Meyer.

MANKOWITZ  
Year before?

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
1-10.

MANKOWITZ  
Head Coach: Rick Ireland. Year  
before?

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
2-9. Head coach --

MANKOWITZ  
Rick Ireland.

Mankowitz smirks.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Here's a good one: What's the  
difference between hemorrhoids and  
Mike Mankowitz?

Mankowitz picks up a manilla folder on his desk. He flips it  
open.

**ON THE PHOTOS**

Spanking new sports cars in the UNLV student lot. \*

SUBORDINATE DOUG (O.C.)  
What're these?

WALTON (V.O.)  
(Deadpan)  
Nothing. Get it.

MANKOWITZ  
UNLV football players' parking lot.

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
How'd you -- ?

MANKOWITZ  
Hired a P.I. \*

**ON SUBORDINATE DOUG/MANKOWITZ**

Subordinate Doug looks impressed.

SUBORDINATE DOUG  
Hey, these're nice cars. \*

MANKOWITZ  
Too nice.

Awkward beat as Doug and Mankowitz lock eyes. \*

Doug looks confused. \*

MANKOWITZ (CONT'D)  
Jesus, Doug, they're cheating.

**INT. NCAA HQ - WESTERBY'S OFFICE - DAY**

Mankowitz sits across from **his boss, CHUCK WESTERBY (40's)**.

WESTERBY  
Look, if you want the NCAA to pay  
for your vacation to Vegas --

MANKOWITZ  
I want the NCAA to do its job. \*

WESTERBY  
Seeing as I'm the Head of  
Infractions Enforcement at the NCAA-

MANKOWITZ  
Chuck, I didn't --

\*

WESTERBY  
Suppose you oughta investigate me,  
Mike.

\*

MANKOWITZ  
Chuck, wait --

\*

\*

WESTERBY  
Let's ready the tribunal. Let's the  
get the whole fuckin' --

\*

**INT. NCAA HQ - HALLWAY - LATER**

Mankowitz leaves Westerby's office and intersects with  
Subordinate Doug.

\*

SUUBORDINATE DOUG  
How'd it go?

MANKOWITZ  
I'm heading to Vegas.

SUUBORDINATE DOUG  
Chuck signed off?

MANKOWITZ  
Nope.

SUUBORDINATE DOUG  
Then how're you -- ?

MANKOWITZ  
You'll handle my receipts.

SUUBORDINATE DOUG  
But if Westerby hasn't OK'd --

Mankowitz almost physically flips out, causing Subordinate  
Doug to take a step back.

\*

**INT. UNLV'S PRESIDENT'S OFFICE - DAY**

**JIM COOPER (50's), UNLV President**, at his desk.

We see a UNLV crest behind his chair.

Cooper's **SECRETARY (60's)** enters his office, holding a slip  
of paper.

SECRETARY

President Cooper? A Mike Mankowitz  
is here to see you.

\*

COOPER

I don't know a Mike Mankowitz.

\*

SECRETARY

He asked that I tell you he knew  
you would say that. He also said  
he's the, uh --

\*

\*

Secretary consults her slip of paper.

SECRETARY (CONT'D)

-- The NCAA Associate Director of  
Infractions Enforcement.

President Cooper's look goes from confused to concerned.

\*

**INT. STEAKHOUSE - NIGHT**

President Cooper eating steaks along with Meyer and Boosters  
#1 and #2 from earlier.

Booster #2 disgustingly eats a whole side of spinach.

MEYER

Shit, Coop, football wins are good  
pub.

COOPER

Unlike NCAA sanctions --

\*

BOOSTER #2

\*

Ron, if you stick around, we're all  
gonna have to walk the plank.

MEYER

Fellas, they're bluffing.

**INT. MCCARRAN AIRPORT - LAS VEGAS - DAY**

Walton strutting through the airport.

**EXT. UNLV - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY**

\*

Walton approaches Ron as Ron barks out orders during  
practice.

\*

\*

WALTON

Ron Meyer?

Ron turns.

MEYER

Depending.

\*

**INT. UNLV - MEYER'S OFFICE - LATER**

Ron seated at his desk across from Walton.

WALTON

Shit, Ron -- we got strip clubs in  
Texas, too.

\*

\*

Ron takes a bottle of whiskey out of his desk.

MEYER

Women I can find anywhere.

Ron takes two to-go cups from his desk and pours the whiskey  
into the to-go cups.

\*

MEYER (CONT'D)

But my own program?

\*

Meyer hands Walton a cup.

\*

WALTON

Shit, you think I can't make you a  
kingmaker?

\*

MEYER

Considering as of just now I'd  
never heard of you.

\*

\*

\*

They clink cups; Walton quickly finishes his whiskey.

\*

WALTON

My dad drank.

MEYER

Mine, too.

Meyer pours Walton another.

\*

WALTON

I thought the shit poisoned him.  
Now I realize it threw his punches  
off target, knocked him out better  
than I coulda.

\*

MEYER

I never fought back. You?

\*

Walton shakes his head; they drink again.

\*

WALTON

I wanna know.

MEYER

Know what?

WALTON

How you built it.

\*

MEYER

Built it --

\*

WALTON

This powerhouse.

MEYER

Find 'em good, coach 'em good --

Walton chuckles.

\*

MEYER (CONT'D)

I find the best players around. I  
promise them more than they want,  
give them more than I promise, and  
get rid of them the minute I  
oughtta.

\*

WALTON

Come to SMU. Build me a dynasty.  
We've got resources you'll never  
enjoy in this desert -- and I'm not  
talking about water.

MEYER

I'm comfortable here.

WALTON

You're unsatisfied.

\*

MEYER

You my shrink?

WALTON

My friend, I'm the Alpha and Omega.  
I'm fate; divine luck; the voice of  
God Almighty giving you a chance to  
stamp your fuckin' name into the  
history books so folks remember who  
Ron Meyer was and what he did.

\*

\*

\*

\*

(MORE)

WALTON (CONT'D)

(Quick laugh)

Satisfied. That you speaking, or  
your daddy?

\*

MEYER

Walton, I applaud the performance.  
I oughtta to slip a twenty down  
your blouse. But mention my father  
again and --

\*

\*

\*

WALTON

Work with me, Ron.

\*

MEYER

Like I said, Walton, I'm --

\*

\*

WALTON

You're not, Ron. I'm not either.

\*

\*

MEYER

Thanks for swingin' by, Walton.

\*

\*

**INT. UNLV - HALLWAY - MEYER'S OFFICE - LATER THAT DAY**

Mankowitz knocks on the door; Ron answers.

\*

MANKOWITZ

Ron Meyer?

MEYER

Did my Secretary -- ?

\*

Mankowitz extends his hand; they shake.

\*

MANKOWITZ

Mike Mankowitz from the NCAA  
Infractions Committee. Got a  
minute?

MEYER

For the NCAA? I got two.

**EXT. WALTON'S OFFICE - DAY**

A new four-story office building on the edge of Dallas' city  
limits.

To the north, we see new developments popping up amid maize  
fields and grazing land dotted with cattle and longhorns.

Walton pulls up to the office in his Cadillac.



**INT. WALTON'S OFFICE - DAY**

Walton enters the office.

He nears his office, approaching the desk of **his secretary, RHONDA (40's)**.

RHONDA  
Mr. Porter, you have a message from  
a Ron Meyer.

Walton smiles.

\*

**EXT. DALLAS COUNTRY CLUB - GOLF COURSE - LATER THAT DAY**

Kenny golfing with his **SMU BUDDIES**.

Walton walks onto the green in a full suit.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Once Ron was in --

\*

\*

KENNY  
You always golf in a suit?

WALTON  
You want Bear Bryant coaching SMU?

\*

KENNY  
You nabbed Bear Bryant?

WALTON  
Better: the next one.

\*

**INT. SMU - PRESS CONFERENCE - MORNING**

Ron, dressed to the nines, confident as hell, addressing  
**LOCAL MEDIA**.

He sits beside L. Donald Shields and Bob Hitch.

Walton and Kenny stand in the back of the room.

\*

MEYER  
Well, we're gonna be competitive  
next year. I really feel that, uh,  
you can be competitive mentally and  
as well as physically --

WALTON (V.O.)  
I was already counting figures in  
my head.

MEYER

-- And I hope that's where we'll be. I'm not gonna say we're gonna be 11-0. I don't like to get into a numbers game. Just gonna play 'em one at a time.

WALTON (V.O.)

-- Up-fronts for recruits.

MEYER

So, uh, I think the fortunate thing about the SMU job is it's not a complete chaos.

WALTON (V.O.)

-- Moving expenses for their families --

MEYER

We're on very solid ground.

WALTON (V.O.)

-- New cars, women, stipends --

\*

MEYER

The team needs a lotta direction, a lotta positive influence --

\*

**EXT. THE PALM RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Walton entering The Palm with Meyer.

They trail SMU Boosters, Board Members, Donors.

Walton stops Ron.

WALTON

We're in this together, Ron.

\*

MEYER

Thick and thin.

\*

Walton smiles.

WALTON

Fuck this up and I'll kill you.

\*

Kenny approaches Walton.

\*

Ron walks away.

\*

KENNY  
Not bad, kid.

A **WAITER** approaches.

WAITER  
Mr. Porter? Phone call for you, sir-

WALTON  
Phone call?

KENNY  
Tell Anna hello.

Kenny winks and walks off.

**AT THE PHONE**

ANNA (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
You gonna ask me to lunch yet?

WALTON  
(Phone)  
As a feminist, I believe the lady  
should make the first move.

ANNA (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
Avner's. Tomorrow.

**INT. AVNER'S - DAY**

A power-lunch spot.

Awkward silence between Anna and Walton.

Walton's barely touched his steak.

ANNA  
You're supposed to slice that thing  
-- not tickle it.

Walton puts his silver wear down gently.

WALTON  
I don't do this.

ANNA  
Eat?

WALTON  
Date.

A Waiter nears the table.

ANNA  
Get him a double.

WAITER  
And the spirit, ma'am?

ANNA  
All of 'em.

Waiter walks away.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Mansion on Strait Lane -- Kenny  
told me -- two Cadillacs -- also  
Kenny -- and a soon-to-be real  
estate empire -- that was my  
research -- but you don't date?  
(Beat; raises eyebrows)  
Oh...

WALTON  
(Defensive)  
No --

ANNA  
No?

Waiter returns and hands Walton a drink; he drinks.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Last weekend you had your chest  
pumped out and teeth shining.

WALTON  
I'm not nervous.

ANNA  
If I were a betting woman, I'd say  
your nuts've already retreated up  
into your stomach.

Walton sighs, dejectedly; he motions for another drink.

Anna leans onto your elbows and locks eyes with Walton.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
Walton, I just wanna get to know  
you.

Walton smirks -- genuine, intrigued.

WALTON

How'd you get rich?

ANNA

Who said I'm rich?

WALTON

Boutique owner -- I listened -- driving a BMW -- watched you drive off from Kenny's -- wearing Louis Vitton heels and Floris 89 -- a men's cologne, no less -- which means your shop at Neiman's. Which means your shop where I shop. And I'm rich. So, tell me: how'd you get rich?

ANNA

Just like you.

WALTON

How's that?

ANNA

I found a way.

Waiter brings Anna a double whisky; Walton a martini.

WALTON

Well, I'm all yours now, Anna Wallace. What comes next?

Anna smiles.

**INT. WALTON'S CADILLAC - DAY**

Anna rides Walton, who looks like he's laboring through the sex. \*

Anna stops semi-abruptly and looks downward.

ANNA

Not your day, stud.

Anna caresses Walton's cheek.

ANNA (CONT'D)

How 'bout next time?

WALTON

Next time?

ANNA

Seeing you struggle turns me on.

Anna kisses Walton and playfully slaps him on the cheek. \*

**INT. SMU FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

First coaching staff meeting, **ten COACHES** in all. \*

Among the crowd are **STEVE ENDICOTT (30's), the offensive coordinator; LARRY KENNAN (30's), the defensive coordinator.**

Ron enters, dressed in a full suit. \*

The Coaches pipe down.

MEYER

Most ya'll think I'm here to use  
SMU as a springboard to coachin' at  
SC or Notre Dame. \*

ENDICOTT

-- Or the NFL. \*

Chuckles; Ron goes to the chalkboard. \*

MEYER

I'm here to build a dynasty. To do  
that, we're gonna out-recruit every  
program in America.

**ON THE CHALKBOARD**

Meyer draws a circle. Inside the circle he writes **DALLAS.**

ENDICOTT

How's that, Ron?

Meyer draws another circle, inside of which he writes  
**HOUSTON.**

MEYER

Holy shit, Steve -- I thought you'd  
never ask.

Meyer then connects the two circles with a line, labeled **I-45.** \*

MEYER (CONT'D)

The I-45 Corridor stretches from  
Dallas to Houston. We will dominate  
the I-45 Corridor.

(MORE)

MEYER (CONT'D)

We will nab recruits UT and A&M  
think're theirs, and take athletes  
not even on their radar.

ENDICOTT

You know something they don't?

\*

MEYER

Seeing as we're in a state where  
'bout yesterday Martin Luther King  
and I couldn't shit in the same  
bathroom --

\*

COACH #1

We marching on Washington?

MEYER

We're recruiting the best players.  
Skin color does not matter. If  
they're elite, they're ours. That  
means less practice and triple the  
usual recruiting time.

ENDICOTT

How's the University gonna pay for  
that?

MEYER

They're not.

Meyer motions to the back of the room.

#### **IN THE BACK OF THE ROOM**

Walton and Kenny, sitting.

\*

#### **ON THE COACHES**

MEYER (CONT'D)

Folks, this is Walton Porter Jr.  
and Kenny Yates. They and their  
Board have generously donated to  
the University's scholarship funds  
to enable your recruiting travel.

\*

ENDICOTT

Scholarship funds?

\*

MEYER

Jesus, Steve, I'm speaking  
indirectly.

\*

**INT. SMU - HENRY LEE PARKER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Parker at his desk. His phone rings.

HENRY LEE PARKER  
Parker --

WALTON (V.O.)  
We had it down pat --

\*

**INT. BANK - OFFICE - DAY**

Henry Lee Parker with a **BANKER**.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Henry Lee set up a slush fund at  
Bank of Highland Park --

**EXT. PAY PHONE - MOMENTS LATER**

Henry Lee Parker dialing a number on a pay phone.

**INT. INVESTMENT BANK - DAY**

**INVESTMENT BANKER (40's)** answer his phone.

INVESTMENT BANKER  
(Phone)  
Yeah --

WALTON (V.O.)  
-- Which one of Kenny's I-banking  
friends managed --

\*

\*

**INT. SMU FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

SMU's Assistant Coaches taking cash-filled envelopes from  
Henry Lee Parker.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Then Henry Lee divy'd up the cash  
for our Assistants.

**INT. LAW OFFICE - DAY**

Vince, Kenny's lawyer from before, presents a contract to  
Walton and Kenny.



WALTON (V.O.)

Vince wrote up four-year contracts  
for the recruits to sign; make the  
whole shit official --

VINCE

Now, this puts ya'll on the hook  
for weekly payments, so long as  
they're on the roster --

WALTON (V.O.)

Any program coulda slipped someone  
money or bought them a car. We  
needed the contracts to show we  
meant business. No one else had the  
balls to do that.

**INT. RECRUIT'S HOME - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Ron and Walton sitting across from a **JACK (18, white), a  
recruit and his MOTHER and FATHER.**

WALTON (V.O.)

Then Ron worked his magic.

MEYER

Jack, we're not here to blow smoke--

JACK'S FATHER

Jack doesn't take to flattery.

JACK'S MOTHER

Don't take to much at all.

JACK

SC offered money. UT, Florida --

\*

Meyer and Walton are taken aback by Jack's brazenness.

RON

Son, every program in the country  
worth its salt'll offer you money.

\*

WALTON

I doubt, however --

\*

\*

Walton slides a contract across the table.

WALTON (CONT'D)

-- They promised a contract 'til  
you sign one with Dallas Cowboys.

\*

\*

JACK  
I like The Steelers.

\*

RON  
'Course you do, son.

\*

**EXT. DALLAS - APARTMENTS - DAY**

Jack's Mother and Father moving into a spanking new apartment.

WALTON (V.O.)  
We figured we were starting a  
family business, so we might as  
well employ folks' families.

**EXT. FARM - DAY**

\*

A **FARMER RECRUIT (18)**, lifting haybales with **his FATHER**. Ron  
and Walton standing beside the recruit and his father.

\*

\*

FARMER RECRUIT  
Forget the NFL -- I'm a farmer at  
heart.

\*

\*

\*

Inspiration strikes Ron.

\*

RON  
What kinda financial shape this  
farm in?

\*

\*

\*

**EXT. CAR DEALERSHIP - DAY**

\*

Walton speaking to a **CAR SALESMAN (50's, slick)** in front of a  
lot of brand new sports cars.

\*

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
I worked out a deal with a  
dealership to give the boys some  
new cars in exchange for tickets --

\*

\*

\*

\*

**EXT. SMU - STUDENT PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY**

\*

**RECRUIT** after **RECRUIT** shaking hands with **BOOSTER** after  
**BOOSTER**, each handshake culminating in a new Pontiac or  
Corvette.

\*

\*

\*

INT. STEAKHOUSE - PRIVATE DINING ROOM - NIGHT

More **RECRUITS** eating dinner with **BOOSTERS**.

WALTON (V.O.)  
And I found some lovely ladies to  
help sweeten things.

BOOSTER #1  
Fellas, who here believes SMU can  
make their dreams come true?

A phalanx of **BEAUTIFUL WOMEN** file into the private dining  
room.

Recruits' eyes bug out.

INT. HIGH SCHOOL COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

Walton and Kenny sitting before a **HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL COACH**  
(50's, black).

WALTON (V.O.)  
Then we fulfilled Ron's dreams of  
social justice.

HIGH SCHOOL COACH  
-- Ain't ever told my players to go  
to Southern Methodist --

WALTON  
Southern Methodist ain't ever  
called.

KENNY  
We guarantee the fine young men at  
this high school a chance of a  
lifetime. Better'n' what Grambling--

Walton clears his throat.

KENNY (CONT'D)  
Better'n' what A&M or anyone else --

EXT. SEALY HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM - DAY

Walton and Ron mosey up to the stadium's fence. They look in  
and spot the team practicing.

Among the team, we see a man among boys --

**ERIC DICKERSON (18)**, the top running back recruit in the country, a future-Hall of Famer.

Dickerson jukes one defender, trucks another; stunning.

WALTON  
Who is that?

RON  
You mean *what* is that?

WALTON  
The Second Coming?

RON  
That, Walton, is Eric Dickerson.

**IN THE NEAR-DISTANCE**

We see Mike Mankowitz sitting atop a rental car.

Ron and Walton make eye contact with Mankowitz.

RON (CONT'D)  
Shit.

WALTON  
Friend of yours?

Mankowitz smiles.

RON  
Let's go.

**EXT. STRATFORD HIGH SCHOOL STADIUM - DAY**

Ron and Walton pull up to another practice field.

**ON THE FIELD**

Much like at Sealy, we see **a man among boys** --

**CRAIG JAMES (18)**, star running back recruit --

RON  
And *that* is Craig James. Him and Dickerson are the best players in America. We're gonna sign 'em both.

James trucks a **DEFENDER**.

WALTON  
We'll need more money.

RON  
Yes, we will.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Now, we knew getting Eric and Craig  
would be a challenge.

**EXT. DICKERSON HOME - DAY**

We see Dickerson walk out of his house into a new Pontiac.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Programs pulled out all the stops --

**EXT. DICKERSON HOME - DAY**

A trio of milk cows stand in a nearby pasture; a brand new  
Pontiac sits in the driveway.

Walton and Ron pull up to the home.

**GRANDMA DICKERSON (70's)** exits the home with Eric.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Shit, they even bought them fuckin'  
livestock.

Walton and Ron exit their car. Kenny is also with them, along  
with Clements.

GRANDMA DICKERSON  
They bought us fuckin' livestock.

RON  
Mornin', Eric; ma'am.

GRANDMA DICKERSON  
White boys in suits callin' me  
'ma'am'.

WALTON  
What're you gonna do with the cows?

GRANDMA DICKERSON  
Shoot 'em. Gut 'em. Eat 'em.

**INT. CRAIG JAMES' HOME - DAY**

The same team of Boosters, only this time they're surrounding  
James and his family. **James' girlfriend, MARILYN (18)**, also  
is at the meeting.

JAMES  
Southern Cal offered me a horse.

RON  
If it's a horse you want, Craig --

JAMES  
I wan two of 'em. Brown. I like  
brown.

WALTON  
Marilyn, where're you lookin' to go  
to college?

MARILYN  
Well, I'll go wherever Craig goes.

JAMES  
And I'll go wherever Marilyn goes.

Boosters look at each other.

**INT. MARILYN'S HOME - DAY**

Marilyn opens a letter from SMU.

MARILYN  
Full scholarship, plus stipend?

**INT. CRAIG JAMES' HOME - DAY**

James puts down the phone.

JAMES  
I'm going to SMU?

WALTON (V.O.)  
Once James signed, Eric followed --

**INT. DICKERSON HOME - DAY**

Eric picks up the phone.

DICKERSON  
(Phone)  
You're offering what per week?

**EXT. SMU CAMPUS - DAY**

A **horde** of fresh **RECRUITS**, walking tall on campus.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Blink of an eye, we had the top  
recruiting class in the nation.

**INT. BILL CLEMENTS' HOME - DAY**

Clements reading the Dallas Morning News.

**ON THE NEWSPAPER**

***SMU SURPRISES WITH IMPRESSIVE RECRUITING HAUL***

**EXT. SMU - FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT**

**SMU** getting beaten badly; Ron, frustratedly coaching.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Now, we struggled at first on the  
field --

**ANOTHER GAME**

SMU getting demolished again --

WALTON (V.O.)  
Shit, before Craig and Eric showed  
we stunk: three-and-eight; four-and-  
seven; four-six-and-one --

**ANOTHER GAME**

Again --

WALTON (V.O.)  
Even *with* Craig and Eric on board  
at first we stunk --

**ANOTHER GAME**

We see **SMU QB MIKE FORD** throwing an interception.

MEYER  
We gotta find ourselves a QB.

**EXT. PARK - CLEMENTS RALLY - DAY**

Governor Clements declaring his candidacy for Texas Governor.

He stands atop a stage at a podium, addressing a large **CROWD**.

CLEMENTS

And that's why I'm announcing my  
candidacy for Governor of the great  
state of Texas!

**MOMENTS LATER**

Walton approaches Kenny.

KENNY

Ron said we're stickin' to I-45 --

WALTON

Fuck Ron. We can dominate the  
coasts, the Midwest --

KENNY

And I'm not one to say slow down --

WALTON

Speaking of, I need a beer --

Clements approaches Kenny and Walton.

KENNY

Governor --

They shake hands.

CLEMENTS

I've a hunch as to what you two're  
bitchin' about.

WALTON

You wanna win -- don't you,  
Governor?

Clements smirks.

CLEMENTS

Walton -- there's a kid in Highland  
Park. Quarterback. His dad and I go  
back. Supposed to have some scrap  
to him. Get him a roster spot.

WALTON

We'll have to talk to Ron --

CLEMENTS

I thought you had sway.



**EXT. HIGHLAND PARK STADIUM -**

**LANCE MCILHENY** juking and outrunning his opponents.

WALTON (V.O.)

I don't wanna give Clements credit,  
but how else would we've discovered  
a 5'8 midget of a quarterback,  
right in our backyard?

**ON WALTON, RON & KENNY**

In the stands -- watching, mightily impressed.

**INT. ANNA WALLACE BOUTIQUE - DAY**

Elegant women's clothing store.

Anna works a clothes rack.

Walton enters with flowers.

WALTON (V.O.)

But hope was coming. Meanwhile --

Anna notices Walton approaching.

ANNA

We don't have your dress size.

WALTON

Got plans tonight?

ANNA

Got something in mind?

WALTON

Dinner and a disappointment?

**INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Walton and Anna, dining and enjoying each other --

WALTON (V.O.)

I was heading towards something --

**INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Walton and Anna, making love --

WALTON (V.O.)  
I figured would never happen --

**EXT. DALLAS ARBORETUM - DAY**

Walton and Anna, lying on the grass amid flora --

WALTON (V.O.)  
Not in God or the Devil's wildest  
dreams. Yet --

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - MORNING**

Walton and Anna talking over coffee.

ANNA  
Walton, I've done fine without your  
help.

WALTON  
Who said I was helping?

ANNA  
When you offered to fund my next  
three stores.

Walton tops off Anna's mug.

WALTON  
I want to build something together.

ANNA  
I'm not a football player.

WALTON  
No, you're my wife-to-be.

Anna chortles.

ANNA  
That's your pitch?

WALTON  
I wanna be partners. I want us to  
build something -- wait, did you  
not hear me propose?

ANNA  
I did.

WALTON  
And?

ANNA  
I ignored you.

WALTON  
Why?

ANNA  
Make you sweat. You really want a  
life with me, Walton? Marriage? A  
family?

Walton looks taken aback by the mention of 'family.' He  
recovers with --

WALTON  
Honestly, I only proposed to get  
into your pants.

**INT. BELO MANSION - NIGHT**

Anna and Walton's black-tie-wedding.

A scene for the Society Section.

Nelle amid the crowd, watching her son.

Walton saddles up beside his mother at her table.

NELLE  
You snagged one, Walt.

WALTON  
I got lucky.

Nelle sips her champagne.

WALTON (CONT'D)  
I'm glad you're here.

NELLE  
You're glad; I'm surprised.  
(Smirks; beat)  
Treat her good, Walt.

**LATER**

Walton and Anna take their first dance as a married couple.

WALTON (V.O.)  
For all my sins, God gave me that  
moment on that dance floor with  
Anna. For that alone, well...

Anna leans into Walton's ear.

ANNA  
(Whispering)  
I'm pregnant.

The news terrifies Walton -- *fatherhood* terrifies Walton.

Walton covers up his fear and and looks Anna in the eye.

They smile and kiss.

**INT. HIGH SCHOOL CAFETERIA - DAY**

A dominantly white high school. **UT RECRUITERS, A&M RECRUITERS**  
working the cafeteria, speaking to **RECRUITS**.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Now, our record suggested we stop  
our little experiment; but farmers  
and roughnecks don't know quit --

**INT. PETROLEUM CLUB - DAY**

Bobby Stewart and Booster #2, aggressive with Walton and  
Kenny.

WALTON (V.O.)  
'Course not everyone appreciated  
the foundation we were pouring.

STEWART  
And this slick boy ya'll reeled in  
from Vegas --

WALTON  
We're laying a foundation --

STEWART  
And losing!

WALTON  
If you'd just trust me --

Booster #2 interjects --

BOOSTER #2  
Shit, son, I've tasted Jap blood  
and struck oil. I fucked Marlene  
Dietrich. Why the fuck should I  
trust you?

INT. CAFETERIA - DAY

Suddenly some **SMU ASSISTANT COACHES** make their way into the cafeteria; their competitors look shocked and angry.

WALTON (V.O.)  
When they saw itty-bitty Southern  
Methodist coming outta nowhere,  
putting its dick on the table and  
saying, *We're here, too,*  
*motherfuckers -- shit --*

INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT

Walton and Anna, smiling and laughing over dinner.

Walton getting drunk,

ANNA  
Wanna slow down there, partner?

WALTON  
(Winking)  
I don't --

WALTON (V.O.)  
I coulda slowed my excitement --

INT. STRIP CLUB - NIGHT

Ron receiving a lap dance. Walton drinks. A nude **STRIPPER** approaches --

WALTON (V.O.)  
But --

STRIPPER  
Ya'll two look like trouble.

WALTON  
Ron brings it; I step in it.

STRIPPER  
Compliment my blouse and I'll turn  
your beer into champagne.

WALTON  
Like Jesus Herself.

**INT. USC HEAD COACH'S OFFICE - DAY**

USC HEAD FOOTBALL COACH on the phone.

WALTON (V.O.)  
It took time --

USC HEAD COACH  
You're signing with who?

**EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT**

Again, SMU losing; Dickerson and James getting demolished.

**INT. NOTRE DAME HEAD COACH'S OFFICE - DAY**

NOTRE DAME HEAD FOOTBALL COACH on the phone.

NOTRE DAME HEAD COACH  
(Phone)  
You gotta be fuckin' --

He interrupts and crosses himself.

NOTRE DAME HEAD COACH (CONT'D)  
You gotta be kidding me.

**EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT**

SMU getting its ass kicked again --

WALTON (V.O.)  
Bit too much time --

**INT. FLORIDA HEAD FOOTBALL COACH'S OFFICE - DAY**

FLORIDA HEAD FOOTBALL COACH on the phone.

FLORIDA HEAD COACH  
(Phone)  
SMU has a team?

**INT. USC HEAD COACH'S OFFICE - DAY**

USC BOOSTER  
(Phone)  
They're paying how much?

INT. NCAA HQ - MANKOWITZ'S OFFICE - DAY

Mankowitz at his desk, picking up call-after-call; complaint-after-complaint.

INT. FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

SMU finally dominating an opponent; Ron and the Boosters gleeful.

WALTON (V.O.)  
But, by the Year of Our Lord 1980,  
some magic started to show --

INT. KENNY'S MANSION - PRIVATE OFFICE - CONTINUOUS

Kenny at his desk on the phone.

KENNY  
(Phone)  
Bill, it's my job to keep you outta  
the loop.

CLEMENTS (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
Which is hard when I'm catchin'  
wind of --

KENNY  
(Phone)  
Bill --

INT. CAMPISI'S RESTAURANT - PRIVATE ROOM - NIGHT

Walton and Bobby Stewart -- along with other **BOOSTERS** --  
gather around a table.

L. Donald Shields and Hitch are at the table, too.

WALTON  
We'll have to boost overall  
spending by at least 25% --

STEWART  
We're not the fuckin' Yankees.

SHIELDS  
You know, if we increased academic  
scholarship funding --

Boosters roll their eyes and laugh at Shields.

WALTON

Ya'll wanna quit now? Right when  
we're starting to win?

\*  
\*

Boosters look shocked by Walton's chutzpah.

\*

WALTON (CONT'D)

Now, let's talk helicopters --

STEWART

Helicopters?

**INT. HELICOPTER - NIGHT**

Ron flying with a **black RECRUIT (18)**, heading towards Texas Stadium.

WALTON (V.O.)

Ron knew the way to a recruit's heart was to make him believe he's the only one in your heart. Chopper ride over Texas Stadium, a special scholarship in their name --

RON

Son, I don't just want you on the team. I want you to be SMU's honorary Frederick Douglass Scholar-

**ANOTHER HELICOPTER RIDE**

This one featuring Ron with a **white RECRUIT (18)**.

RON (CONT'D)

Son, I want you to be SMU's honorary Robert E. Lee Scholar --

**EXT. OWNBY STADIUM - NIGHT**

\*

**SMU** taking on **UTEP**. SMU is actually winning.

WALTON (V.O.)

Soon enough the product on the field was picking up --

\*

**INT. PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - EXAM ROOM - DAY**

\*

Anna undergoing an ultrasound via her **OBGYN**.

\*

Walton sits beside Anna.

\*



OBGYN

And you've got yourself a baby boy.

Anna looks emotional; Walton withholds his terror.

**INT. BAR - NIGHT**

A group of SMU FOOTBALL PLAYERS drinking.

One PLAYER gets into a scuffle with an OLDER PATRON.

A huge fist fight breaks out.

WALTON (V.O.)

Now, part of my work was nothing  
more than babysitting.

**EXT. BAR - NIGHT**

Walton pulls up to the bar to find the SMU Football Players handcuffed.

COPS watch over the players.

Walton approaches a cop -- SERGEANT SILAS.

WALTON

Sergeant Silas?

SERGEANT SILAS

Who's asking?

WALTON

I just got off the phone with the  
Mayor and the Chief of Police --

SERGEANT SILAS

Who the fuck're you?

WALTON

I'm the man who's getting these  
kids outta cuffs and back home, and  
you're the guy who's gonna gimme  
the key.

**INT. SMU - RON'S OFFICE - DAY**

A PLAYER enters the office and sits.

Ron and Walton sit on one side of the desk; the Player on the other.

WALTON (V.O.)  
I'll admit, too, there were tougher  
parts to the job.

RON  
Son, we're gonna have to let you  
go.

PLAYER  
But I'm scholarship'd.

RON  
So long as you're on the team.

\*

**EXT. SMU - PARKING GARAGE - DAY**

**SMU PLAYERS** all exiting their convertibles, showing off their  
new sound systems, strutting about with their **GIRLFRIENDS**.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Soon the program near-ran itself --

\*

**EXT. ANNA WALLACE BOUTIQUE - FT. WORTH - DAY**

Grand opening of Anna's second boutique. **PARTYGOERS**  
kibbitzing over champagne and finger foods.

Walton approaches Anna and kisses her. Walton drinks  
champagne.

\*

\*

WALTON  
Watch out, Neiman Marcus.

ANNA  
Thank you.

WALTON  
All I did was write a check.

ANNA  
I'm serious, Walt.  
(Re. champagne)  
Ease up --

\*

\*

\*

Walton winks and kisses Anna.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
I wouldn't have admitted it then --  
shit I wouldn't have *known* it then--  
but I was happy --

\*

**INT. NCAA HQ - MANKOWITZ'S OFFICE - DAY**

Mankowitz sitting across from Westerby.

WESTERBY

I've approved your fishing trip.

MANKOWITZ

(Shocked)

Sir?

WESTERBY

Ron Meyer; SMU.

Mankowitz smiles.

**INT. KENNY YATES' MANSION - AFTERNOON**

A meeting of **WOMEN OF THE DALLAS REPUBLICAN PARTY**.

Basically the same group of women from Kenny's swanky dinner party, only this time they drink coffee and tea; the pastries, however, remain untouched.

Anna sits among the **GROUP** as they stuff envelopes.

Anna looks miserable.

BEVERLY

Which is why I told Kenny, if I so as caught him with another woman --

**GOP LADY #1** holds up a mailer.

GOP LADY #1

Beverly, I thought we weren't sending these to the Hill Country.

BEVERLY

You want some LBJ holdover to bump your taxes?

GOP LADY #2

Dick and I have an understanding: when he's on business, we mind our own business --

GOP LADY #1

Folks down there can hardly read and write as is, much less vote on-

GOP LADY #3  
How can you and Dick square that  
when -- ?

Beverly holds up a mailer.

**ON THE MAILER**

**VOTE REPUBLICAN. FREEDOM, FAITH, FAMILY.**

Beneath the text, we see an **illustration depicting Jimmy Carter with Lenin, Marx and Mao.**

BEVERLY  
Thus the photos, Tiffany.

Anna chortles; it catches Beverly's attention.

BEVERLY (CONT'D)  
What about you, Anna?

The room's attention veers towards Anna.

ANNA  
Regarding?

BEVERLY  
Walton.

ANNA  
I don't follow.

BEVERLY  
Seeing as we all have *some* kinda  
arrangement with our men --

\*

ANNA  
It's a simple one.

GOP LADY #1  
Thank God. I could use one.

ANNA  
If he cheats on me, I cut his nuts  
off.

Beat.

WALTON (V.O.)  
I deserved it, too.

\*

\*

Anna sips her coffee.

\*

INT. ANGLETON HIGH - HALLWAY - DAY

DAVID STANLEY (18), a physical specimen of a linebacker and a key player to our story, walks the hallway. He's alone. A leper among normal STUDENTS.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Suppose I deserved David, too.  
(Beat; sighs)  
David Stanley -- linebacking  
prodigy --

INT. ANGLETON HIGH - CLASSROOM - DAY

David sits in the back of the classroom. He looks dazed.

WALTON (V.O.)  
-- Weirdest fuckin' kid I ever met,  
and -- well, I'll get there later.  
But on the field?

EXT. ANGLETON HIGH - STADIUM - NIGHT

ANGLETON HIGH playing against an OPPONENT.

David, at linebacker, beyond riled up before the play --

WALTON (V.O.)  
It's like God breathed into the  
boy's nostrils and said, *Thou shalt*  
*destroy* --

David bursts through the offensive line and nearly decapitates the QUARTERBACK.

INT. STANLEY HOME - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

Walton sitting across from David and his mother, ERICA (40's).

All about the living room we see photos of David: playing football, wrestling, running track. Trophies adorn bookshelves and coffee tables.

This is a home -- and a mother -- devoted to David.

David's surveys the floor.

He looks as though he's on something; however, he's experiencing the effects of CTE.

WALTON (V.O.)  
But, Jesus -- the kid --  
(To Erica Stanley)  
Well, Mrs. Stanley, while other  
programs offer David an  
*opportunity*, we offer David a  
guarantee.

ERICA  
David doesn't need a guarantee, Mr.  
Porter.

WALTON  
What do you think, David?

David snaps to attention.

DAVID  
I just wanna play football.

ERICA  
Mr. Porter, I've done all I can to  
give him a chance. Lord knows I'd  
like him close by --

WALTON  
That what you'd like, David?

David is zoned out.

WALTON (CONT'D)  
David?

DAVID  
Huh?

Beat as Walton grows perplexed.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Walton awakes, hung over, with Anna sitting on the bed  
looking at him.

WALTON  
That's a look.

ANNA  
Which I need not explain.

Walton hobbles out of bed but trips over himself.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
How much long're you keepin' at  
this?

WALTON  
Don't --

ANNA  
Don't -- ?

WALTON  
With the, *You're like all the other  
men* --

ANNA  
Other men I know don't let folks  
like Ron and Kenny yank 'em around  
like some kinda piss boy-

WALTON  
Sorry?

ANNA  
Responding to their every need.  
Shit, Walt, you woulda made a  
lovely grape feeder to a King,  
fanning him with peacock feathers  
and all the rest. *No, your majesty;  
yes, your majesty; No, Kenny; Yes,  
Ron.* Do you even want a life with  
me? A family --

WALTON  
After hearing this shit come outta  
your mouth --

ANNA  
You didn't answer me.

WALTON  
I'm free to do as I please, Anna.  
Marry you, conceive a child with  
you are just as much my decisions  
as they are --

ANNA  
Then why've you somehow lost your  
ability to say 'no'? These days by  
sundown you're lost inside a  
bottle, your ears burning from the  
latest recruiting trip --

WALTON  
You knew when you married me --

ANNA

I saw what could be. With my very  
eyes, I saw someone who built  
something outta nothing and said to  
myself, "That's someone I can work  
with."

WALTON

And now?

ANNA

Now, I see a man, free as ever to  
do as he pleases. So what do you  
wanna do, Walt?

**EXT. SMU - PRACTICE FIELD - DAY**

The **FIRST TEAM OFFENSE** assembles on the field against the  
**FIRST TEAM DEFENSE**. Ron blows his whistle and yells --

WALTON (V.O.)

No one else in my life had the  
balls to call me a pussy. That's  
why I loved her.

RON

McIlheney!

-- Startling Lance, who then runs to the First Team's huddle.

RON (CONT'D)

Lance is gonna take some reps.  
Mike, step aside.

WALTON (V.O.)

Meanwhile, our QB problem --

Ford, shocked, takes his helmet off and walks to the  
sideline.

RON

Give him the call, Steve!

WALTON (V.O.)

Well --

ENDICOTT

(Hollering)

Rip-6-Sweep-Right --

LANCE

All right: Rip-6-Sweep-Right on --



DICKERSON  
Who the fuck're you?

Lance does a double-take.

LANCE  
What? Eric, I'm Lance McIlheney --  
the backup QB.

DICKERSON  
Shit --

Eric leaves the huddle early.

Everyone half-assedly claps to break the huddle and goes to  
their positions.

LANCE  
Down -- set -- hut!

Lance drops back to pass, but a **DEFENSIVE LINEMAN** bursts  
through the offensive line.

Lance scrambles with ungodly agility, jukes one defender,  
then another --

Suddenly, Lance has a bunch of hulking **DEFENSIVE LINEMEN**  
chasing after him.

#### **ON THE SIDELINES**

All the **COACHES** look slack-jawed.

Ron approaches Endicott.

RON  
Steve, your playbook --

ENDICOTT  
Yeah?

RON  
Burn it.

#### **EXT. TEXAS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY**

**SMU** takes on **WICHITA STATE**.

Lance is behind center.

He huts the ball, and they run the option.

Lance pitches the ball to James.

James sprints for the end zone. \*

Touchdown. \*

**MOMENTS LATER** \*

The same play, only Lance pitches to Dickerson, who jukes and trucks **DEFENDERS**. \*

Touchdown. \*

**MOMENTS LATER** \*

Lance huts the ball, fakes a pitch and then sprints to the house. \*

Another touchdown. \*

The Pony Express has been born. \*

**IN THE STANDS** \*

**BOOSTERS** who once wanted to murder Walton now backslap him. \*

**EXT. TEXAS STADIUM - FIELD - THE NEXT WEEK** \*

**SMU** dominating **TEXAS TECH**. \*

**IN THE STANDS** \*

Celebrities of all stripes. \*

The game's more than a game -- it's a bonafide event. \*

**INT. WALTON'S OFFICE - DAY** \*

Walton holding court with Bob Hitch and **BRAD THOMAS (30's)**, **Athletic Department Promotions Director**.

They display before Walton assorted posters on easels with logos for their new PR campaign.

We see a poster that reads: **PONY UP**. \*

WALTON  
Sounds like a strip club bouncer.

HITCH  
We're about out --

THOMAS

We got one more, although it's presumptuous.

WALTON

How's that?

Thomas puts a new poster on the easel.

THOMAS

We figure with Dickerson and James -  
- and now McIlheney -- we'll have  
ourselves a serious running attack--

Walton stands; smiles.

WALTON

The Pony Express.

**WE THEN SEQUENCE --**

All about Dallas, we see billboards with the SMU logo, sporting the Pony Express logos.

**PATRONS** are purchasing SMU gear. Although the team does not have the record to show for it, the hype is real.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - FOYER - AFTERNOON**

A knock at the door.

WALTON (V.O.)

As for me being free to do as I  
pleased --

Anna and Walton answer to find Kenny.

KENNY

Plane's waiting. We got a table at  
Commander's.

Walton smiles; Anna looks furious.

**EXT. COMMANDER'S PALACE - NEW ORLEANS - THAT NIGHT**

Walton and Kenny eating turtle soup and pounding martinis.

WALTON

-- Now, if we *really* wanna be  
smart, we'd have Ron hire some of  
Switzer's assistants. That way --

KENNY

Walton, we talked football in the car. We talked football on the tarmac, on the plane and in the cab. Now we're at the fanciest fuckin' spot in New Orleans with martinis and turtle fuckin' soup, and what the fuck are we talkin' about?

\*

Walton grows slightly embarrassed.

KENNY (CONT'D)

You've become family to me. You may not figure, but I'm proud to know you. Few've had to eat the piles of shit you and I've eaten to get here.

WALTON

That's an image.

KENNY

Eat your soup. Drink you drink. Our friends're waiting.

WALTON

Friends?

**INT. BROTHEL - BAR/LOUNGE - NEW ORLEANS - LATER**

Opulence abounds while **PROSTITUTES** and **their PATRONS**, all white and well-heeled, talk and walk to rooms to fuck.

**PROSTITUTE #1 (black)** services Kenny: sitting on his lap, serving him drinks, flirting with him.

**PROSTITUTE #2** sits on Walton's lap.

KENNY

(To Prostitute #1)

Don't make me hog-tie you.

Kenny slaps Prostitute #1's ass.

PROSTITUTE #1

You forget what happened last time?

KENNY

(To Prostitute #2)

Mary Jane, show Mr. Porter your perfume collection. I got a mule to ride.

Kenny stands and spansks Prostitute #1.

Prostitute #1 leads Kenny by the tie to her room; as she does so, Kenny turns back to Walton --

KENNY (CONT'D)  
Tonight's on me, son.

Kenny turns back around and walks with the Prostitute.

PROSTITUTE  
Your dad's awful generous.

WALTON  
My dad's dead.

PROSTITUTE  
Well, lemme soothe your suffering.

Prostitute stands.

Walton hesitates; thinks; then follows the Prostitute.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - DINING ROOM**

Enormous, empty; Anna standing alone in the dawn light.

**INT. SHIPS LOUNGE - NIGHT**

Dive bar. Kenny and Clements at two bar stools, sipping on two Shiners.

CLEMENTS  
I've got people all over Dallas  
telling me they know every red  
Pontiac or blue Ford belongs to an  
SMU football player.

KENNY  
They do.

CLEMENTS  
Walton's running you --

KENNY  
I'm handlin' Walton.

CLEMENTS  
If my fuckin' maid is hearing it --  
much less sporting the *cojones* to  
mention it --

Kenny sips his drink.

CLEMENTS (CONT'D)

Don't think this ain't risk for me,  
Kenny. Just sitting down with you  
to have a beer --

\*

KENNY

I can turn my back, if you'd like.  
Talk sideways, like --

\*

\*

Clements shakes his head; sips; Kenny laughs.

\*

CLEMENTS

What?

KENNY

Shit, you tell your crowds how much  
you --

(Mocking)

-- Love the American free  
enterprise system.

(Ends mockery)

Here it is in full force -- *and* you  
get a return on your investment.

CLEMENTS

How's that?

\*

KENNY

We're having fun, aren't we?

CLEMENTS

You, maybe.

\*

KENNY

Jap shrapnel in my shoulder, twenty  
years of roughneckin', three cases  
of the clap -- I've earned my fun.

CLEMENTS

I've got a duty, you know. To the  
state, to my voters --

Kenny finishes his beer; stands.

KENNY

Tell you what: I'll talk to Walton;  
you talk to your voters. Tell them  
about freedom, the American Way and  
personal responsibility.

(MORE)

KENNY (CONT'D)

Tell them Bill Clements is a  
carrier of light in a godless sea  
of faggots, niggers and Commies  
that'll swallow this country whole.  
Tell them all of it, Bill. That's  
what you're about; that's what  
we're about. And Lord knows we're  
right -- right?

Kenny leaves, but Clements chortles and remains seated.

\*

**EXT. TEXAS STADIUM - DAY**

SMU lining up against TCU.

WALTON (V.O.)

We convinced the Cowboys to let us  
start using Texas Stadium. Some at  
the University thought it was too  
showy.

(Laughs)

Yeah.

\*

**LATER**

\*

James, Dickerson and McIlheney running wild.

\*

**INT. SMU - AD OFFICE - DAY**

Sequence **one PLAYER after another** entering the office and  
taking cash-filled-envelopes from a **SECRETARY (60's)**.

WALTON (V.O.)

We had our setbacks, but the team  
was improving --

\*

\*

**EXT. DALLAS SKYLINE - DAY**

Billboard after billboard promoting The Pony Express.

WALTON (V.O.)

The hype was growing --

**INT. SMU - RON MEYER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Ron on the phone with a **RECRUIT**.

RON

(Phone)

Son, if your daddy needs a new job,  
we'll get him a new job. Question  
is: what kinda Mustang do you wanna  
drive?

**ANOTHER PHONE CALL**

RON (CONT'D)

(Phone)

Well, name your price --

**ANOTHER PHONE CALL**

RON (CONT'D)

(Phone)

Walton, we're gonna need a boost --

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - BABY'S ROOM - DAY**

\*

Walton standing alone, holding a drink. He looks about the  
room -- crib, baby wallpaper -- and looks lost; terrified.

\*

\*

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - BEDROOM - MORNING**

Walton on the phone with Ron.

\*

Walton drinks.

\*

Anna enters the room. She's showing and looks upset.

\*

**EXT. DEVELOPMENT - DAY**

Walton overseeing the groundbreaking of a new development. A  
lot as far as the eye can see. He looks like a father holding  
a newborn.

WALTON (V.O.)

Good-fuckin'-shit the cash was  
flowing in --

**EXT. SCOTTISH RITE HOSPITAL - DAY**

Walton donating a check for \$100,000 to Scottish Rite. One of  
those huge ceremonial checks. He shakes hands with **SCOTTISH**  
**RITE PERSONNEL** and poses for photos in front of **PRESS**.



WALTON (V.O.)  
All the while, I was making a name  
for myself around town.

\*

**EXT. AUSTIN STREET SHELTER - DAY**

A similar situation: Walton presenting a ceremonial check to **PERSONNEL** at a shelter devoted to serving homeless women.

**INT. FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

A board meeting at First Baptist Church.

**W.A. CRISWELL (60's)**, lead Pastor at First Baptist, sits at the head of a conference table.

Criswell addresses over two dozen **BOARD MEMBERS**.

Walton sits at the far, opposite end of the table.

WALTON  
-- Now, I know I haven't been on  
the Board long, but does First  
Baptist wanna extend itself beyond  
the community it serves?

CRISWELL  
Extend itself?

WALTON  
Well, Pastor Criswell -- Governor  
Connolly may be a friend, but just  
about yesterday he was glad-handing  
the Kennedys. You really want  
someone like that speaking to your  
flock about protecting the unborn?

\*

**INT. MOTEL - DAY**

\*

Mankowitz at a desk compiling evidence for his case against SMU: photos; spreadsheets with homes and home prices, etc.

**INT. STRIP CLUB - DAY**

Kenny and Walton enjoying themselves at a strip club.

\*

Suddenly a **STRIPPER** approaches --

\*

STRIPPER  
You Walton Porter Jr.?

\*

\*

WALTON  
My love, I can be anyone you want.

STRIPPER  
There's a call for you.

**LATER**

Walton at a phone in an office.

RON (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
Walton --

WALTON  
(Phone)  
Ron, get your ass down here!

RON (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
Anna called. She didn't figure  
where you were, but --

WALTON (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
Ron, if you told my wife --

RON (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
Walton, just fuckin' listen --

**INT. PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - WAITING ROOM - DAY**

Walton in the waiting room, alone.

A **DOCTOR** approaches Walton.

DOCTOR  
Mr. Porter?

WALTON  
That's me.

Doctor sits beside Walton.

DOCTOR  
I'm sorry to have to deliver this  
news, but --

The Doctor's voice begins to fade.

**INT. PRESBYTERIAN HOSPITAL - DELIVERY ROOM - LATER**

Walton walking into comfort Anna.

ANNA

Hello, Walton. How's your night  
been?

WALTON

I don't know what to say.

ANNA

You smell like a good time.

(Beat)

Go home.

WALTON

I won't.

ANNA

Walton, so help me, I'll take  
what's left of my body and soul and  
tear apart what's left of  
yours. Now, leave.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - BABY'S ROOM - DAY**

Walton standing in the middle of the room.

**EXT. APARTMENT - DAY**

An **SMU PLAYER** getting out of his spanking new car and walking  
into his family's new apartment.

Mankowitz waits in his car.

Mankowitz gets out of his car.

WALTON (V.O.)

Mankowitz was hot on our trail, but  
a shut mouth is a smart mouth.

MANKOWITZ

Excuse me --

SMU Player turns.

SMU PLAYER

You with Mr. Parker?

MANKOWITZ

NCAA.

SMU Player chuckles, turns his back and enters the apartment.  
Mankowitz approaches the apartment's front door and knocks.

**PLAYER'S FATHER** answers.

MANKOWITZ (CONT'D)  
Hello, sir, my name's Mike  
Mankowitz. I'm with the NCAA --

Recruit's Father slams the door in Mankowitz's face.

WALTON (V.O.)  
And considering what we were doing  
for folks' families --

\*

**EXT. SAME APARTMENT - NEXT DAY**

Recruit's Father heading out of the apartment and getting in his car.

Down the block, Mankowitz awaits the Recruit's Father.

**EXT. APARTMENT - DAY**

Another apartment; another **FAMILY**; soon the same result.

Brand new cars in the driveway.

Mankowitz knocks.

\*

**RECRUIT'S MOTHER** answers.

MANKOWITZ  
(Gesturing)  
Ma'am, that's a hell of a rose  
garden.

We see a cluster of red roses planted beside the front door.

RECRUIT'S MOTHER  
They came with.

\*

\*

MANKOWITZ  
My name's Mike Mankowitz --

RECRUIT'S MOTHER  
Jewish.

MANKOWITZ  
I'm with the NCAA, and --

Recruit's Mother slams the door in Mankowitz.

**INT. DINER - DAY**

Mankowitz eating burgers with a **JOURNALIST**.

JOURNALIST  
You're asking --

\*

MANKOWITZ  
One source --

JOURNALIST  
Ever heard of journalistic ethics?

MANKOWITZ  
Ever heard of cheating?

Journalist chuckles.

JOURNALIST  
Check out the State House, if  
cheating's your concern -- or every  
bank in this state, or square inch  
of Texas real estate once owned by  
the Tonkawa and Caddo.

\*

**INT. THE MECCA - MORNING**

\*

Mankowitz eating biscuits and gravy. At the table over, he spots a headline on the Dallas Morning News' Sports Day section.

**ON THE NEWSPAPER**

*SMU SIGNS TOP OL RECRUIT FROM PITTSBURGH*

WALTON (V.O.)  
I'll admit, my love of publicity  
might've hurt our cause --

**ON MANKOWITZ**

Smiling.

WALTON (V.O.)  
But you gotta understand, we had a  
well-oiled machine that deserved  
attention. *I* deserved attention.

**EXT. TEXAS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY**

A new season.

**SMU** taking on **BAYLOR**; The Pony Express in full force. \*

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
 Shit, by 1981 we damn near grabbed \*  
 a national title -- \*

We see a **SEQUENCE** of Dickerson, McIlheney and James running roughshod over the competition. \*

**EXT. TEXAS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY**

SMU facing off against **UT-AUSTIN**.

WALTON (V.O.)  
 If it weren't for UT --

A **UT KICKER** kicks a field goal.

**ON THE SCOREBOARD**

We see UT has won the game **9-7**.

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
 You know what they say about \*  
 runners up? \*

**ON THE UT SIDELINE**

Bedlam.

**ON THE SMU SIDELINE**

Dismay.

WALTON (V.O.) \*  
 Nothing. \*

**IN THE STANDS** \*

**SMU FANS** -- the Boosters among them -- downtrodden.

**EXT. CAMPAIGN STOP - DAY**

Governor Clements giving a stump speech before a large **CROWD**.

CLEMENTS  
 -- Hell, I'm the product of the  
 American free enterprise system.  
 (MORE)

CLEMENTS (CONT'D)  
Why shouldn't we give every  
American access to it?

Cheers.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - BEDROOM - NIGHT**

Walton enters, drunk.

WALTON  
Anna?

**INT. SMU - RON MEYER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Multiple **PLAYERS** in Ron's office.

RON  
Fellas, just ignore him --

PLAYER #1  
Ignore the NCAA?

PLAYER #2  
He's gonna hog our cash --

RON  
No one's hoggin' anyone's --  
hoggin'?

**INT. SMU - RON MEYER'S OFFICE - LATER**

Ron alone in the office, picking up the phone.

**INT. WALTON'S OFFICE - DAY**

Walton answering his phone.

WALTON  
(Phone)  
Ron, some Jew from the NCAA isn't  
gonna --

RON (O.S.)  
(Phone)  
I've already been chased outta  
Vegas, Walton.

**INT. RON MEYER'S HOME - BEDROOM - DAY**

Ron in bed with -- and fucking -- two **WOMEN (20's)**.

We hear the doorbell ring.

WOMAN #1

Ron, the doorbell's ringing.

\*

RON

Honey, you're just climaxing.

\*

Another ring of the doorbell --

\*

WOMAN #2

Ron!

Ron jumps out of bed.

\*

**INT. RON'S HOME - FRONT DOOR - MOMENTS LATER**

\*

Ron, nude, opens to door to find Mankowitz standing there.

\*

MANKOWITZ

Morning, Ron --

RON

Mike.

Mankowitz looks down, then back up.

MANKOWITZ

Must be Tuesday.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - FRONT DOOR - DAY**

Manic knocking at the door.

Walton and Anna answer the door.

It's Ron.

WALTON

You smell like --

ANNA

Go away, Ron.

RON

He came to my fuckin' door, Walt.



WALTON

Who?

RON

Mankowitz came to my fuckin' door.  
He's gonna --

Moans from Anna.

WALTON

What's wrong?

ANNA

Shit --

\*

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

\*

Walton, alone watching TV.

\*

**ON THE TV**

\*

A **NEWSCASTER** reads the news (muted). The chyron below the  
Newscaster reads: **SMU FOOTBALL HEAD COACH JUMPS TO NFL.**

**ON WALTON**

Dumbfounded.

WALTON (V.O.)

I couldn't blame him.

\*

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - DAY**

Walton sips a whisky and looks off into the distance.

\*

Anna enters the room and sits on the couch beside Walton.

\*

WALTON

Doesn't have to be our last try.

ANNA

Please. You're relieved.

\*

Walton sips his drink.

ANNA (CONT'D)

If we lost the home --

WALTON

If we lost the home -- ?

ANNA

If it burned down, was swallowed in  
a sinkhole -- what would you do?

WALTON

I thought I was the drunk one.

(Beat; sips)

Collect insurance; rebuild; burn it  
down again; collect insurance --

ANNA

I'm asking --

WALTON

Invest in real estate from central  
Florida to southern California --

ANNA

Will you answer --

WALTON

Jesus, Anna -- what would I do? I'd  
get another.

Quick beat.

Anna's gaze remains fixed on Walton.

WALTON (CONT'D)

There's a parable you're trying to  
spit out, only I lack the time,  
patience or desire --

ANNA

You built an empire from nothing.  
Skyscrapers and homes. Now you've  
turned the worst college football  
program in the country into the  
most dominant. Ron Meyer charmed  
and coached 'em, but you pulled the  
strings.

WALTON

What's your point?

ANNA

My point is if this house burns,  
you burn another house down -- one  
bigger and more expensive.

(MORE)

\*

\*

\*

\*

\*

ANNA (CONT'D)

Shit, you burn the entire fuckin'  
block down and in every ash heap of  
every home you build a home of your  
own while planting that says,  
"Mine." That's how you've lived,  
hasn't it? "Mine."

\*

\*

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

She wasn't wrong.

\*

\*

**INT. CLEMENTS' HOME - DINING ROOM - NIGHT**

A meeting of **SMU'S TOP BRASS** over drinks and smokes.

Clements stands at the center of the room.

\*

CLEMENTS

I'll be quick. This shit ends  
tonight. It was fun. We won games.  
We beat our buddies, and we let 'em  
know. But, effective right-fucking-  
now, we're above board.

WALTON

Above board?

KENNY

Walton --

\*

CLEMENTS

I stutter, Walton?

WALTON

You're already a walking obituary.  
Might as well be tongue-tied.

Clements turns to Walton.

CLEMENTS

Son, if this home weren't God-  
fearing, I'd cut and gut you long  
after you say mercy.

WALTON

And I'd lend you the knife.

KENNY

Walton --

WALTON

(To the group)

Name a successful team that doesn't  
spend the necessary --

Shields, trying to smoke a cigar, begins to cough violently.

SHIELDS

These things hurt!

KENNY

Don, that's because --

(Interrupts himself)

You know what? Keep inhaling.

(To the Group)

Fellas, what if we phase out the program by --

WALTON

Phase it out?

CLEMENTS

I'm not asking, Kenny.

\*

WALTON

That's cute, Bill --

CLEMENTS

Governor --

WALTON

Your *majesty*, we have a paper trail.

CLEMENTS

Get rid of it.

WALTON

Contracts --

CLEMENTS

Burn 'em.

WALTON

(To the group)

I hope he's the only one here who doesn't get it. We've sat in living room after living room, promising the moon to these kids. We've turned those promises into contracts. And those contracts have been signed. For those of ya'll who thought our biggest problem was finding a new head coach -- shit, above board? We have a payroll to meet.

(MORE)

WALTON (CONT'D)

Now, I know Bill wants to look pristine so that every God-fearing voter in this state'll look at him and see not only a Governor but a future President, but he's in it with us. And we are in this shit together.

(Beat)

The payroll stays, Bill. We don't quit. At least I don't. Now, let's talk head coaches.

**EXT. SOUTHERN MISS - PRACTICE FIELD - DAY**

The **SOUTHERN MISS FOOTBALL TEAM** practices. They are coached by **BOBBY COLLINS (40's), SMU's coach-to-be.**

WALTON (V.O.)

I'm not one to apologize, but if I were, I'd dole one to Bobby Collins.

\*  
\*

Collins blows his whistle.

BOBBY COLLINS

That's some play! What a great play!

WALTON (V.O.)

He built a halfway-decent program at Southern Miss, but Southern Miss to SMU at the time was a paper airplane to an F-8.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\***INT. SOUTHERN MISS - COLLINS' OFFICE - DAY**

Collins sitting across from Walton.

\*

BOBBY COLLINS

Mr. Porter, I haven't even been to Dallas --

WALTON

You think the spotlight's too big for you, Bobby?

\*  
\*  
\*

BOBBY COLLINS

Now, I wasn't saying --

\*  
\*

WALTON  
We've built a beautiful machine at  
SMU. Coaches get paid, players get  
paid --

BOBBY COLLINS  
Should you be, you know, *sayin'* --

WALTON  
Only thing we're lacking is a  
national title. And as Head Honcho  
of the most powerful program in the  
country, I, Bobby Collins, believe  
you're the man to bring us one.

BOBBY COLLINS  
But, Mr. Porter, paying players --

WALTON  
You think we oughtta let those boys  
starve, Bobby?

BOBBY COLLINS  
Well, no --

WALTON  
Certainly you would've appreciated  
a little something in your day.

BOBBY COLLINS  
(Laughing)  
I wouldn't have said *no* --

WALTON  
Nor will you say no to me.

BOBBY COLLINS  
(Laughing)  
Mr. Porter, you got a way.

**INT. SMU - PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY**

Collins withering a bit in front of the flashing lights.

He sits next to Bob Hitch.

BOBBY COLLINS  
Well, it's uh -- it's great to be  
here at SMU --

WALTON (V.O.)  
Asshole didn't stand a chance.

**INT. SMU - HALLWAY - MOMENTS LATER**

With **PRESS** leaving the press conference, Walton wraps his arm around Bobby and begins --

WALTON

Like I told you -- lemme handle the  
business, you coach football --

\*

**EXT. SMU PRACTICE FIELD - DAY**

\*

Collins on the sideline, running the team through drills.

David Stanley on the sideline, alone, muttering to himself.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Shit, we were coming off a 10-1  
season, one win short of a national  
title, and the best offense in the  
nation --

\*

Erick Dickerson walks up to Craig James.

DICKERSON

(Gesturing re. Stanley)  
The fuck's up with him?

\*

\*

JAMES

New linebacker.

DICKERSON

How much he cost?

\*

**LATER**

\*

McIlheney running the option offense.

Lance huts the ball and darts left.

David Stanley is in at linebacker.

Stanley slices through a **BLOCKER** and near-decapitates Lance.

\*

Players pounce on Stanley --

\*

DICKERSON (CONT'D)

The fuck're you doing?!

Dickerson rips David's helmet off.

DAVID

You ain't so big!

DICKERSON  
Motherfucker --

**ASSISTANT COACHES** jump into the scrum to break it up.

**EXT. SMU - PARKING STRUCTURE - DAY**

David enters a brand new Mustang.

**EXT. HIGHWAY - DAY**

David speeding down I-75, seemingly going nowhere.

**INT. DAVID STANLEY'S CAR - CONTINUOUS**

David driving with a maniacal look.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - FOYER - NIGHT**

Walton enters to find Anna standing there, awaiting him.

WALTON  
I don't want a speech.

ANNA  
Just papers.

Walton walks to a liquor trolley and pours himself a drink.

ANNA (CONT'D)  
It was fun, Walt.

WALTON  
Some of it.

Walton drinks.

ANNA  
So, what's next?

WALTON  
Next?

ANNA  
Can't be a booster for life.

WALTON  
Like you said: find something to  
burn down, claim as my own.  
(MORE)



WALTON (CONT'D)

(Beat)

Where you gonna go?

ANNA

I'll be in touch.

Anna leaves.

**INT. SMU - DAVID STANLEY'S DORM - NIGHT**

**HENRY HUNTER (18), David's teammate and roommate, snorting coke on his desk.**

David enters the dorm.

HENRY HUNTER

Crazy Man Stan --

DAVID

What's that?

HENRY HUNTER

Fuel.

Hunter does another line; he then offers Stanley a bump.

David does a line.

HENRY HUNTER (CONT'D)

Knee pain ain't so bad no more.

Henry laughs.

David does another line.

**INT. SMU - BOBBY COLLINS' OFFICE - DAY**

Walton in Collins' office.

WALTON (V.O.)

By the time Bobby came 'round, we  
had such talent on the field and  
such efficiency off it --

One **PLAYER** enters --

BOBBY COLLINS

Morning, son --

PLAYER

Coach --

Walton hands the Player an envelope.

Another **PLAYER** enters; Walton hands him an envelope.

**EXT. SMU - DORM - NIGHT**

A phalanx of **PROSTITUTES** entering the dorm.

WALTON (V.O.)  
While Mankowitz was probing, we  
were keeping the program going --

**INT. SMU - DORM - HALLWAYS**

A shot of the Prostitutes knocking on and entering dorm room  
after dorm room.

WALTON (V.O.)  
But David --

\*

**INT. DAVID STANLEY'S CAR - NIGHT**

David doing line after line of cocaine.

**EXT. TEXAS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY**

SMU taking on TCU.

\*

**TCU QUARTERBACK** hikes the ball and drops back to pass.

David bursts through the offensive line and spears the  
quarterback.

David, irate, is ejected from the game; **TEAMMATES** and **COACHES**  
restrain him.

\*

\*

**EXT. STADIUM - DAY**

\*

SMU versus **ARKANSAS**, tied 17-17.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
Shit, if it weren't for that  
Arkansas tie in 1982 I'd have a  
title ring on my fuckin' finger --

\*

\*

\*

\*

We see the clock run down and the **PLAYERS'** dejection.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
-- Not fuckin' Joe Paterno.

\*

\*

BOBBY COLLINS  
Heck of an effort, boys!

\*  
\*

WALTON (V.O.)  
A fuckin' tie.

\*  
\*

**INT. SMU - SHIELDS' OFFICE - DAY**

\*

Shields answering his phone.

SHIELDS  
(Phone)  
Don Shields --

\*

MANKOWITZ (O.S.)  
President Shields, this is Mike  
Mankowitz with the NCAA --

**MOMENTS LATER**

\*

Shields dialing on his phone --

**INT. CLEMENTS' HOME - CONTINUOUS**

Clements on the phone with Shields.

CLEMENTS  
(Phone)  
Donny, you stay out of this. Go run  
the university.

**INT. WALTON'S OFFICE - MORNING**

L. Donald Shields sitting across from Walton.

SHIELDS  
I'm catching wind of drugs.

\*

WALTON  
Drugs.

SHIELDS  
Cocaine.

\*

WALTON  
Rumors, Don.

\*

SHIELDS  
Irregardless.

WALTON

You think because we have a payroll  
we've also got a drug operation?

SHIELDS

Do we?

(Beat)

I didn't sign up for this.

WALTON

Never heard you say that when we  
were gifting players whores and  
Corvettes.

Shields puts the mug down and stands.

WALTON (CONT'D)

Walk, Don. It'll make no  
difference.

SHIELDS

I wanted to be a teacher.

WALTON

You're not one.

(Quick beat)

Anything else?

**INT. SMU - LOCKER ROOM - DAY**

David doing cocaine before practice.

Some of his **TEAMMATES** nearby.

One **TEAMMATE** looks down at his crotch --

TEAMMATE

The fuck is -- ?

Another **TEAMMATE** we see doing cocaine, like David.

**EXT. SMU - PRACTICE FIELD - LATER**

Collins trying to instill discipline on the team, but it's  
hopeless.

Everyone seems to be resting on their laurels and doing their  
own thing.

WALTON (V.O.)

Ron may've been part of the shit,  
but whatever it was about him, the  
players played. With Bobby, well --

Collins blows his whistle.

BOBBY COLLINS

Let's go, boy!

DICKERSON

(Offended)

Boy?

\*

**EXT. SMU - LATER THAT DAY**

Walton speeding onto the campus.

**INT. SMU - BOBBY COLLINS' OFFICE - LATER**

Walton entering Collins' office.

WALTON

What now?

**INT. SMU - LOCKER ROOM - CONTINUOUS**

David stewing, by himself.

BOBBY COLLINS (O.C.)

David!

David stands and heads towards Collins' office.

**INT. SMU - BOBBY COLLINS' OFFICE - CONTINUOUS**

David enters.

WALTON

David, we brought you here to play  
football -- not commit felonies and  
get hopped up on God-knows-what.

DAVID

I just wanna play football.

WALTON

Evidence suggests otherwise.

\*

BOBBY COLLINS

Son, what can I do to help you?

DAVID

I got this dizziness. And my knees--

BOBBY COLLINS

So you're hurt?

DAVID

I just wanna play football.

WALTON

David, you're off the team and  
outta the SMU.

DAVID

Outta SMU?

WALTON

You got no GPA, and by day's end  
you'll have no scholarship.

**EXT. STANLEY HOME - DAY**

\*

David moving back home, his mother distraught and helping her  
brain-damaged son.

As David walks up the driveway, Mankowitz pulls up to the  
front.

WALTON (V.O.)

Call it hubris, call it being a  
dumb fuckin' dick -- we figured  
cutting bait with David would be  
the end of David.

\*  
\*  
\*  
\*  
\*

**INT. DALE HANSEN'S OFFICE - DAY**

\*

DALE HANSEN (30's), WFAA TV journalist, answers his phone.

\*

HANSEN

(Phone)

This is Dale.

\*  
\*  
\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Mankowitz had plenty to go off  
already, but once he scooped Hansen-

\*  
\*  
\*

**INT. THE MECCA - DAY**

Over coffee, Mankowitz sits across from **DALE HANSEN** (late 30's), a TV journalist.

WALTON (V.O.)

Well --

HANSEN

I'm assuming Governor Clements has nothing to do with this?

Mankowitz smiles.

**INT. BALLROOM - NIGHT**

Clements' victory party.

Clements ascends the stage and heads to the podium.

A raucous **CROWD** cheers on the once-and-future Governor.

CLEMENTS

Well, it felt good to win before --  
but it feels better to win again --  
to restore values in the statehouse  
-- American values -- Christian  
values-

Applause.

Clements looks into the crowd.

We spot Mankowitz.

**EXT. STANLEY HOME - FRONT DOOR - DAY**

Hansen knocking on the front door.

David's mother answers.

HANSEN

Mrs. Stanley?

**INT. STANLEY HOME - LIVING ROOM - LATER**

**NEWS CREW** setting up their cameras.

David and his mother looking uncomfortable.

**LATER**

Dale Hansen interviewing David Stanley.

WALTON (V.O.)  
-- It was over.

DAVID  
They gave me \$25,000.

DALE HANSEN  
Who?

DAVID  
Henry Lee Parker, Bob Hitch, Walton  
Porter Jr., SMU -- plus \$750-a-  
month, atop another \$350-a-month  
for car payments --

DALE HANSEN  
Car payments?

**INT. SMU - CONFERENCE ROOM - DAY**

Henry Lee Parker, Bob Hitch and Bobby Collins readying for an  
interview. They sit shoulder to shoulder.

Dale Hansen looks over his interview notes.

Collins leans into Hitch.

BOBBY COLLINS  
Where the fuck is Walton?

HITCH  
Hopefully dead.

\*

**LATER**

\*

Dale Hansen slides an envelope across the table to Henry Lee  
Parker.

DALE HANSEN  
Is that your handwriting on the  
envelope?

Henry Lee Parker starts tripping over himself.

HENRY LEE PARKER  
Well, uh --

Awkward beat.



HENRY LEE PARKER (CONT'D)  
Lemme get my glasses...

Parker starts fumbling about for his reading glasses.

**INT. NCAA HQ - CONFERENCE ROOM**

Mankowitz presenting to **NCAA PERSONNEL**, Westerby among them,  
his case against SMU.

MANKOWITZ  
-- Which is why I recommend we levy  
against Southern Methodist the  
harshest possible penalty.

**MOMENTS LATER**

WESTERBY  
I think we owe Mike a  
congratulations for the  
investigative work --

Mankowitz begins to smile.

Westerby's voice fades as we hear --

WALTON (V.O.)  
Asshole couldn't help himself.

**INT. PRESS CONFERENCE - DAY**

Mankowitz in front of many **REPORTERS**.

Mankowitz looks pale --

MANKOWITZ  
I'm here to discuss the infractions  
by the SMU football team, and the  
penalties that the NCAA will levy  
upon the SMU football team --

As Mankowitz talks --

WALTON (V.O.)  
Mankowitz could hardly hold it  
together. The moment, the weight of  
it all -- all that work --

MANKOWITZ  
A cancellation of the 1987 football  
season; cancellation of all home  
games for the 1988 season --

WALTON (V.O.)

Every penalty felt like a shot to  
the gut --

Mankowitz looks pale, off-kilter.

MANKOWITZ

A banning from bowl games for the  
next three years; the loss of 55  
scholarships over the next four  
years; a reduction in coaching  
staff by half; a banning of off-  
campus recruiting for the next two  
years --

Mankowitz grows wobbly.

WALTON (V.O.)

And the kicker --

MANKOWITZ

And a two-year ban of all Boosters  
who participated the SMU payment  
program. The chief violator among  
those Boosters, Mr. Walton Porter  
Jr. --

Mankowitz faints.

**PEOPLE** rush to his aid.

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - NIGHT**

Walton watching the same interview on TV, drinking a scotch.

A knock at the door.

Walton answers; it's Kenny.

Kenny enters and follows Walton to sit down.

Long beat.

KENNY

You're out, Walton.

WALTON

I saw the press conference. Drink?

KENNY

You hear me?

WALTON \*  
I saw the news conference, Kenny. \*

Walton pours himself a drink. \*

KENNY \*  
With us. \*

WALTON \*  
You dumpin' me, Kenny? \*  
(Beat) \*  
Why'd you come to me, Kenny? \*

KENNY \*  
We won games, didn't we? \*

Walton laughs. \*

WALTON \*  
And now? \*

KENNY \*  
Now you build your skyscrapers and \*  
suburbs. \*

WALTON \*  
And you'll be in church and diggin' \*  
yourself outta sand traps. \*

KENNY \*  
No need to be petty, Walton. \*

WALTON \*  
You promised me loyalty. \*

KENNY \*  
And you had it. \*

WALTON \*  
I thought -- \*

KENNY \*  
What, that we were friends? That \*  
I'd step up, be the daddy you've \*  
lacked? We don't settle for \*  
friends, Walton. You know that \*  
better'n' the rest. Shit, it's what \*  
makes workin' with you so easy: \*  
Walton Porter Jr.: a pure Texan, a \*  
pure American. Not some dumb \*  
Puritan with divine inspiration. \*

(MORE)

KENNY (CONT'D)

You're the fella whisperin' in that moron's ear, tellin' him that to build that city on a hill you gotta slaughter some Commanch' along the way; because you know that winning's a choice; and what comes--

(Beat)

Son, you know this better'n anyone. I won't see you around the golf course. Shit, I doubt I'll see you around town. Far as the Board's concerned, Walton Porter Jr. was and will never again be. And that, my friend, is winning.

WALTON

Sure you don't want a drink, Kenny?

KENNY

You take care, Walton.

**EXT. GOLF COURSE - DAY**

The Boosters -- all the usual suspects -- golfing, laughing together.

WALTON (V.O.)

They could played nice, Kenny and the rest. But they had my country club membership revoked --

**INT. PETROLEUM CLUB - ENTRANCE - DAY**

Walton entering the Petroleum Club.

Walton approaches the front desk.

A **manager, JIM, (40's)** stands behind the front desk.

WALTON (V.O.)

-- The Petroleum Club --

(End V.O.)

Just me today, Jim --

MANAGER JIM

There's been a change in your membership status, Mr. Porter --

**INT. STATE HOUSE - GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

Clements sitting across from a **JOURNALIST (20's)**.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Clements of course took full  
responsibility --

CLEMENTS  
No, I wanted no part of the  
program; and it's a crying shame  
that some would act so selfishly --

**INT. WALTON'S MANSION - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Walton sitting in front of the TV, drinking.

**ON THE TV**

**COWBOYS vs. COLTS;** Ron on the sidelines, coaching.

WALTON (V.O.)  
Some woulda drunk themselves silly.  
Some woulda beat their breasts and  
screamed at the heavens. Me? I saw  
what I always saw: an opportunity.

**ON WALTON**

Smiling.

**INT. TEXAS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY**

**COWBOYS vs. COLTS.**

The Cowboys are kicking the Colts' ass.

**INT. INDIANAPOLIS COLTS' HQ - OWNER'S OFFICE - DAY**

Ron sitting across from the **COLTS' OWNER.**

WALTON (V.O.)  
And old Ron --

COLTS' OWNER  
Ron, we appreciate all you've done  
for the Colts, but we've decided to  
go in a different direction.

**EXT. NELLE'S HOUSE - DAY**

\*

Walton pulls up to his mother's quaint, one-story home.

**INT. NELLE'S HOUSE - FOYER - DAY**

Walton enters the home.

NELLE (O.C.)  
Kitchen.

**INT. NELLE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - CONTINUOUS**

Nelle smokes a cigarette at the kitchen table.

Walton enters.

NELLE  
Lookie here: a ghost.

WALTON  
Coffee on?

NELLE  
Almost ready -- along with your  
bubble bath and steak diner.

Walton walks to the stove and turns on the burner to heat the coffee pot.

NELLE (CONT'D)  
Anna called.

Walton walks to the table and sits beside his mother.

WALTON  
Since when'd ya'll talk?

NELLE  
Since she left you.

WALTON  
Suppose you encouraged her.

NELLE  
You nailed it, Walton.

Nelle takes a drag of her cigarette.

NELLE (CONT'D)  
Still got your throwaways in the  
back -- trophies and such.

WALTON

Trash 'em.

Walton takes a cigarette from his mother's pack on the table.

Walton lights up.

Nelle chuckles.

WALTON (CONT'D)

What?

Quick beat.

Nelle takes a drag.

NELLE

You look like your father. Sitting  
there, pulling everything your way -  
- light and gravity, even.

WALTON

He had a way.

NELLE

More than a way.

Walton stands, goes to the stove and pours a mug of coffee.

NELLE (CONT'D)

You come for coffee and cigarettes?

Walton returns to the table.

WALTON

I came to talk to him.

NELLE

Your dad?

Nelle chuckles.

NELLE (CONT'D)

He came by it honest. Had the  
lashes to prove it.

\*

WALTON

All along his back.

NELLE

You remember.

WALTON

I remember.

\*

Beat.

They sip coffee.

NELLE  
Black coffee.

WALTON  
That's right.

NELLE  
Nothin' else?

WALTON  
You want me to get on my knees,  
tell you I gotta problem --

Nelle waves off Walton.

Beat.

WALTON (CONT'D)  
Remind me when his father passed.

NELLE  
Your granddaddy? Year before I met  
your dad. By his own hand.

WALTON  
(Taken aback)  
That's news to me.

NELLE  
I didn't wanna inspire you.  
(Beat)  
Your daddy was in Lufkin, pouring  
drinks at the family bar. Old man  
beat your dad every morning just  
about, only this day the old man  
woke up smiling and walked out the  
door. Didn't touch your dad, didn't  
say a word. Just drove north to  
Natchitoches and walked into the  
pines. Couple of hunters found him  
the next day. Thought he was a damn  
pinata, hanging there. Said he had  
a grin frozen to his cheeks. They  
tied flowers to his lapel before  
they called the coroner. Don't ask  
me why.

Quick beat.



WALTON  
What'd Anna say?

Beat.

Nelle looks into her son's eyes and looks pained by his pain.

NELLE  
You can let go, you know.

WALTON  
How's that?

NELLE  
'Cause you're alive, and he's dead.

WALTON  
Not that simple.

NELLE  
It is. You can fix your marriage,  
build something worth holding on  
to; or you can keep on. More money  
to make, more shit to spend money  
on. Your call. If there's anything  
I've learned from the sidelines,  
it's that you get what you hunt.

\*

WALTON  
What I want is --

NELLE  
What you want you can't get. But  
you're alive, and he's dead. Up to  
you.

We watch Walton for a beat, then move to --

**EXT. COTTON FIELD - DAY**

Walton overlooking the same cotton field he once picked as a  
child.

WALTON (V.O.)  
My call.  
(Beat)  
I get what I hunt.  
(Beat)  
My call.

**INT. INDIANAPOLIS COLTS' HQ - RON'S OFFICE - DAY**

Ron cleaning out his office.

The phone rings; he answers.

\*

RON

Yeah?

**INT. WALTON'S OFFICE - DAY**

Ron entering Walton's office.

WALTON

You showed.

RON

I'm unemployed.

WALTON

No, you're not. You're an agent and partner at Porter-Meyer.

Ron laughs.

WALTON (CONT'D)

Wanna conquer the sports world,  
Ron?

**INT. RESTAURANT - NIGHT**

Ron and Walton pitching a **COLLEGE FOOTBALL PLAYER (18)** over dinner.

WALTON

Well, we figure a rookie contract is just a stepping stone in the NFL. We're talking endorsements from all sectors --

CUT TO:

**ANOTHER DINNER; A NEW RECRUIT**

RON

Son, that tackling ability is worth millions, so long as you have the right agent negotiating on your behalf.

\*

\*

**INT. WALTON'S CADILLAC (MOVING) - DAY**

Walton driving past the Texas Capitol Building.

**INT. UT CAMPUS - CHANCELLOR'S OFFICE**

Walton sitting across from the **UT-AUSTIN CHANCELLOR (60's)**  
and **DAVID MCWILLIAMS (50's)**, UT's Head Football Coach.

UT-AUSTIN CHANCELLOR  
Come again?

WALTON  
One million.

Chancellor and Coach McWilliams look at each other, then to  
Walton.

UT-AUSTIN CHANCELLOR  
Well, that's quite generous --

COACH MCWILLIAMS  
Aren't you a Mustang?

WALTON  
I'm a man who supports public  
education, blessed with the money  
to show his support.

COACH MCWILLIAMS  
Then why am I here?

WALTON  
Well, Coach, if you'd like UT to be  
back atop the college football  
pyramid, I think I can help.

WALTON (V.O.)  
I was out, sure -- but I wasn't  
dead. And if I'm not dead, you'll  
find me.

**INT. STATE HOUSE - GOVERNOR'S OFFICE - DAY**

Kenny enters the Governor's office.

Clements stands to welcome Kenny.

CLEMENTS  
I thought I smelled trouble.

KENNY

My ass.

They shake hands.

**INT. LIMO (MOVING) - DAY**

\*

Kenny and Clements riding inside.

WALTON (V.O.)

You'll find me right nearby --

KENNY

I need a drink.

CLEMENTS

After the game.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Hunting --

\*

**EXT. UT-AUSTIN FOOTBALL STADIUM -**

\*

Game day; a packed house.

\*

UT BOOSTERS aligned at midfield before the coin toss.

\*

**IN THE STANDS**

\*

Kenny and Clements take their seats.

\*

PA ANNOUNCER

\*

And introducing the Board of  
Governors..

\*

\*

**ON THE FIELD**

\*

We see Walton approach the Boosters.

\*

**ON CLEMENTS & KENNY**

\*

Who then spot Walton.

\*

WALTON (V.O.)

Finding what's yours --

KENNY

You gotta be fuckin' kidding me.

WALTON (V.O.)

Burning it to the ground.

CLEMENTS

What?

WALTON (V.O.)

-- Taking what's yours. \*

WALTON (V.O.)

-- And making it mine. \*

PA ANNOUNCER \*

And the newest Longhorns Board  
Member, Walton Porter Jr. -- \*

We hear applause. \*

WALTON (V.O.)

All fucking mine. \*

Walton flashes a Hook 'Em Horns to the delight of the crowd;  
to his own delight. \***THE END.****POSTSCRIPT** \**The sanctions levied against SMU were the most severe in NCAA  
history.* \**The penalties brought upon SMU came be known as The Death  
Penalty.* \**In the twenty years following The Death Penalty, SMU football  
experienced only one winning season.* \**Since 2019, some college athletes -- depending on the state  
in which they attend college -- can profit from NIL (Name;  
Image; Likeness) deals.* \**However, college athletics -- in particular their top  
moneymaker, football -- remain a racket in which nearly all  
players are unpaid for the more than \$1 billion their labor  
generates for their universities and the NCAA.* \*