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Fabulistic: Examination and application of narratology and screenplay craft

Nicholas DeVan Snead

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FABULISTIC: EXAMINATION AND APPLICATION
OF NARRATOLOGY AND SCREENPLAY CRAFT

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Communication Studies

by
Nicholas DeVan Snead
March 2011
FABULISTIC: EXAMINATION AND APPLICATION OF NARRATOLOGY AND SCREENPLAY CRAFT

A Project
Presented to the Faculty of
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San Bernardino

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March 2011

Approved by:

Bradford Owen, Chair, Communication Studies

Rod Metts, Communication Studies

Steven Morris, Theatre Arts
ABSTRACT

This project contains a literature review, a discussion, and an original feature length screenplay titled Blitz the Interference. The review of literature examines: (1) various structuralist-inspired theories of narratology, and (2) the three-act structure method of screenplay construction. The discussion provides a commentary on how the subject matter from the literature review was applied towards the creation of an original screenplay, and how theories from narratology can be used to help create screenplay narratives. Blitz the Interference is a sports comedy tale about a new football coach who attempts to lead his screwball team of players to victory while also tackling his own personal issues. The three-act structure method of screenplay construction is only one approach that can be used to write screenplays; there are various alternative methods that can be used to write scripts. Although the three-act structure method can be considered formulaic, it is considered the industry standard in Hollywood, which is the primary reason why it was the technique chosen for this particular project.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my three committee members--Dr. Bradford Owen, Dr. Rod Metts, and Mr. Steven Morris--for devoting their time, assistance, and valuable feedback throughout the duration of my project. I would like to give special thanks to Dr. Owen, who served as my chair and mentor. I would also like to thank Dr. Jo Anna Grant who was always willing to help me during the early stages of my graduate project.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Section</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ABSTRACT</td>
<td>iii</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS</td>
<td>iv</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF TABLES</td>
<td>vi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Introduction</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analyzing Narratives</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Screenplay Theory</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHAPTER THREE: DISCUSSION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Discussion</td>
<td>84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX: &quot;BLITZ THE INTERFERENCE&quot;</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AN ORGINAL SCREENPLAY</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>REFERENCES</td>
<td>206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Fabula Versus Syuzhet ............... 9
Table 2. Berman's Plot Point Outline ......... 63
Table 3. Hauge's Character Chart Applied to the Film "An Officer and a Gentleman" ....... 78
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION TO THE PROJECT

Project Introduction

In the following sections I provide information concerning the purpose of the project, a description of the project, the significance of the project, limitations of the project, and a definition of terms.

Purpose of the Project

The first purpose of this project is to demonstrate how a creative project, when compared to a traditional thesis or comprehensive exam, requires equivalent levels of high quality academic research, and a comprehension, along with the utilization, of the knowledge and skills applied towards a particular topic.

The California State University, San Bernardino Graduate Studies Handbook stipulates "culminating projects must evidence originality, critical thinking, and reflect the scholarly or artistic capability of the candidate" (California State University, San Bernardino, 2010, p. 73). Therefore, just as a thesis or comprehensive exam requires critical thinking and scholarly research, the same can be said for a creative project that meets the stipulations
laid out in the Graduate Studies Handbook. This project required methodical planning, independent study, a review of the relevant literature, the ability to analyze and synthesize information from numerous sources, and the ability to write in a clear, organized, stylistically-correct, and scholarly manner.

The second purpose of this project is to produce an original, creative piece of work that fits with my professional objectives while also serving as a culminating experience of my graduate education. My program of study concentration is film studies, and I would like to become a professional screenwriter. Thus, I chose to write an original feature-length screenplay for the creative portion of my project. The feature-length screenplay will not only demonstrate my knowledge and use of the information obtained in my graduate education, but will also serve as a professional writing sample that I can use immediately after graduation.

Description of the Project

This project has two main parts. The first part of the project is the review of literature, which explores various narratological theories and the three-act structure method of screenplay construction. The literature review does not
explore every single concept, criticism, perspective, or issue dealing with narratology and screenwriting. That monumental task is much too large for the scope of this project, and would undoubtedly consist of a voluminous investigation. The primary objective of the literature review is to explore a specific section, a small slice, of narratology involving the fundamental dynamics and functions of the fabula and syuzhet; and, to examine the intricacies of the three-act structure method that is commonly used to create screenplays. Therefore, I have excluded a vast number of narrative theories, narrative topics, and studies from many narrative theorists such as Roland Barthes, Tzvetan Todorov, Claude Levi-Strauss, and a host of other scholars across a wide range of disciplines. The exclusion of any other alternative points of view and theoretical approaches in this project regarding narratology and screenwriting should only suggest that they fall out of my primary focus.

The second part of the project is an original, feature-length screenplay titled *Blitz the Interference*. The information explored in the literature review was applied towards the creation of the screenplay. *Blitz the Interference* is a sports comedy about a new football coach
who attempts to lead his screwball team of players to 
victory while also tackling his own personal issues. The 
target audience for the movie includes football fans, other 
sports fans, and a young demographic that includes teens 
and young adults.

Significance of the Project

I am the first graduate student in the Communication 
Studies master’s program to write a feature-length 
screenplay for the creative portion of the capstone 
project. Hopefully my project will serve as an example and 
inspiration to future California State University, San 
Bernardino graduate students enrolled in the Communication 
Studies program who are interested in creating a capstone 
project that involves writing a screenplay.

Limitations of the Project

As noted earlier, the literature review does not 
provide an exhaustive analysis of narratology and 
screenplay craft. Thus, many vital dimensions of 
narratology and screenplay craft were not explored. The 
literature review focuses on the structuralist-inspired 
approach toward narratology and the three-act structure 
method of screenplay construction, without examining 
alternative perspectives in great detail. This was only
done to keep the scope of the literature review in line with the narrow focus of the project.

**Definition of Terms**

Two terms that will frequently come up in my investigation are *fabula* and *syuzhet*. *Syuzhet* can also be spelled as *sjuzhet*, *sujet*, or *suzet*. The two terms originate from Russian Formalism and are used to describe how narratives are constructed. Russian Formalists described the *fabula* as the chronological chain of narrative events that are causally linked together, and the *syuzhet* as the unique arrangement and presentation of the *fabula* (Terras, 1985).

However, *fabula* and *syuzhet* are defined differently depending on which theorist is defining them. For instance, *fabula* is sometimes referred to as the story and *syuzhet* is sometimes referred to as the plot (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2006). In contrast, Bal (1985) insists that *fabula* and *story* are distinct from one another. Therefore, when the terms *fabula* and *syuzhet* appear in the literature review, there will also be a corresponding explanation of how a particular theorist defines them.
CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

What do Mark Twain and Quentin Tarantino have in common? They are both great storytellers—at least in my opinion they are. So what goes into being a great storyteller? There are many things, such as having a wonderful imagination, a knack for generating dazzling dialogue, or the ability to chronicle human experience in an engaging manner. Perhaps even more important, great storytellers possess an understanding of stories—how to create them, how to shape them, and last but not least, how to tell them.

Stories can be thought of as narratives, and narratives are the topic under discussion in this literature review. More specifically, this literature review focuses on narratology and screenwriting.

Narratology can be defined as "the structuralist-inspired theory of narrative which studies the nature, form, and functioning of narrative" (Prince, 1987, p. 65). This is not the only definition of narratology, but this definition was chosen because it adequately describes the
particular content examined in this literature review. My investigation of narrative makes no claims that the structuralist approach is the authoritative ideology, or that the structuralist approach has no weaknesses or limitations. Nor is this literature review meant to be an exhaustive exploration of narratology and screenwriting. The limited scope of this literature review is to provide a focused analysis of narratology from key theorists and to examine the three-act structure method of screenplay construction.

In the first section of the literature review I examine narratology with a particular focus on four theorists: Mieke Bal, Seymour Chatman, David Bordwell, and Peter Verstraten. There will be some comparing, contrasting, and cross-referencing, but Bal, Chatman, Bordwell, and Verstraten each bring a unique perspective which I will investigate.

In the second section of the literature review I explore the craft of screenwriting. My primary focus in the second section is to examine the intricacies of the three-act structure approach towards screenwriting.
Analyzing Narratives

Overview of Fabula and Syuzhet

As mentioned earlier, the fabula is sometimes thought of as the story and the syuzhet is sometimes thought of as the plot. Bordwell offers a more complex definition for both terms, but his definition derives from of his analysis of the fabula and syuzhet relationship in film. Bordwell says the fabula "embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and a spatial field," and the syuzhet is the "actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula" (Bordwell, 1985, pp. 49-50). Prince (1987, p. 30, p. 87) defines the fabula as "the set of narrated situations and events in their chronological sequence," and the syuzhet as "the set of narrated situations and events in the order of their presentation to the receiver."

To illustrate the difference between fabula, when it is thought of as story, and syuzhet, when it is thought of as plot, Table 1 showcases how they are distinct. In the left-handed column of Table 1 I have listed a series of events which make up the fabula content. In the right-handed column of Table 1 I have arranged a selection of
events taken from the left-handed column in a particular sequence to present the fabula in a certain manner.

Table 1. Fabula versus Syuzhet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Fabula/ Story</th>
<th>Syuzhet/ Plot</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(the chronological order in which events occurred)</td>
<td>(the order in which the events are arranged and presented)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Smith plan to stage the fake death of Mr. Smith</td>
<td>Johnson is thrown overboard a yacht with weights around his ankles, to his watery death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Smith execute the fake murder of Mr. Smith</td>
<td>Johnson, a private detective, is hired by Mrs. Smith to find her husband’s murderer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson, a private detective, is hired by Mrs. Smith to find her husband’s murderer</td>
<td>Johnson finds his first clue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson finds his first clue</td>
<td>Johnson finds his second clue</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson finds his second clue</td>
<td>Johnson and Mrs. Smith have an intimate night together</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson and Mrs. Smith have an intimate night together</td>
<td>Johnson learns that Mr. Smith faked his death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson learns that Mr. Smith faked his death</td>
<td>Johnson learns Mrs. Smith helped Mr. Smith fake his death</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Johnson learns Mrs. Smith helped Mr. Smith fake his death</td>
<td>Mr. and Mrs. Smith abduct Johnson before he can alert the police</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Mr. and Mrs. Smith abduct Johnson before he can alert the police

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mr. and Mrs. Smith abduct Johnson before he can alert the police</th>
<th>Johnson is thrown overboard a yacht with weights around his ankles, to his watery death</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Johnson is thrown overboard a yacht with weights around his ankles, to his watery death</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 1 illustrates, the left-handed column contains the chronological cause-and-effect chain of events that make up a mystery story. In the right-handed column I have arranged a selection of events taken from the left-handed column in a particular order, which presents a non-chronological plot.

**Exploring Narratology: Bal and Chatman**

Bal (1985) devised an analytical strategy for examining narratives in which she breaks up a narrative text into three distinct layers: the fabula layer, the story layer, and the text layer. The fabula layer deals with the series of logically related events that make up the story subject matter. The story layer deals with the particular manner in which those events are arranged. Lastly, the text layer is concerned with the linguistic
structure of the narrative and who is telling the story (Bal, 1985).

Bal (1985, p. 5) puts forth clear definitions of several central concepts pertaining to her analysis of narrative texts. These definitions are stated below:

- Text - a finite, structured whole composed of language signs.
- Narrative Text - a text in which an agent related a narrative.
- Event - the transition from one state to another state.
- Actors - agents that perform actions; don't have to be human.
- Fabula - a series of logically and chronologically related events that are caused or experienced by actors.
- Story - a fabula that is presented in a certain manner.

Chatman (1978) also devised an analytical strategy to examine narratives that involves breaking up a narrative into distinct components. Chatman argues that a narrative can be divided into two main components: story and
discourse. Similar to Bal’s outlook on story, Chatman’s viewpoint is story refers to the chain of events that make up the narrative. He also refers to story as the “content” of the narrative. Chatman’s discourse component refers to “the means through which the story is transmitted,” or can be thought of as how the story is transmitted (Chatman, 1978, p. 19).

However, both Bal and Chatman did not stop at dividing narratives into these main layers and components. Bal (1985) further divides the fabula layer and story layer into sub-layers, which she refers to as elements and aspects. Similarly, Chatman (1978) further divides the story and discourse components into sub-components. Perhaps they did this to make their system of examining narratives easier for individuals to use or maybe they wanted to devise a thorough approach that could be used to analyze narratives in a more comprehensive manner. In the next several sections I examine these main layers and components, along with their corresponding sub-layers and sub-components.

**Bal’s Fabula Layer and Chatman’s Story Component.** Bal states that several “elements” come together to make up the fabula layer of a narrative (Bal, 1985, p. 7). The four
elements are: events, actors, time, and location. Bal (1985) stresses that there is no specific or predetermined blueprint that must be followed when developing and using these fabula elements. The designer of the narrative can arrange and present them in any way to get the particular effects he or she desires.

On the other hand, Chatman (1978) asserts his story component can be divided into two sub-components: events and existents. Like Bal (1985), Chatman points out that the arrangement of the events and the way they are presented will determine the plot. To emphasize the crucial role of the way the events are arranged in regards to plot, Bal, Chatman, and Bordwell (1985) allude to the fact that the same set of events can be used to create various plots just by changing the way the events are arranged. Each particular arrangement of the same events would create a distinct, unique plot.

**Events.** Bal (1985) defines an event as "the transition from one state to another caused or experienced by actors," and says that events can be thought of as processes (p. 13).

Bal (1985) contends that there are three criteria that can be used to identify which sentences in a narrative text
are actual events. The first criterion is change. Change refers to the notion that something must transition from one instance to a completely different instance. For example, if a person went from hungry to having a full stomach, then an event--eating--took place and changed the person's hunger status. The second criterion is choice. Choice refers to an actor having multiple choices or possibilities to select from, and the selection of a particular choice directly determines the ensuing course of events that take place. For example, a particular action that an actor takes at the beginning of the story could lead to his rise to power by the end of the story. The third criterion is confrontation. Confrontation refers to "two actors or groups of actors being confronted by each other" (Bal, 1985, p. 16). Bal points out that the opposing actors or groups of actors don't have to be at confronting odds with each other during the entire fabula.

Chatman (1978) describes events by saying "events are either actions, in which an existent is the agent of the event, or happenings, where the existent is the patient" (p. 32). An agent refers to a character who influences, initiates, and manipulates events (Prince, 1987). In contrast, a patient refers to a character who is affected,
negatively or positively, by events, and is often a victim of complications arising from events (Prince, 1987). Chatman (1978) defines action as an alteration of status that either is caused by an agent or affects a patient, and defines happenings by saying "a happening entails a predication of which the character or other focused existent is narrative object" (p. 45).

In addition, Chatman (1978) says that narrative events have a "logic of hierarchy" (p. 53). Or in other words, particular events are more important than others. For example, events that are deemed more important may have a longer duration or may get more emphasis than lesser events. Chatman refers to major events as kernels and minor events as satellites (pp. 53-54). One of the major differences between kernels and satellites is what would happen if you remove them from the narrative. Chatman argues that kernel events cannot be removed from the plot without "destroying the logic of the narrative" (p. 53). Conversely, he asserts satellite events can be removed from the plot without destroying the logic of the narrative.

What then is their purpose? Chatman insists that satellite events are used for "filling in, elaborating, and completing the kernel events" (p. 54). He also refers to
the kernel events as being the skeleton of a narrative, as if to say they make up the underlying, necessary structural foundation, and refers to the satellite events as the flesh of the kernel skeleton.

Existents. Chatman (1978) states that an existent can be either a character or an element of setting. These two existent elements are similar to two of Bal’s fabula elements: actor and location. Therefore, I will analyze character and actor together, and setting and location together.

Actor/Character. In describing actors Bal (1985) states “actors are agents that perform actions” (p. 5). In addition, Bal argues that the only actors within the fabula that deserve significant analysis are those actors who cause or experience events; whom she calls functional actors. Not every actor in the fabula is a functional actor. For example, a character riding a skateboard past the protagonist is performing an action--riding a skateboard--and would technically be considered an actor, but the character would not be considered a functional actor because he or she has no functional part in the structure of the fabula. However, Bal maintains that just because an actor is a non-functional actor, the
significance of the non-functional actor is not always completely void because the non-functional actor’s actions could still have some degree of influence on the fabula (Bal, 1985).

Chatman (1978) argues that characters should be “autonomous beings, not mere plot functions. It should argue that character is reconstructed by the audience from evidence announced and communicated by the discourse” (p. 19). Chatman makes this point in response to some structuralist thinkers who believe characters are nothing more than products and functions of plot, which he disputes. In addition, Chatman asserts that traits are the core substance of characters. He believes the more traits a character is given, then the more well-rounded and more complex that character will be. Similarly, he argues that characters with a limited number of traits turn out to be flat and predictable.

Bal (1985) suggests that actors should be categorized into classes based on shared characteristics and relationships to get a better understanding of the fabula. Bal refers to these classes as actants, a term coined by Algirdas Julien Greimas, a French semiotician. Bal and Greimas (as cited in Bal, 1985) identified three categories
of actants: the subject/object classes, the power/receiver classes, and the helper/opponent classes. I provide an overview of these classes in the next several paragraphs.

The first set of related character classes contains the subject and the object classes. To illustrate these two classes Bal (1985) came up with the following scenario: “an actor-x aspires towards goal-y” (p. 27). In this scenario actor-x would be considered the subject-actant, and goal-y would be considered the object-actant. The importance of identifying the subject-actant from the object-actant comes from being able to separate the actor attempting to accomplish a goal from the goal itself (Bal, pp. 26-27).

The second set of related character classes contains the power and the receiver classes. Bal (1985) points out that there are powers that could support the subject-actant’s attempts to achieve a goal, directly supply the desired object to the subject-actant, allow the desired object the be given to the subject-actant, or prevent the subject-actant from achieving its goal. Sometimes these powers are not humans, but rather an abstraction (e.g., society, time, fate). On the other hand, the receiver is the person to whom the object is handed, and in many cases
the receiver is the same person as the subject-actant (Bal, 1985, pp. 28-29).

The third set of related character classes contains the helper and the opponent classes. Bal (1985) asserts that these two classes are significantly different from the others. The reason behind her assertion is that the helper-actant and opponent-actant are not directly linked with the object, but rather directly related to "the function that connects subject with object" (Bal, 1985, p. 30). In many narratives the task or desired object-actant is not easy for the subject-actant to achieve or obtain. There are obstacles and trials that the subject-actant must triumph over to reach the desired goal. The role of the helper or helpers is to assist the subject-actant overcome and face these obstacles, while one major opponent or several opponents stand in the subject-actant's way of achieving the desired goal. Bal, emphasizing the importance of these two classes states, "it is the presence of helpers and opponents which makes a fabula suspenseful and readable" (p. 31).

Time. As stated above, events can be thought of as processes, and the changes that happen during these
Bal (1985) states that there are two types of duration that fabula events usually can be divided into. The first type of duration is when the time span of the fabula events covers a relatively short period of time in which things have been compressed. For example, a narrative that covers a few days of the hero’s life is focused on a short duration of time of the hero’s life. The second type of duration is when the time span of the fabula events covers a much longer period of time and usually involves a much greater deal of character development. For example, the film Forrest Gump utilizes the longer duration of time approach to cover the hero’s life during his childhood years up to his adulthood when he becomes a father. Bal goes on to say that neither of these two types of duration is better than the other or has a clear advantage over the other. However, Bal points out that particular types of fabulas may find it useful to select one type of duration over the other. For example, autobiographies, which need to cover long periods of time, use the longer duration format (Bal, 1985, p. 38).
Location/Setting. Events take place in locations. Furthermore, different locations have distinct attributes which separate them from other locations. Bal (1985) argues that if a specific location is not given, then readers will typically use their own imagination to supply one (p. 43).

Chatman (1978) describes setting as the abstract space where characters exist and move, and setting is "the place and collection of objects against which a character’s passions appropriately emerge" (p. 139). He also says that one main function of setting is to contribute to the mood of the narrative. For instance, a location set at a cemetery at night could create a creepy atmosphere.

Sometimes locations are categorized into distinct or opposing groups. For example, there are numerous narratives in which there is a contrast made between city and country. Bal (1985) and Chatman (1978) recognized that the contrasting attributes between opposing locations could serve as symbolic, ideological, or thematic meanings that set them apart from one another. An example illustrating a location contrast is a country location being associated with freedom and nature and a city location being associated with confinement and a metropolitan lifestyle.
Lastly, in some cases there may be a boundary that separates two opposing locations. An example of a boundary between two opposing locations is purgatory, which separates heaven from hell (Bal, 1985, p. 45).

Bal’s Story Layer. Previously in the literature review the term fabula was associated with story, and the term syuzhet was associated with plot. However, the terms “story” and “plot” are defined differently depending on which theorist is defining them. In Bal’s case, story and fabula are not synonymous. When Bal (1985) uses the term “story” she is associating story with plot, the ordering of the narrative events; and, when uses the term “fabula” she is associating fabula with the chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events.

Bal (1985) says aspects are “those features that distinguish the structured story from the fabula” (p. 49). The aspects that Bal identified are: sequential ordering, rhythm, frequency, and focalization.

Sequential Ordering. Sequential ordering entails the sequence in which the events are ordered. One way to order the sequence of events in a story is to put them in chronological order. In some cases using chronological order to arrange the events is sensible because in many
ways chronological order mirrors reality (Bal, 1985, p. 51). However, events are not always arranged in chronological order, and this can be done for a variety of reasons (e.g., intended confusion, blurring of time or reality).

In addition, manipulating the sequential ordering of events can be done to make particular things stand out more, to emphasize something, for aesthetic purposes, to cause particular psychological effects, to show multiple interpretations of a single event, and a multitude of other desired effects (Bal, 1985).

Bal (1985) also states the “differences between the arrangement in the story and the chronology of the fabula are called chronological deviations or anachronies,” and “chronological deviations have a tendency to be more drastic when the fabula is more complex” (p. 53). Bal analyzed three particular aspects of chronological deviation: direction, distance, and range.

In regards to direction, Bal (1985) asserts that there are two directional possibilities: events that happened in the past and events that happen in the future. The term she uses to describe the category of past events is
retroversion, and the term she uses to describe the category of future events is anticipation.

In regards to distance, Bal (1985) states "by distance we mean that an event presented in an anachrony is separated by an interval, from the present" (p. 59). In this context, present refers to the particular moment in the fabula which the narrative is focusing on, but then gets interrupted on account of a chronological deviation.

Bal (1985) uses the term span to describe range, and describes range as the duration of time covered by an anachrony. To illustrate the difference between range and distance look at the following sentence: Last year, I went to Los Angeles for two months. In this example the range of the past event is two months, and the distance is one year.

Bal (1985) points out that it is not always possible to determine the direction, distance, and/or range. Bal calls a deviation in which time can’t be determined an achrony. Two factors that can make it difficult to analyze a deviation of time are that not enough information is given, or there is sufficient information, but it is too difficult to sort it out.

Rhythm. According to Bal (1985), analyzing the rhythm of a narrative refers to analyzing the speed "with
which the various events are presented” (p. 69). She argues that the attention paid to the various elements can serve as a viable unit of measure to analyze rhythm. In addition, she suggests that the first thing that should be done to analyze rhythm is to determine how much time is covered by all of the various events or series of events in the fabula. She argues that once all of the events and time given to them have been laid out, it will always be the case that some fabula events will be given extensive presentation and other fabula events will be given a summarizing--shorter--presentation (Bal, 1985, p. 70).

Bal (1985, p. 71) contends that “every narrative can be divided into pieces,” and each piece would correspond to one of the following five tempi: (1) ellipsis, (2) summary, (3) scene, (4) slow-down, and (5) pause. Chatman (1978) also includes these five tempi into his story component.

Ellipsis refers to content that has been omitted and not told (Bal, 1985). Therefore, the question may arise: How can something that has not been told be determined to have occurred? It is possible that when we are given substantial information, we may be able to deduce that some content has been omitted if it was not presented to us.
Chatman (1978) describes an ellipsis as when the discourse halts, but time continues to move along in the story.

Summary refers to a quick and compact presentation of events. A summary could be used to quickly present particular events that don’t have a significant impact on the fabula, to present background information, and a means to connect various scenes (Bal, 1985, p. 73). Chatman (1978) says “cinema has trouble with summary, and directors often resort to gadgetry,” while acknowledging that some directors are creative enough to handle summary more efficiently (p. 69). In regards to cinema, summaries can be handled through montage sequences, voice over narrators, and dialogue.

A scene presents an event or a series of events. Bal (1985) states “in a scene the duration of the fabula and that of the story are roughly the same,” and stresses that “roughly the same” doesn’t mean exactly the same (p. 74). Chatman (1978) has a similar take. He says in a scene, story time and discourse time are almost equal in duration (Chatman, 1978, p. 72).

Slow-down is just what it sound likes. It means purposely slowing down the tempo. A slow-down can be used to increase focus on something, to heighten the moment, and
make a suspenseful moment even more suspenseful (Bal, 1985).

Pauses “include all narrative sections in which no movement of the fabula-time is implied” (Bal, 1985, p. 76). For example, if a narrative shifts from the fabula to some other secondary storyline and shifts back to the fabula with no time passing as if to pick up right where the fabula left off, then that section where we shifted away from the fabula would be considered a pause. It is considered a pause because the fabula remained stationary when we shifted away from it. Chatman (1978) describes a pause as “when story-time stops, but discourse continues” (p. 74).

**Frequency.** Frequency refers to “the numerical relationship between events in the fabula and those in the story” (Bal, 1985, p. 77). Bal and Genette (1980) identified four possible frequency scenarios in which events could occur:

- **Singular:** An event occurs once and is presented once.

  - *Example:* I went to the movies

- **Iterative:** An event can occur (*n*) number of times and is presented once
example) I used to go to the movies every Saturday.

- Repetitive: An event occurs once and can be presented (n) number of times
  
  example) I went to the movies. He went to the movies. I went to the cinema for entertainment.

- Multiple: An event can occur (n) number of times and can be presented (n) number of times
  
  example) I went to the movies on Monday. She went to the movies on Monday. I went to the movies on Saturday.

Focalization. The presentation of events are always presented from a particular point of view or presented in a certain way. Bal (1985) states "in a story, elements of the fabula are presented in a certain way, and we are confronted with a vision of the fabula" (p. 100). Bal describes the term focalization as the "relation between the elements presented and the vision through which they are presented" (p. 100).

Bal (1985) emphasizes that the term focalization should not be thought to be completely synonymous with the terms point of view, narrative perspective, or various
other narratology terms that may appear similar at first. Bal argues that these other similar concepts (e.g., point of view, narrative viewpoint) are usually flawed because of one reason: they don’t make a strong distinction between “the vision through which the elements are presented and the identity of the voice that is verbalizing that vision” (Bal, 1985, pp. 99-100). Or in other words she believes these other concepts are somewhat flawed because they do not entail making a strong distinction between who is doing the seeing and who is actually verbalizing the vision.

Bal (1985) refers to the subject of focalization as being the focalizor, which has also been spelled focalizer, and is “the point from which the elements are viewed” (p. 103). Bal may have used the word point because it allows flexibility to describe the subject doing the viewing. In regards to a character subject doing the viewing, the focalization may shift among different characters, which would allow us to see how different characters view the same event.

When we are looking at the object being viewed by a particular focalizor it is important to remember that our image of the object is not the true object itself, but rather an image of the object given to us from the vision
of a particular focalizor (Bal, 1985). For example, a character focalizor may have certain biases and opinions that could have an effect on how the image of the object is presented to us. Therefore, Bal (1985, p. 106) makes an argument that the following three questions are relevant:

1. What does the character focalize: at what is its attention at?
2. How does it do this: with what attitude does it view things?
3. Who focalizes it: whose focalized object is it?

Bal’s Text Layer and Chatman’s Discourse Component. As mentioned in earlier in the literature review, Bal’s Text Layer examines the different speakers involved in the presentation. Bal (1985) puts most of her focus on the narrative agent, the agent who tells the narrative, and so that is what I will focus on also. I also discuss Chatman’s (1978) discourse component, which concerns the “means through which the story is transmitted (p. 19).

Bal (1985) and Chatman (1978) believe it is important to look at the various narrative agents involved in the narrative communication process to get a better understanding of the how narratives are transmitted. Bal and Chatman identified six agents involved the narrative
communication process: (1) the real author, (2) the implied author, (3) the narrator, (4) the narratee, (5) the implied reader, and (6) the real reader. I examine each of these narrative agents in the following paragraphs.

The Real Author. The narrative communication process starts with the real author. The real author is the real person or persons who created the narrative (Kozloff, 1992).

The Implied Author. The next agent in the communication process is the implied author. Booth (1983), the originator of the term implied author, describes the implied author as the real author’s second self, and as the literary personality of the real author. Chatman (1978) describes the implied author as “the principle that invented the narrator and everything else in the narrative” (p. 148).

The Narrator. The next agent in the communication process is the narrator. The narrator can be thought of as the “the fictitious spokesperson who tells the story for the writer” (Bal, 1985, p. 8). Chatman (1978) identifies several types of narrators: overt narrator, covert narrator, unreliable narrator, reliable narrator. An overt narrator is a noticeable narrator who acts as a storyteller
during the presentation of the story. Chatman puts the covert narrator in "the middle ground between nonnarration and conspicuously audible narration," because the covert narrator speaks, but remains hidden to us (p. 197). A reliable narrator is a narrator who we believe to be a trustworthy source and someone who is not trying to deceive us. On the other hand, an unreliable narrator is a narrator whose credibility is in question (Booth, 1983).

The Narratee. The next agent in the communication process is the narratee. The narratee is the person within the narrative text to whom the narrator tells the story (Kozloff, 1992). Chatman (1978) contends that there is not always a narrator or a narratee in the text, but there is always a real author and a real reader.

The Implied Reader. The next agent in the communication process is the implied reader. The implied reader is the hypothetical person the implied author is writing the text for (Kozloff, 1992). For example, implied authors can write for their fan base or a specific audience.

The Real Reader. The next and last agent in the communication process is the real reader. The real reader
is the living, breathing person who reads the text
(Kozloff, 1992).

Kozloff (1992) applied the narrative communication
model to the novel Huckleberry Finn, and identified each of
the six narrative agents as:

• Real Author: Samuel Clemens.

• Implied Author: Mark Twain, the penname that Samuel
  Clemens wrote under.

• Narrator: Huck Finn – the story is told through the
eyes and thoughts of Huck, the protagonist.

• Narratee: The narratee is the “unspecified person”
  that Huck Finn is telling the story to. When the story
  first opens Huck states “You don’t know about me
  without you have read a book by the name of The
  Adventures of Tom Sawyer...” (Kozloff, 1992, p. 56). So
  the “you” that Huck Finn is addressing is the
  narratee, which could be any unspecified person who is
  listening to or reading his story.

• Implied Reader - The implied reader is the unspecified
  person Mark Twain is writing for.
• Real Reader - The real reader is the real, living, and breathing individual who is reading the book.

Chatman (1978) says that one of the sub-components of his discourse component is the manifestation of the narrative. Manifestation concerns the expression and appearance of the narrative via a particular medium (e.g., verbal, cinematic, musical, etc.). For instance, consider a novel as the particular medium used to convey and present a narrative. Now consider that same narrative presented to us through the medium of film. The manifestation of the narrative through both mediums will differ, and each distinct medium used will result in a unique expression and appearance of the narrative.

The Fabula, Syuzhet, and Style in Film.

Bordwell’s (1985) definition of fabula differs from Bal’s definition of fabula. In Bal’s definition of fabula, fabula is not synonymous with story (Bal, 1985). However, Bordwell does associate the term fabula with story, and says “the fabula embodies the action as a chronological, cause-and-effect chain of events occurring within a given duration and a spatial field” (p. 49). Bordwell associates the term syuzhet with plot, and says “the syuzhet is the
actual arrangement and presentation of the fabula” (p. 50). Bordwell defines style as “the film’s use of cinematic devices” (p. 50). Examples of cinematic devices are editing, sound, setting, lighting, and mise-en-scene. When the terms fabula, syuzhet, and style are used in this section of the literature review they are used in the context of Bordwell’s definitions.

Bordwell (1985) offers an alternative way of thinking about the fabula that builds upon the descriptions already mentioned. Bordwell states that if a viewer is given two narrative events, then the viewer will then use narrative comprehension to identify causal, spatial and/or temporal links, which ultimately results in the viewer “progressively and retroactively creating an imaginary construct” (p. 49). Bordwell says this imaginary construct created is the fabula. Narrative comprehension involves the viewer making an effort to understand narrative elements and sets of events in order to construct a coherent story that is unified by temporal and spatial relations. Bordwell points out that although he refers to the fabula as an imaginary concept, the fabula should not be thought to be some “whimsical” or completely non-existent construct (p. 49).
Bordwell (1985) believes that viewers build the fabula by using schemata, which are organized clusters of knowledge and information that help viewers form hypotheses. Examples of the different kinds of schemata Bordwell (1985) mentions are: "identifiable types of persons, locations, relations of causality, space, and time, and the canonic story" (p. 49). Hypotheses come into play because Bordwell argues that when viewers piece the fabula together, they will often watch the film while also framing and testing hypotheses about past and future events in the film.

The Syuzhet and Fabula Relationship. Bordwell (1985) argues that the fabula is not something given to the audience, but something that is constructed by the viewer and is inferred from the syuzhet. Bordwell also says the syuzhet controls "the architectonics of the film's presentation," or in other words the syuzhet controls the plotting structure of film's presentation (p. 50). Bordwell lays out three principles which relate the syuzhet to the fabula: (1) narrative logic, (2) time, and (3) space.

Narrative logic. Bordwell (1985) states "in constructing the fabula the perceiver defines some phenomena as events while constructing relations among
them," and also points out that the "relations are primarily causal ones" (p. 51). The syuzhet can be used to assist the perceiver in making these causal relations. The syuzhet can also be used in such a way to purposely make it more difficult for the perceiver to identify these causal relations. For example, the syuzhet can be arranged in a particular manner in order to add mystery, suspense, and complexity to the presentation of the narrative; all being things that can enhance the perceiver's experience of the story.

**Time.** Bordwell (1985) mentions frequency, order, and duration, as three aspects the syuzhet can use to manipulate how the perceiver constructs fabula time. These are three of the same aspects identified by Bal (1985) and Gennette (1980) earlier in the literature review. An example of the syuzhet utilizing frequency is the presentation of a meaningful event multiple times. In addition, just because an event is presented multiple times does not mean the presentation of the event has to be the exact same each time. In regards to order, the syuzhet can control which particular events are presented and what order they are presented in. For example, fabula time can be distorted by presenting events out of chronological
order. In regards to duration, the syuzhet can be arranged to cover any particular time span (e.g., one day, months, years, an entire lifespan).

**Space.** Bordwell (1985) states "fabula events must be represented as occurring in a spatial frame of reference, however vague or abstract" (p. 51). The syuzhet can help the perceiver construct fabula space by informing the perceiver of the salient surroundings, locations, "and the positions and paths assumed by the story's agents" (Bordwell, 1985, p. 51). Bordwell points to Hitchcock's *Rear Window* as a film in which the protagonist's confinement to his surroundings helped the perceiver construct the fabula's restricted space.

**The Syuzhet and Style Relationship.** Bordwell (1985) asserts the syuzhet and style treat the narration process differently. He says the syuzhet "embodies the film as a dramaturgical process" and the style "embodies the film as a technical process" (p. 50). In other words, the syuzhet is more focused on the structure and presentation of the events, and the style deals more with the utilization of various cinematic techniques to present those events.

The syuzhet and style work together with the goal of facilitating the construction of a fabula, but each play a
separate role in the process. Bordwell (1985) states "in the normal film the syuzhet system controls the stylistic system" and describes the syuzhet as the "dominant" system between the two in regards to "normal" films (p. 52). Bordwell does not offer explicit explanation of what he means by "normal" films, but he may be referring to films that use classical Hollywood narration in which style is typically used to support the causal, spatial, and temporal ordering of events in the syuzhet.

Bordwell (1985) points out that although style is not considered the dominant system between the two in normal films, the valuable role of style should not be overlooked or diminished. He says that one of the important functions of style is its use as a means to perform syuzhet tasks (e.g., providing information, manipulating how easy or difficult it will be to construct the fabula, cueing hypotheses). In addition, style can be a significant factor when multiple stylistic alternatives exist for accomplishing a particular syuzhet purpose (Bordwell, 1985). For example, utilizing lighting and sound to achieve a particular syuzhet purpose could have a totally different effect on the perceiver compared to using only setting to achieve the same purpose.
Bordwell (1985) acknowledges that "film style can also take shapes not justified by the syuzhet’s manipulation of story information" (p. 52). Or in other words, style does not always have to serve as the supporting system to achieve syuzhet purposes, and could compete for dominance with the syuzhet for presenting the fabula. Bordwell (1978) has a particular name for the type of narration when style is more dominant than the syuzhet or is at least equal in importance with it, and he calls it parametric narration.

**Narratology and Genre**

What is one thing we almost always see in horror films? What about musicals? When a film falls into a particular genre we tend to expect that certain things will be incorporated into the film. For example, in westerns we expect a setting filled with rugged, frontier landscapes. Similarly, in film noir we expect a visual style that incorporates low-key lighting and dark spaces. Just as narratology can be applied toward specific media such as film, narratology can be applied to genre as well.

Verstraten (2009) argues that genres are based on conventions rather than concrete, universal rules, and conventions, unlike rules, can be altered and are open to change. As a result, he asserts that the "mutability of
conventions make genres elastic" (p. 176). He contends that genres are based on repetition--story elements that repeatedly and frequently pop up in certain genres.

Furthermore, Verstraten (2009) says that the strength of many films "is determined by the way in which they take into account the narrative principles of their respective genres" (p. 186). However, there can always be exceptions; stories can always go against genre conventions. But, when a story that is said to belong to one genre starts to shift away from its corresponding genre conventions, then the story also begins to shift to a different genre.

Verstraten (2009) examines several genres in terms of their characters. I examine five of these genres: (1) western genre, (2) film noir genre, (3) detective genre, (4) horror genre, and (5) science-fiction genre.

**Western Genre.** The iconic character of the western is the cowboy. Verstraten (2009) describes the cowboy as a character who usually has a sharpshooting, rugged, masculine aura. Verstraten also contends that the cowboy often must embark on a character development journey to finally become a hero. He says in this journey other characters in the narrative believe in the cowboy's heroism
first, and their trust is what allows the cowboy to transform into a hero and defeat the antagonist.

Verstraten (2009) argues that the classic cowboy does not narrate about his heroic deeds that happened in the past, and relies on other characters to do that for him. For instance, when the cowboy rides into town, the locals may whisper and gossip about rumors and tales of the cowboy’s past deeds and reputation. Verstraten (2009) adds “a classic cowboy does not operate on the level of narration or focalization but exclusively on the level of the action....he is the object of narration, the object of focalization, and the subject of the action” (p. 182).

Film Noir. Verstraten (2009) identified three conventions which frequently show up in film noir. The first convention is the presence of a narrating character explaining how he or the protagonist got wrapped up in trying to solve a mysterious crime. Often this narrating character is a private detective who has been hired to solve a crime, but other times this character can be someone other than a detective. The second convention of film noir is the use of flashbacks, and a lot of the mystery being cleared up thereby. The third convention that has become a staple of film noir is having an ambiguous
femme fatale character, who makes it difficult for the protagonist to determine if she is a positive or negative character.

**Detective Genre.** Verstraten (2009) describes the detective genre as having a "plot that revolves around the reconstruction of the fabula that preceded a murder case, in order that the crime is allocated a place within a sequence of causes of and consequences" (p. 176). The crime committed in a detective film is not always a murder; for example, it could be a robbery. It is likely that Verstraten specifically alluded to murder as the crime committed because of murder being the plot choice frequently used in this genre.

As Verstraten (2009) mentioned, the fabula must be reconstructed because of the way the syuzhet is arranged; particular events have been left out. It is the detective's job to find out the causal chain of events that have led up to the crime. Verstraten claims that one plot device which has become cliché in the detective genre is having an unexpected candidate turn out to be the perpetrator of the crime.

**Classic Horror and Science Fiction.** Verstraten (2009) and Sobchack (1998) compare and contrast classic horror and
science fiction, with a particular focus on the creature and monster characters found in both genres.

Verstraten (2009) insists "classic horror can be characterized by the thin line between man and monster" (p. 180). This notion suggests that in these films man and monster share enough similar characteristics and behaviors that it can become difficult to distinguish the true monster.

Verstraten (2009) also points out that in many horror movies there are a good number of scenes where the monster is the focalizer, which allows viewers to see things through his eyes. This function helps viewers understand the monster's perspective, and in some cases can stir up sympathy for him. On the other hand, when the creature or monster is the object of focalization, then viewers see it from a distance, and this can enhance the non-human nature of the creature or monster.

Verstraten (2009) points to Stanley Kubrick's 2001: A Space Odyssey as a ground-breaking science fiction film in which Hal, a non-human supercomputer, was given many subjective shots. Verstraten says that after this film by Kubrick, having cyborgs and robots as the focalizer in many
scenes has almost become a science fiction genre convention.

Sobchack (1998) declares that a distinction should be made between the science fiction creature and the science fiction monster. She describes the creature as a malevolent life form that leaves destruction, chaos, and fear in its wake, and typically comes about as punishment for some transgression by humans. Sobchack argues creatures lack the "soul" that monsters have, and creature films typically focus more on the destruction caused by the creature (p. 44). An example of a science fiction creature is Godzilla.

In regards to the science fiction monster, Sobchack (1998) states "it is a human being who--most often as a result of scientific accident--becomes the monster" (p. 50). She also says that unlike the creature, the science fiction monster's actions have purpose and intent, and in some cases the transformation of the human who turns into a monster is a manifestation of one of his or her character flaws. An example of a science fiction monster is the human scientist who turned into a monster in the film The Fly.

Limitations of Narrative Theory

The structuralist-inspired approach of narratology provides a number of useful theories and methods to analyze
narratives, but it also has its fair share of critics who point out what they feel are inherent limitations and weaknesses within its theories and approaches. In the next several paragraphs I take a look at a few of these criticisms.

Kozloff (1992) argues that narrative theory is "inescapably formalist and largely unconcerned with questions about content and thus with political or ideological judgments" (pp. 42-43). Kozloff also claims narrative theory has various limitations that arise when someone only analyzes the text itself and does not consider a number of additional linked factors (e.g., social factors, historical factors, psychological factors) in that analysis.

Walsh (2001) feels that the Formalists’ concern with temporal ordering overshadows their concerns for perspectival issues, and views this as a major drawback. He says “fabula, in order to function as the untransformed substructure beneath the adopted point of view of the sujet, would need to be innocent of all perspective… this requirement is flatly impossible” (p. 599).
Smith (1980), responding directly to Chatman (1978) argues that the structuralist-inspired approach of narratology

... appears to be afflicted, however, with a number of dualistic concepts and models, the continuous generation of which betrays a lingering strain of naïve Platonism and the continued appeal to which is both logically dubious and methodologically distracting (p. 213).

In analyzing Peter Brook’s theory of plotting, Hirsch (1989) claims “I would argue that Brook’s entire conception of narrative dynamic is based on a sexual and psychological model which is exclusively male and that similar limitations define all narratological theories which rely on models of authority and filiation” (p. 54). Hirsch argues that narratology can sometimes overlook the female subject and the works of women writers.

As a counter-argument to some of those who point out limitations in narratology, Bal (1985) adamantly states that her strategy of breaking up the narrative into the three layers of fabula, story, and text is not a supreme theory that can work perfectly with every single type of text in existence, but rather should be seen as a set of
tools that are suitable for a wide range of texts. She also admits alternative theories may prove to be more efficient for particular cases of narrative analysis.

**Lacanian Narration**

Up to this point I have examined the structuralist-inspired approach toward narratology. In this section I examine Lacanian Narration, a post-structuralist approach toward narratology, to explore an alternative outlook that differs from the structuralist-inspired approach.

Davis (1983) proposes that particular theories from Jacques Lacan, a French psychoanalyst and psychiatrist who made significant contributions to various disciplines, can be applied to narratology. Davis points to Lacan’s outlook toward narration: “narration operates like a language, is a language, and manifests linguistic operations in various ways” (p. 848).

Davis (1983) also states “narration exists within the context of an unconscious discourse, within the bounds of what Lacan calls the discourse of the Other” (p. 848). The terminology “discourse of the Other” is a concept from Sigmund Freud. Lacan declared himself a disciple of Freud, and Freud’s studies and influence are at the heart of Lacanian narratology. For that reason, Davis insists
Lacanian narratology should be examined in combination with Freudian studies for a greater understanding.

Davis (1983) declares that Lacanian Narration has three fundamental propositions:

(1) Narration is structured like a subject in language, (2) Narration’s manifest content is a product of the unconscious discourse that is both the precondition of narration and the site of its appearance, and (3) The unconscious discourse of language and its processes are revealed in the gaps or lapses that appear in a narrative’s manifest text (pp. 853-854).

The first proposition--narration is structured like a subject in language--calls for further discussion about language. Language is arbitrary in that there is no natural relationship between the words of any particular language and the concepts or objects that the word signifies or corresponds to (Saussure, 1916/1998). For example, there is no natural reason why the word dog should be associated with the animal we think of when we hear the word dog. Similarly, there is no natural reason why the Spanish word perro, which translates to dog in English, should be associated with the animal Spanish speakers think of when
they hear the word perro. Is the animal a dog or a perro? Saussure and Lacan would say it is neither. It is the speakers of a given language who give concepts and objects arbitrary meanings.

When Davis (1983, p. 853) says “narration is structured like a subject in language,” he is comparing narration to how an individual’s subjectivity is constructed. According to Lacan and other post-structuralists, our subjectivity, our sense of ourselves in relation to the world around us, is socially constructed (Weedon, 1997). Thus, the general idea of the first proposition is saying narration, like language and our subjectivity, is something that is socially constructed.

The second proposition builds upon the first one by saying narration’s manifest content is a product of the unconscious discourse that is both the precondition of narration and the site of its appearance (Davis, 1983). Manifest content is a term coined by Freud in his work concerning dream interpretation. Manifest content can be described as “the apparent surface narrative or content of the dream as articulated by the dreamer in a conscious state,” or in other words the dream content we remember when we wake up (Fish and Perkins, para. 60). In addition,
Freud (1913) claims that a function of the manifest content is to disguise the thoughts and desires stemming from the unconscious, which he refers to as latent content.

Narration can be thought of as the explicit discourse on the surface as compared to the underlying unconscious discourse which gives rise to it.

Davis (1983) adds “the subject of narration, what gives it form and meaning, will always be other than what is signified in narration, or what is signifiable as narration” (p. 854). Considering the notion that narration is a language, narration and what is signified in narration can never get at the Real because language is arbitrary; it is impossible for the Real to be expressed by language.

The third proposition of Lacanian narration is that the unconscious discourse of language and its processes are revealed in the gaps or lapses that appear in a narrative’s manifest text. Davis (1983) states the third proposition implies “placing narrative interpretation within the unconscious discourse of the Other” (p. 854). The third proposition builds upon the second proposition which stated the unconscious is responsible for the creation of the manifest content. Further, the unconscious also plays a role in the interpretation of the manifest content. For
example, each person who reads a narrative text, including the creator, will construct a unique interpretation of that text. The different interpretations amongst individuals may be similar, but won’t necessarily be identical. Those small interpretation differences are the "gaps" and lapses" that Davis is referring to, and the unconscious plays a role in creating them. In addition, the gaps and lapses reflect the differences between the narration’s explicit discourse expressed on the surface level and the underlying unconscious discourse which gave rise to narration’s explicit discourse.

Screenplay Theory

Theories from narratology can be used in conjunction with screenplay theory to write a screenplay. Narratology entails the study of story, plot, structure, character, point of view, and various other narrative elements. These are the same elements that are found in screenplay theory.

Nonetheless, there are unique theories that only apply to screenwriting. In addition, there are unique theories that only apply to the Hollywood model of screenwriting. In this section I analyze the following: (1) The three-act structure, (2) the major plot points in screenplays (3)
constructing scenes, (4) subplots, and (5) story characters. These are theories that only apply to the Hollywood model of screenwriting; there are various other ways of telling stories in movies which are not explored in this literature review.

The Three Act Structure

Berman (1998) claims that if you disregard structure and try to make up your story on the fly then you may find yourself running out of ideas or forcing things to happen just to keep the story moving along.

Howard and Mabley (1993) pointed out how the three-act structure corresponds to audience experience. According to Howard and Mabley, the first act is used to introduce the characters and get the audience involved with the characters; the second act increases the audience’s emotional commitment to the story and characters; and, the third act should provide a resolution to the story while bringing “the audience’s involvement to a satisfactory end” (p. 25).

Howard and Mabley (1993) argue that a good screenplay masks the three-act structure. This means that audiences members should not be sitting there saying “oh that’s the end of act one, that’s the midpoint,” and so on. For a
well-written screenplay, audience members should experience the emotional shifts that happen during the major plot points and act changes, but they should not be fully conscious of some systematic, three act structure model while watching the film.

According to Berman (1998), screenplays that adhere to the three-act structure will be structured along the following arrangement: (1) Act One - Set Up [pages 1-30]; (2) Act Two - Confrontations/Obstacles [pages 31-90]; and, (3) Act Three - The Resolution [pages 91-120].

However, not all screenplays will be exactly 120 pages in length. Therefore, an alternative way to divide up the structure is to use a method suggested by Trottier (2005) which breaks up the screenplay along the following percentages: (1) Act One = approximately 25% of screenplay; (2) Act Two = approximately 50% of screenplay; and, (3) Act Three = approximately 25% of screenplay.

Howard (2004) also has a similar model in which he describes the three-act structure as: (1) Act One - The Beginning: Engaging the audience; (2) Act Two - The Middle: Elaborating and extending the engagement; and, (3) Act Three - The End: Releasing the engagement (p. 256). Although exact page numbers are sometimes used as a guide
for screenplay structure development, Howard (2004) points out that the best way to tell a story "is the way that fits the story's needs and the storyteller's intentions most completely" (p. 251).

**Act One.** The first act introduces the main characters and the world these characters live in to the audience. It also sets up the main conflict that will drive the story, and can be used to give the audience a foreshadowing of the obstacles that the protagonist will have to face to meet his or her main objective (Howard & Mabley, 1993).

Howard (2004) describes Act One as the section where the writer wants to engage the audience. Howard states that when movie audiences first walk into a theatre or read a screenplay that they have "made themselves available to become engaged, but are not yet involved," and that it is up to the screenwriter to engage the audience during the first act (p. 256).

Furthermore, Howard (2004) says audiences initially want to know: the who, what, where, when, and why aspects of the story because of their desire to find a common ground and connection with the story and the characters. An audience member's lack of connection with the story or characters can result in that person not caring about the
story and could take away from their overall story experience. Howard (2004) points out that audiences don’t need to connect or find common ground on every single aspect of the story, or feel that they are watching a movie about themselves, but there must be at least some common ground incorporated into the story that can resonate with audience members in order to make a connection with them. Yet Howard emphasizes that this connection is not enough to maintain the audience’s attention, and that audiences also “want to become interested in the future of at least one character” (p. 257).

Howard (2004) asserts, after the screenwriter has made a connection with the audience and produced a protagonist who wants something then the first act is over, and audiences should now have some level of interest on what will happen next in the story.

Berman (1998) says the setting-up function of Act One focuses on three things: (1) introducing the main character, (2) establishing what the story is about, and (3) establishing the dramatic circumstances surrounding the action (p. 39). In addition, Berman claims that all three of these setup elements should and could be done within the first 10-15 pages of the screenplay, and that the next 10
pages or so should be dedicated on developing the protagonist through dialogue and action.

Act Two. Berman (1998) describes Act Two as the part of the story where the protagonist’s journey towards the desired goal is made more difficult. It is the part of the story where new obstacles come into play that slow down or temporarily stop the hero.

Howard and Mabley (1993) insists that the conflict arising from the obstacles in the second act should change and develop the protagonist, or at least put a significant amount of pressure on the protagonist to change. They also say the second act is usually the section that can be dedicated to subplot development.

Howard (2004) describes Act Two as the section where the writer should elaborate and extend the engagement that was created in Act One, which means the writer should now try to get the audience to connect with the story and characters on a deeper level. Howard claims a story can get away with the audience being only “mildly interested” with the protagonist in the first act, but mild interest won’t be enough to hold the audience’s attention and involvement with the story as time goes on (p. 258). Howard (2004) reminds writers that the second act--aka the middle--makes
up the bulk of the story, and as a result, everything must be made more important, the stakes must be raised, the protagonist must be more passionate about achieving his or her goal than before, and "the obstacles that we knew were probably out there must now become real, distinct, and difficult to surmount" (p. 258).

Furthermore, Howard (2004) asserts that the second act is where the audience's connection with the main characters in the story should become permanent, and in order for the connection to become permanent the writer must enhance the bond between the main characters and the audience. The bond between the audience and the protagonist should be made stronger than the audience's bond with the other characters. The writer can strengthen these bonds by furnishing more information about the main characters that will help the audience sympathize, understand, or identify more with the story characters. For example, the audience may find out about one of the main character's tragic flaws, or learn a nemesis has good in his heart to go along with his bad side (Howard, 2004).

Lastly, Howard (2004) states that just as we know the first act is over when it is established that somebody wants something, the second act is over "when wanting
something badly and having difficulty getting it is finished” (p. 260). However, Howard declares this does not mean that the story is complete or resolved, but rather that the “quest for the original want has been completed or transformed in some fashion,” and “what happens as a result of the protagonist’s having attempted to achieve his or her want is what’s left for the third act” (p. 260).

Howard and Mabley (1993) use the film Chinatown to illustrate his notion of the second act ending when the protagonist gets what he or she wants. The major conflict in Act One driving Jake Gittes, the protagonist of Chinatown, is to find out who set him up and made him look foolish. At the end of Act Two Jake discovers Noah Cross, the antagonist, is behind everything. Thus, Jake has gotten what he wanted, but the story continues into Act Three as Jake has a new goal of trying to help Evelyn and her daughter escape.

**Act Three.** In the third act, the factors contributing towards the protagonist’s character arc should now come to fruition (Howard & Mabley, 1993). Berman (1998) argues that when structuring your story you should already have knowledge of how the story will end in the third act before you start working on the story’s beginning. Berman’s
opinion is "by knowing the ending of your story, you have a straight line of development to follow from the beginning to the resolution" (p. 35). Moreover, Berman claims that knowing the ending to the story beforehand will allow screenwriters to clearly develop which actions and scenes are required to justify the resolution of the story. For instance, with a clear idea of how the story should end, the writer can use the early scenes in the story to incorporate any of the skills, knowledge, or abilities that the protagonist will need to achieve his or her objective at the resolution stage in the story.

Berman's (1998, p. 107) analysis of Act Three centers on five things writers should consider when ending their stories: (1) story endings require meticulous planning and effective execution to work properly because the ending of the story may be the factor that determines whether an audience member enjoys the movie; (2) once the movie cues the audience that the movie will be ending soon then it should be ended quickly and efficiently as possible--"the tighter the ending the more effective it will be;" (3) the ending should not leave any issues within the story unanswered, and, if necessary, there should be further clarification and explanation of any issues that need to be
cleared up; (4) the story "must be resolved rationally and logically without resorting to coincidence;" and, (5) a story that has an unexpected ending or twist, but is still logical, can positively enhance the audience's reaction to the resolution.

Howard (2004) describes the third act as the section where the story releases the audience's engagement. Recall that Howard said the second act ends when the protagonist achieves his or her goal. Howard adds further explanation about his take on when the second act ends to clear up any possible confusion:

Isn't the story over if the character has completed the want in the second act? Not by any means.... The third act is the collision of this possibly altered protagonist with the possibly altered world or the pursuit of the transformed or new want that was the outgrowth of the second-act want (pp. 260 -261)

In regards to releasing the audience's engagement, Howard (2004) warns that if the story is stopped at the wrong moment without carefully ending the audience's connection, then the entire experience that the writer carefully developed over time between the audience and the story they have become immersed in can be ruined. Howard
(2004) adds that stories don’t have to end happily, but they should end fully (p. 261).

**Major Plot Points**

Berman (1998) defines a plot point as "a significant event or incident that propels the story forward" (p. 40). Howard (2004) refers to these major plot points as "crucial moments," and says there will typically be about half a dozen of them, and all of them should be tied directly to the protagonist (p. 285, p. 287). Howard calls them crucial moments because he claims that these moments are so important that if they were taken out then it would destroy the entire story, which is similar to what Chatman (1978) said about kernel events. Trottier (2005) describes plot points as the "important events that complicate or even reverse the action," and can also be referred to as "transition points, action points, and character crossroads" (p. 6).

Berman (1998) diagrams an outline to illustrate the placement of the major plot points within the screenplay. Berman’s detailed outline is shown in Table 2. Berman emphasizes his plot point outline is not a mandate that all screenplays must adhere to because the placement of plot points will ultimately depend on how the writer wants to
construct the story. However, he warns that a story may seem to drag if the plot points are placed too far apart. With that said, he points out that most action film screenplays have a much better chance of straying from his recommended plot point outline because they have multiple action scenes that won’t feel dragged out or bore the audience because the action retains their interest (p. 42).

Table 2. Berman’s Plot Point Outline

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page(s)</th>
<th>Description of Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-10</td>
<td>Introduce the main character, establish the premise of the story, what the story is about, and the dramatic circumstances surrounding the action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11-20</td>
<td>Focus on the main character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23-25</td>
<td>INTRODUCE THE FIRST MAJOR PLOT POINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30</td>
<td>END OF ACT I</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>Introduce another plot point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>60</td>
<td>INTRODUCE MID-POINT PLOT POINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>Introduce another plot point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85-87</td>
<td>INTRODUCE THE SECOND MAJOR PLOT POINT</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>END OF ACT II</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>105</td>
<td>Introduce another plot point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115-120</td>
<td>RESOLUTION OF STORY</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Catalyst Plot Point. Trottier (2005) states before the first major plot point occurs at the end of Act One the catalyst, also known as the inciting incident, occurs early on in the story; usually happening within the first 10-15 pages. At the beginning of the story the protagonist’s life is typically in balance; everything in the protagonist’s life is status quo. Then the catalyst occurs and upsets this balance in the protagonist’s life. It gives the protagonist a new “goal, problem, need, or desire,” which will propel the rest of the story forward based on solving that new goal, solving that new problem, meeting that new need, or meeting that new desire (Trottier, 2005, p. 14).

End of Act One Plot Point. Berman (1998) states a primary function of the first major plot point is “to spin the story around and really grab the reader’s or audience’s attention and interest” (p. 40). He also asserts that the first major plot point clearly reveals the protagonist’s need and establishes the protagonist’s course of action that will carry the story over into Act Two. Berman warns that the first major plot point should be significant, but it should not be set so high that the rest of the plot points are unable to surpass it in regards to rising conflict.
Howard (2004) calls the first major plot point the main tension, and that even though it is established at the end of the first act, it “carries over into and unifies the second act” (p. 289). Thus, the first plot point has a direct influence on the future events that will occur in the next two acts.

Trottier (2005) refers to the first major plot point as the big event because this plot point “is usually a big event that dramatically affects the central character’s life, and after the big event occurs the audience will want to know what will happen next” (p. 6). Trottier says writers need to remember the concept of rising tension and have the big event be more intense than the catalyst.

**Midpoint.** The midpoint is called the midpoint because it usually occurs about half-way through the story. Howard (2004) describes the midpoint as the “first culmination of the second act,” and asserts that it should be the second most important crucial moment in the second act (p. 291). Howard also says a typical function of the midpoint is to make the main tension stemming from the first major plot point more specific and tighter.

Trottier (2005) refers to the midpoint as the pinch. He says the pinch is usually the point in the story when
the protagonist becomes fully committed to his or her desired goal, or that the pinch can be "the moment when the motivation to achieve the goal becomes fully clear, or the stakes are raised" (p. 18). Trottier also says another way to think of the midpoint is the point of no return for the protagonist.

End of Act Two Plot Point. Howard (2004) refers to the second major plot point as the culmination. Howard says the culmination partially resolves the main conflict stemming from the first act, and can create new tension that will propel the story towards the resolution (pp. 291-292).

Trottier (2005) refers to the second major plot point as the crisis, and that out of all of the other problems that the protagonist has endured "the crisis forces the central character to take the final action, or series of actions, that will resolve the story" (p. 6). He also describes the crisis as the worst thing that could happen to the protagonist at this point in the story because all seems lost for him or her.

Act Three Twist Plot Point. Howard (2004) states that in the third act, usually located midway through, that sometimes there is a major twist. Howard describes this major twist as being something that is unexpected; having
the audience to be expecting the story to go in one direction, but then the story goes somewhere else. The functions of this major twist in the third act are to make the third act less predictable, make the third act appear less linear, to throw one more monkey wrench into the hero’s life so things will be more complicated, and to make the story more tense for the audience (Howard, 2004).

**The Story Climax Plot Point.** Trottier (2005) refers to the climax as the *showdown*, and states that “the goal is on the line including the theme or movie message and/or some important value” (p. 19). The showdown functions as the final face-off between the protagonist and the nemesis. The protagonist and the nemesis may have battled each other earlier in the story, but the showdown is typically the final decisive battle. Howard (2004) points out that not all climaxes have to entail some extravagant, high octane scene with explosives and a lot of “bells and whistles” (p. 339). In Howard’s viewpoint, the primary function of the climax is to carry the story towards a satisfying resolution, and substance rather than spectacle should go into it.

**The Story Resolution Plot Point.** Howard (2004) says the final resolution ends the audience’s involvement with
the story and the protagonist. All of the conflicts and building moments that took place earlier have been brought to an end. Sometimes it may be the case that the audience can assume the protagonist is likely to go on another quest, but the particular quest that the audience has been following the protagonist on throughout the story has come to a finish (Howard, 2004).

Other Often Used Plot Points. Trottier (2005) states that some screenplays have a major plot point that occurs near the end of the story that he refers to as the realization. He says "that just after the story’s climatic scene or sequence of scenes, the central character realizes something new about himself or herself, or we’re shown some visible or spoken evidence of his or her growth," and that this serves as a major moment of realization for the hero (p. 19). For example a protagonist may finally realize the error of his ways, or the protagonist may realize what she thought she wanted the entire story is not all that important after all.

Some screenplays also include a denouement after the story’s main conflict has been resolved. Trottier (2005) says the denouement can be used to bring resolution to any
loose ends or subplots that have not been completely resolved yet.

Constructing Scenes

Trottier (2005) describes a scene as "a dramatic unit consisting of the camera placement [INTERIOR or EXTERIOR], a location, and time" (p. 68). The [INTERIOR or EXTERIOR] distinctions refer to screenplay slug lines in which interior corresponds to an inside location and exterior corresponds to an outdoor location. In Trottier’s opinion, a new scene occurs every time the slug line, location, or time changes.

Scenes can be thought of as having a beginning, a middle, and end (Trottier, 2005; Keane, 1998). Using that perspective, scenes are little mini-stories that add up to a bigger, overall story. Keane (1998) says in constructing scenes, writers should use dramatic beats, which are the ups, downs, and shifts in conflict. Dramatic beats can also entail a moment of change experienced by one of the characters. Keane says a scene that falls flat is probably the result of the writer not incorporating enough dramatic beats into the scene.

Trottier (2005) and Keane (1998) both say start the scene as close to the end as possible while still being
able to cover everything deemed necessary. For example, if the protagonist has to fly across the country to find a clue, then the scene can start with the protagonist getting off the plane in the new location. If nothing important happens during the trip to the new location that serves a purpose in the story, then the various unimportant events from the entire trip should be bypassed over.

Keane (1998) recommends ending the scene with the audience wanting more and wondering what will happen next. Keane says some writers fall into the trap of attempting to divulge an abundance of information too quickly. Scenes that end on cliffhangers or scenes that disclose just enough information to keep audiences wanting more is one way to maintain a high level of audience interest.

Scenes can also be arranged in such a way to have setup scenes and corresponding payoff scenes. McKee (1997) says when the audience first observes a setup scene, they should grasp one particular meaning from it. When they see a later payoff scene, that initial meaning taken from the setup scene is altered and takes on more importance. In addition, McKee says writers need to make setup scenes stand out so audiences will be able to remember them later on. If a setup scene does not stand out enough, then when
the payoff scene occurs the audience may not be able to make the connection. On the other hand, if a setup scene is not handled with enough subtlety then the payoff may be very predictable (McKee, 1997).

Keane (1998) recommends structuring your screenplay so scenes contrast with each other. Instead of having a high-emotional scene follow a high-emotional scene, it’s better to have it follow a lighter-emotional scene. Using a continuous and consecutive pattern of creating scenes with contrasting emotions and tone throughout the story can help prevent your audience from becoming emotionally drained (McKee, 1997).

**Subplots**

The main story conflict and all of the major plot points revolve around the protagonist. Subplots, on the other hand, revolve around a secondary character, (e.g., the antagonist, the best friend character, or the romantic interest character). For the reason that subplots focus on secondary characters, subplots can be used to “flesh out” secondary characters and make them more three dimensional (Howard, 2004, p. 298). Howard also points out that most films incorporate at least one subplot, and some films may have as many as three or four subplots.
In addition, subplots should have their own crucial plot points, rising conflict, and resolution (Howard, 2004). Just as the main story should be resolved, all subplots should be resolved to maintain the feeling of closure when the movie ends. Although subplots can have their own inner story arc within the main story, complications arising from the subplots can be applied to the main conflict to intensify it (Trottier, 2005). For instance, complications arising out of a subplot story arc can result in making things more difficult for the protagonist to achieve his or her goal.

Subplots can be used to avoid having to rely solely on the main conflict of the story. Relying too much on the main conflict can cause the main conflict to become repetitive or worn out (Trottier, 2005). For example, if the protagonist and the nemesis fight at the beginning of the second act, then once again a few scenes later, and again a few scenes later, and so on, then the main conflict between the two central characters can become boring and monotonous.

Howard (2004) expresses similar thoughts of how focusing only on the protagonist the entire time within the story can be a bad thing. Howard says focusing solely on
the protagonist during the entire story can lead to "tunnel vision;" meaning that the audience only gets to see the world that revolves around the protagonist and no one else (p. 298). Subplots involving a central secondary character will allow the story to momentarily shift focus from the world of the protagonist to the world of the secondary character. In Howard's opinion, this will allow the story to open up to a much broader world, and ultimately provide the audience with a broader experience as well.

Five Subplot Do's and Don'ts. Howard (2004) offers five specific do's and don'ts for using subplots alongside a main story with a central character:

(1) Subplots should not distract from or diminish the main story. (2) Subplots shouldn't take the audience off into a completely different world so that they completely lose their primary focus; primary focus should still remain on the protagonist's story, (3) The subplot must somehow be subordinate to the main story, or be thematically related to the main story, (4) subplots should be within the same world as the main story, and (5) subplots should play out under the overall structure of the protagonist's story (p. 298)
Hauge’s Character Chart

Hauge (1991) states there are four essential character aspects writers can use to build compelling story characters: (1) outer motivation, (2) inner motivation, (3) outer conflict, and (4) inner conflict.

Outer Motivation. Outer motivation refers to the goal a character works towards achieving during the story, or it can be the main object the character desires and goes after (Hauge, 1991).

Inner Motivation. Inner motivation answers the question: "Why does the character want to achieve his or her outer motivation?" (Hauge, 1991, p. 54). Inner motivation involves the underlying reasons why the protagonist wants to achieve or attain something. For example, a protagonist’s outer motivation could be to go on a journey to rescue a princess in distress, and the underlying reason--the inner motivation--why the protagonist wants to rescue the princess could be to ask for her hand in marriage.

Outer Conflict. Outer conflict refers to anything that temporarily or permanently stops a character from achieving his or her outer motivation (Hauge, 1991). Outer conflict can be in many forms. For example, outer conflict can come
from an opposing character, society, or some element of nature (e.g., avalanche, extreme heat, storm, etc.).

**Inner Conflict.** Inner conflict refers to the underlying psychological barriers within a character that make it difficult for the character to achieve his or her outer motivation (Hauge, 1991). For example, a character’s narcissism may be an inner obstacle the character must overcome to achieve his or her goal.

Hauge (1991) also says that there are four categories of primary characters: (1) the hero, (2) the nemesis, (3) the reflection character, and (4) the romantic interest character.

**The Hero.** The hero, also known as the protagonist, is the character who is the focal point of the story. It is the hero’s outer motivation that drives the story forward. Hauge (1991) points out that some stories don’t explore the hero’s inner motivation or inner conflict at all.

**The Nemesis.** The nemesis, also known as the antagonist, is “the character who stands in the way of the hero achieving his or her outer motivation” (Hauge, 1991, p. 59). The nemesis does not have to be a bad guy, but must the nemesis must stand in opposition to the hero. Hauge says the more formidable the nemesis, then the following
chain of events occurs: the harder it is for the hero to achieve his or her goal; which makes the conflict even more powerful; which makes the story even more intense, interesting, and effective. Hauge recommends writers to create a specific, identifiable nemesis. For instance, instead of having the entire mafia as the nemesis, it may be more effective having one particular mob individual serving as the main nemesis opposing the hero.

The Reflection Character. A reflection character, also known as a buddy character, is a character who "supports the hero’s outer motivation" (Hauge, 1991, p. 61). In many stories reflection characters are those individuals who have roles as the best friend or loyal sidekick to the hero. Hauge says there are two main purposes for having a reflection character: (1) it makes the story more believable if there is someone to help the hero achieve his or her outer motivation instead of being able to do it all alone, and (2) it provides the hero with a character that he or she can converse with during the story, which can then in return be used by the writer as an opportunity to reveal character information (e.g., background information, inner motivation information, inner conflict information, etc.).
The Romantic Interest Character. The romantic interest character, also known as the love interest, is the character with whom the hero desires to be romantically involved (Hauge, 1991). Hauge adds that just because a hero and a character are romantically involved does not automatically qualify the character to be considered a love interest. Hauge says the true qualifier that can make a character a love interest is the story revolving around the hero’s motivation to become romantically involved with that character. For example, a hero could have romantic relations with a former lover we only see once, and this romantic rendezvous would not classify the former lover as a love interest.

Application of Hauge’s Character Theory. Hauge (1991, p. 71) analyzed the film An Officer and a Gentleman to illustrate the relationship between the four types of primary characters and their corresponding character aspects, which is shown in Table 3.
Table 3. Hauge's Character Chart Applied to the Film "An Officer and a Gentleman"

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Primary Characters</th>
<th>Outer Motivation</th>
<th>Outer Conflict</th>
<th>Inner Motivation</th>
<th>Inner Conflict</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Hero: Zack Mayo</td>
<td>Become an officer; have affair with Paula</td>
<td>Foley; candidate school; Paula wants marriage</td>
<td>To belong; desires Paula</td>
<td>Won't trust anyone or give himself to others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nemesis: Foley</td>
<td>Get Zack and other cadets to D.O.R.</td>
<td>Zack won't D.O.R.</td>
<td>Not explored</td>
<td>Not explored</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection Character: Sid</td>
<td>Become an officer, have affair with Lynette</td>
<td>Foley; candidate school; Lynette wants marriage</td>
<td>Live up to family's expectations</td>
<td>Other-directed; no longer knows what he wants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Romance Character: Paula</td>
<td>Relationship with Zack</td>
<td>Zack only wants affair</td>
<td>Loves Zack; to escape</td>
<td>Not explored</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As Table 3 illustrates, some films don't explore all four of the character aspects Hauge identified. For
instance, Hauge argues that the inner conflict for Foley, the nemesis character in *An Officer and a Gentleman*, is never explored. Although some films may not delve into one or more of the character aspects for any given character, the hero’s outer motivation and outer conflict are the two character aspects that are typically incorporated into the majority of Hollywood films.

**Other Screenplay Structure Models**

I have only examined the three-act structure method of screenplay construction up to this point. However, the three-act structure method is not the only viable technique that can be used to create a screenplay. As Howard (2004) says, some stories can’t be told using the three-act structure method. In addition, even if a story can be told using the three-act structure, writers don’t have to limit themselves by using it, and can construct their stories any way they see fit. In the next several paragraphs I explore a few alternative methods and philosophies of screenplay storytelling.

Thompson (1999) argues that many contemporary Hollywood films don’t follow a three-act but rather a four-part structure, in which all four sections are roughly the same length. Thompson categorizes these sections as: Part
1- The setup; Part 2 - Complicating action; Part 3 - Development; and, Part 4 - Climax and Epilogue. Like the three-act structure model, all four of the sections Thompson categorized are driven by and revolve around turning points (Thompson, 1999).

Avant-garde, experimental, and “art” films purposely break away from the three-act structure method of mainstream storytelling. For instance, an avant-garde film may have a non-linear storyline infused with random events, or use a certain editing technique extensively throughout the film to call attention to it. While the three-act structure expects viewers to look at the logical sequence of events arranged by cause and effect in order to interpret the story, avant-garde films combine images and sounds in new, expressive, and aesthetically unique ways that require viewers to focus on how these filmic elements have been combined and arranged to interpret the story (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2006).

Dancyger and Rush (2007) point to Spike Lee’s film She’s Gotta Have It as a screenplay that is broken up into two acts, and Martin Scorsese’s film Mean Streets as a screenplay structured as one act. Dancyger and Rush describe She’s Gotta Have It as a story that has no first
act turning point, and a story without a clear resolution that invites viewers to formulate their own conclusions and interpretations. Dancyger and Rush (2007) argue that Mean Streets is a story told in one act because the story follows a singular line of action with no real turning points.

Documentaries may sometimes be overlooked when analyzing screenplay structure, but documentaries can have turning points and shifts as well, for example, the change from one topic to a new one. Another example is having a documentary's structure and turning points revolve around changing points of view (Pramaggiore & Wallis, 2006). Pramaggiore and Wallis allude the documentary Night and Fog as a film that uses visual attributes such as color to divide its structure into sections.

As these alternative examples illustrate, the mainstream three-act structure method is not the only way to design a screenplay story. Some screenplays can have less than three acts, more than three acts, multiple protagonists, no central hero at all, resolutions that provide closure, or open endings. The possibilities of screenplay construction are endless, and what ultimately
matters is writers creating stories they want to tell and doing it the way they want.

Conclusion

Narratology examines narratives and narrative structure. For instance, narratology can be used to: examine different narratives to see what they have in common and how they are different, analyze the order of the story events, or analyze how the story is presented.

In addition, narratology is heavily governed by structuralist-inspired theories. Mieke Bal and Seymour Chatman are two narratologists who analyzed narratives by breaking them down into distinct layers, which allowed Bal and Chatman to thoroughly explore their form, expression, and inherent features.

However, narratology is not free of limitations or without critics. For example, some critics believe narratology is too formulaic, and others believe it overlooks many critical ideological, social, unconscious, and other factors. While these are valid criticisms of narratology, its theories can serve as useful tools to examine and create narratives.
One particular type of narrative is the screenplay. Many of the screenplays written for mainstream Hollywood films follow the three-act structure method because this method is considered the industry standard. The first act is used to set up the story world, introduce the main characters, and establish the main goal of the protagonist. The second act revolves around the rising conflict and obstacles that the protagonist must overcome to reach the desired goal. The third act involves the resolution and is where the protagonist either achieves or does not achieve the desired goal.

Although most contemporary Hollywood screenplays follow this three-act structure model, it is not a mandate that screenwriters must follow. For instance, writers can write stories with fewer than three acts, more than three acts, or multiple protagonists. The three-act structure model may be a standard approach to screenwriting for the American mainstream film industry, but it is not an absolute rule that writers must follow when writing a screenplay narrative.
CHAPTER THREE

DISCUSSION

Project Discussion

Writing a screenplay for the creative portion of my graduate project was a challenging endeavor that turned out to be a truly rewarding experience. Furthermore, conducting the literature review, which focused on the topics of narratology and the three-act structure method of screenplay construction, resulted in me gaining not just more knowledge about narratives, but an in-depth understanding of how narratives are created, designed, and presented.

In addition, I was able to apply some of the knowledge I obtained from the literature review towards the writing of my screenplay. For instance, I was having a lot of difficulty figuring out how to handle a story in which the storyline required a ten-game football season that lasted almost three months. I was unsure of how to break up the story time, and how much time to devote to each football game. I was able to overcome this problem by applying what I learned about rhythm from Mieke Bal in the literature review. The theories on rhythm helped me manage how I
presented the football games without spending too much or too little time on them.

A second example of how I applied what I learned from the literature review towards my screenplay involved my protagonist, who had to deal with bad dreams concerning his childhood relationship with his father. This was part of the protagonist’s inner conflict, and was an important character issue that I wanted to emphasize. I applied what I learned about frequency as a tool to stress this issue, and showed the protagonist having bad dreams multiple times instead of once.

I also applied what I learned in the literature review about subplots having a beginning, middle, and end. The main football players, who are all secondary characters, have their own little mini-stories going on while the main storyline plays out. In addition, I followed what Trottier said about tying the subplots to the main storyline to intensify it. As a result, each subplot involving the main football players was done in a way that made things more complicated for the protagonist. These are just a few examples of the various ways of how I was able to apply some of what I learned from the literature review towards the writing of the screenplay for this project. Moreover, I
expect to use what I learned from the literature review for writing future screenplays as well.

At the core of every screenplay is a story, a narrative. Thus, it makes perfect sense that theories from narratology can be directly transferred to screenwriting. Arthur C. Clarke, a distinguished author and co-writer of the film 2001: A Space Odyssey, said "before you make a movie, you have to have a script, and before you have a script, you have to have a story" (Goodreads, 2011, para. 23). Narratology can be used to help create the story in the development stages of the screenwriting process. Furthermore, narratology can be used to help determine the presentation of the screenplay story. Or in other words, narratology can be used in the conceptual stages of the screenwriting process, as well as the actual writing stages of the screenwriting process.

As I was conducting research on narratology and screenplay craft, I began to notice how theories from narratology and theories from screenwriting shared a lot of similarities. The jargon was different, but many of the underlying concepts were very much alike. It was as if narratology theories served as a precursor for many of the screenwriting theories and principles that are taught by
contemporary screenwriting gurus like Syd Field and David Howard. It may be the case that narratology principles (1) served as some type of foundation for screenplay craft, and/or (2) served as a literary influence that a lot of screenwriting theorists drew upon for inspiration when creating screenplay theories and principles. It is also possible that screenwriting theorists are not even aware that their screenwriting principles share a lot in common with narratology principles. Nevertheless, the similarities between narratology and screenplay craft are evident.

I am satisfied with my screenplay for this project. I wrote a film that I would want to see. After writing the first draft of the screenplay I am able to pick out what I believe are some weaknesses and strengths within the screenplay story. For instance, I feel the pacing, visual-writing style for the dramatic action, and character interaction was good. On the other hand, the areas I feel that could be strengthened include the protagonist’s character development arc and giving the main characters more traits. Writing screenplays or any type of story writing involves rewriting. The first draft of the screenplay is typically just the beginning, and subsequent drafts are needed to polish the story. Although I am
satisfied with how this first draft turned out, I plan on writing subsequent drafts to improve the story. In addition, it goes to show that writing a screenplay involves more than just adhering to the three-act structure model and incorporating the major plots points; what ultimately makes a great screenplay is a great story and a great writer.

I walk away from this project having gained a solid grasp on screenwriting structure and designing narratives. Before completing the project I had knowledge of plot points and the concept of rising conflict in regards to screenwriting, but I frequently had difficulty shaping a complete story to fit within the typical 90-120 page limit that most screenplays adhere to. The knowledge I have gained from the project has helped me overcome that problem by giving me insight on how to design, plot, and present stories while adhering to page limits.

In addition, the project helped me obtain a high level of familiarity with the fabula and syuzhet, and how they operate. As a result, I am now comfortable and knowledgeable enough to write non-chronological narratives, which is something I was not capable of doing effectively before completing this project.
Moving on from this project, I want to explore additional narrative topics that were not thoroughly examined in the project; in particular, theme, dialogue, post-structuralist narratology, and alternatives to the three-act structure method of screenplay construction.

One goal that I had at the start of the project was to become a better screenwriter. Although there is plenty of room for my screenwriting improvement, I can undoubtedly declare that goal was met. Moreover, with the new skills I picked up during the project and the help of my committee members, the project turned out to be an even more beneficial and enlightening experience than I expected.
APPENDIX

"BLITZ THE INTERFERENCE"

AN ORIGINAL SCREENPLAY
SUPERIMPOSE: SAN ANTONIO, TEXAS, 1995

EXT. ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL - OUTDOOR TRACK - DAY

Spectators scattered throughout the bleachers. Young runners on the track field. A megaphone voice announces results.

EXT. BEHIND THE TRACK FIELD BLEACHERS - DAY

BRUCE ALLEN (30, sporting a leather jacket and mullet) towers over his son VINCENT (12, soft-spoken) who is on the ground doing push-ups with a cement block on his back.

BRUCE
Are you going to win this race?

VINCENT
I hope so.

BRUCE
Hope ain't good enough. You tired of being a loser?

VINCENT
Yes sir.

BRUCE
Hell. You ain't smart. I'm least trying to toughen you up. You sure you tired of being a loser?

VINCENT
Yes sir.

On Vincent's struggling face we cut to: Bruce, bent down talking to Vincent face to face, still behind the bleachers.

BRUCE
Winning is everything. Second place is like urine. And third place and below is shit. Now go win.

Bruce takes a swig from a flask. Vincent goes off to:

EXT. TRACK - STARTING LINE - DAY

Beside: PAUL & SAUL (11, twins); PETER (12, chubby); and JACKSON (12, cocky, spiky hair and a long rattail).
Hey Vincent. What were you and your dad doing behind the bleachers? Making out?

Vincent timidly looks at Jackson with nothing to say. A FEMALE TRACK REFEREE steps up to call the start of the race.

Okay you little spawns. Get ready.

On your mark...get set...go!

The ref FIRES the pistol. The four runners take off.

THE RACE - DAY

After the runners are a good distance away from the bleachers and crowd, Jackson, in the lead, goes into his pocket and pulls out a thin plastic bottle filled with ketchup. Jackson squirts the ketchup on the turf behind him as he runs.

Don't slip!

The twins, side by side, see what Jackson is doing and maneuver to avoid the condiment sabotage. Vincent is not too far behind the twins and does the same. Peter is way behind.

Paul reaches a ketchup glob, jumps over it, pulls something.

Ow! My leg!

Paul stops running, grabs his hamstring, and hops around. Seconds later Saul stops running, grabs his hamstring, and hops around. The twins feel the same pain. Vincent passes them and steadily starts catching up with Jackson.

Peter passes the twins, who still stand in the same spot where their injury occurred, nursing their legs.

Vincent closes the gap and runs side by side with Jackson.

Here we go folks. Down the stretch.
JACKSON
Give up, dillhole.

Out of nowhere, Bruce tackles Jackson. Vincent stops running and looks back at Jackson on the ground clutching his arm.

JACKSON
You broke it! You broke my arm!

BRUCE
(to Vincent)
What are you doing? Don't look back, keep goin' forward. Go!

Vincent looks at the finish line just a few yards away, then back to Jackson. Vincent runs to Jackson and checks on him.

BRUCE
(to Vincent)
You idiot. Go win the race.

Vincent ignores Bruce. Peter runs pass them, breaks the finish line tape, and does a funky celebration dance. A mob of angry parents led by JULIUS (40, Jackson's large father, same hairdo as Jackson) rush over. Julius grabs Bruce up.

JULIUS
What the hell did you do to my boy!

BRUCE
Hold up. I can explain.

Bruce quickly jerks his way out of Julius' grip and runs.

The mob of parents try to get Bruce but he keeps dodging them using quickness and track hurdles as shields.

VINCENT (V.O.)
That's my dad. I never really did know my mom. She died when I was two. He told me I probably wouldn't win this race. I wanted to win and prove him wrong, but I guess he was right...again.

ROBBERY SEQUENCE - DAY

- Bruce stands outside a convenience store. He pulls a ski-mask over his head and a gun out his jacket. He runs inside.

- Bruce bolts out the store with a twelve-pack of beer. He jumps on his motorcycle and speeds away. He cracks open a beer and MOCKS the store clerk running behind him. He runs a red light; a tractor trailer from the blind side runs over him.
VINCENT (V.O.)
After my dad died I lived in an orphanage that smelled like gasoline for seven months.

NEW HOME SEQUENCE - DAY

- Vincent riding with SANDY (35, smile on her face) in her car entering the city of Dallas, passing the WELCOME SIGN.

- Vincent, carrying a suitcase, is led by Sandy through his new house and to his new room.

VINCENT (V.O.)
But then Sandy adopted me. She was way nicer than my dad. She did things that he never did like cook and help me with my homework. But I still thought about him sometimes.

SUPERIMPOSE: DALLAS, TEXAS, 15 YEARS LATER

EXT. PINERIDGE REC CENTER - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

We see an outdoor sign with "Pineridge Recreation Center" engraved on it, and a recreation facility in the background.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - DAY

A group of kids are in the middle of a soccer match. DEVIN, 12, advances the ball down the field with an array of fancy footwork against many defenders while also drinking from a plastic bottle of punch. Devin scores. Vincent (now 27, clean-cut) runs over.

VINCENT
Devin, what did I tell you about showboating? Next time look for your teammates more and save the drinks for after the game. Okay?

DEVIN
Yeah, okay.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - LATER

Vincent dribbles the ball downfield. TIM (10) shouts out.

TIM
Vincent! Vincent! I'm open!
Vincent kicks the soccer ball to Tim, who dribbles around the last defending player. Tim hammers the ball towards the soccer goal, but it goes over the goal and sails into:

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - PARKING LOT - DAY

...the hands of CONRAD (Vincent's 28 year old best friend/coworker/roommate, a self-proclaimed genius and permanent frat boy). Conrad catches the ball while sitting on the hood of his yellow 1972 Ford Mustang.

CONRAD

Incoming!

INTERCUT BETWEEN VINCENT AND CONRAD

VINCENT

Hey, throw the ball back over!

CONRAD

Come over here for a second!

VINCENT

Just wait till after the game!

CONRAD

Come on! This can't wait!

VINCENT

(to the kids)
I'll be right back.

EXT. PINERIDGE PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

CONRAD

Hey, I'm going out to lunch with this really hot girl. I need you to give me some lines of your pansy poetry stuff to impress her.

VINCENT

Stop playing around Conrad. Give me the ball back.

CONRAD

Nope. No poetry. No ball.

VINCENT

Fine. Say this. Roses are red/ violets are blue/you're hot/but I'm hot too. Now gimme the ball.
CONRAD
Ew, I like how you snuck in that last part like a dual compliment. You really think that could work?

VINCENT
You kiddin' me. She's gonna melt.

A car pulls up with an ATTRACTIONE WOMAN driving it.

CONRAD
That's her. I'll talk to you later at home tonight. Go. Shoo now.

Vincent snatches the soccer ball and jogs back to the game.

INT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - HALLWAY - AFTERNOON
Vincent, carrying a bag of soccer balls, walks past a room.

SANGRETTI (O.S.)
Vincent, come here for a second.

Vincent backtracks and enters the weight room.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - AFTERNOON

SANGRETTI (55, rec' manager, wearing a suit, man of principle) reads from a newspaper, showing it to Vincent.

SANGRETTI
"Tony Sangrettei, manager of Pineridge Recreation Center being presented with the Edward Glass award for superior community service." You see, I believe obligation is paramount. It's one of the things that makes us sapiens. But enough about all that. I need you to spot me on the bench press real quick.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - BENCH PRESS RACK - MOMENTS LATER

Sangretti has removed his suit jacket and dress shirt, now donning a Power Rangers t-shirt. The weight bar has two 35 lb plates on the left side and no plates on the right side.

SANGRETTI
I noticed that my right pectoral is larger than my left. I need to equalize 'em.
(gesturing)
So grab a hold of the bar there, and try to keep it balanced.
Vincent keeps the lopsided bar horizontally stable enough while Sangretti executes his pectoral equilibrium workout.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - MORNING

A modest-sized home with a basement. Vincent's pickup truck and Conrad's Ford Mustang are parked in the driveway.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Vincent is at the oven cooking a pack of bacon in a pan full of grease, but he is totally focused on his resume he holds.

VINCENT
My objective is to be an asset- No, a valuable worker for your company.

A small flame rises out of the pan. Vincent doesn't notice.

VINCENT
I think I could provide you with...

The grease fire turns into a large blaze. Now he notices.

VINCENT
Holy crap!

Vincent frantically tries fanning the flame with his hands, then blowing on it, but it fails. He looks around in panic. He runs to the sink, turns the water on, and flings water over to the fire, but it only makes the flame rise.

Conrad, wearing blue pajamas with a large Bruce Lee graphic on them, saunters in, yawning.

CONRAD
Hey there's a fire.

VINCENT
Don't you think I know that! Where's the fire extinguisher!

CONRAD
I think it's under the sink.

Vincent forages through the cabinet under the sink. Conrad walks over to the flame, and puts his hands out in front of it like it was a campfire; he enjoys the warmth of it.

Vincent finds the extinguisher, and puts the fire out.
VINCENT
Why'd you just stand there!

CONRAD
It was a one man situation.

Vincent picks his resume off the floor. Conrad goes to the fridge, retrieves a box of pizza, and begins eating a slice. Vincent grabs a slice for himself as well.

CONRAD
What are you looking at?

VINCENT
My resume. I got some interviews lined up in the next few days.

CONRAD
Why are you going to interviews if you already got a job down at the rec center?

VINCENT
I want a better job. Like something bigger or something more...

(thinking of a word)

...prestigious.

CONRAD
You're the one who got me a job there. Now you tryin' to leave?

VINCENT
It's working at a rec center. I mean the job is kinda cool. Are you satisfied working there?

CONRAD
Yeah.

VINCENT
Do me a favor and crack the windows to let this smoke out. I gotta go get ready.

Vincent exits. Conrad goes to the fridge, pulls out a carton of orange juice, pours some in his mouth, and GARGLES.

INT. OFFICE HALLWAY - DAY

Vincent, wearing a suit, stands a few feet from an open door.

VINCENT
Okay. Don't be an idiot. Do not be an idiot.
INT. INTERVIEWER #1 OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

INTERVIEWER #1 sits behind a desk carefully looking over Vincent's resume. An uneasy Vincent sits waiting.

INTERVIEWER #1
I think your resume is very organized and... tidy. But, unfortunately I don't feel you have enough experience for the position.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - UNSUCCESSFUL JOB INTERVIEWS
detailing Vincent going to interviews over multiple days and him sitting across from the interviewers looking dejected.

A) OFFICE OF INTERVIEWER #2

INTERVIEWER #2
You don't meet the qualifications we are looking for. Sorry.

B) OFFICE OF INTERVIEWER #3

INTERVIEWER #3
Do you have any bookkeeping experience?

VINCENT
What do you mean by bookkeeping?

C) OFFICE OF INTERVIEWER #4

INTERVIEWER #4
Maybe you should try Burger Shack. My son works there and he says they're interviewing for assistant managers. And managers get all the free waffle fries they can eat.

D) OFFICE OF INTERVIEWER #5

Interview #5 shakes her head no to Vincent.

END MONTAGE

INT. VINCENT'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

The truck is parked. Vincent coldly looks at his resume on the dashboard. He grabs it and crumples it up.
INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vincent tosses and turns in the bed. His eyes snap open and he turns over to see the alarm clock which reads "2:15 AM."

INT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - ACTIVITY ROOM - NEXT DAY

Vincent supervises a painting class made up of young kids. He walks over to SAMANTHA (13). We see her landscape painting.

VINCENT
Very nice, Samantha.

Vincent walks over to PIERCE (10), as Pierce paints away.

VINCENT
The mighty lion taking down its dinner. King of jungle.

PIERCE
He's not eating her. They're mating. See.

We see the painting up close of the roaring lion mounting the zebra. Sangretti knocks on the door and pops his head in.

SANGRETTI
Sorry to interrupt. But I need to talk to you, now.

INT. SANGRETTI' OFFICE - DAY

Sangretti sits behind his desk. Vincent sits in front of it.

SANGRETTI
You know Coach Joe, the coach of our football team, right?

VINCENT
Yeah, he's a pretty nice guy.

SANGRETTI
Well, Joe had a stroke.

VINCENT
What? That's horrible. Is he okay?

SANGRETTI
He's recovering. But I called you to my office because with Coach Joe out we need a replacement coach for our summer football league starting in eight days. If I can't find a replacement coach, then we might have to forfeit the season.
VINCENT
That sucks.

SANGRETTI
It's more than that. If we have to forfeit the football season then we'll be one program short of maintaining our eligibility for a very, very sizable non-profit grant. And there aren't any more summer programs that we could use in its place.

Sangretti gets up and opens his window blinds to reveal a group of kids outside playing around. He looks out at them.

SANGRETTI
If we lose the grant funds then we may have to cut a bunch of programs to recoup the cost. So that's where you come in.

VINCENT
I would love to help, but I've never coached football before.

SANGRETTI
That's why I'm only asking you to be the temporary football coach until I can find a replacement. Out of everyone else on staff you're the best option we have right now.

VINCENT
Wow. This is... all kinda sudden. Do you need my answer now? Maybe you'll find somebody else.

SANGRETTI
I can give you two days to think about it. But like I said, you're the best option right now.

INT. VINCENT'S TRUCK - AFTERNOON

Vincent starts the truck. He spots BROOKE (28, girl next door look) and a SECURITY GUARD off in the distance further down in the PINERIDGE PARKING LOT. WE INTERCUT BETWEEN THEM.

SECURITY GUARD
I don't care if you are picking up your brother. You can't park in the handicap space.

BROOKE
(looking at ticket)
Forty dollars!

Vincent's attention stays on Brooke. There is something about her. He snaps out of it and steps on the accelerator pedal. The engine ROARS
but the truck stays still. He notices the gear is in park. He shifts and drives off.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - AFTERNOON

Vincent walks up toward the house. He waves to MS. OWENS (60, hair rollers) who is on her PORCH NEXT DOOR checking her mailbox holding her adult cat SPARKY. WE INTERCUT.

VINCENT
Hey Ms. Owens! Hey Sparky!

MS. OWENS
Hey dear!
 raises Sparky's paw
Say hi to Vincent Sparky.

Vincent discovers his front door is slightly open. He enters.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Things are thrown all around like a post-robbery scene.

VINCENT
What the hell.

Vincent steps over the mess and enters...

THE KITCHEN

Cereal poured on the table. The fridge and all the cabinets are open. Vincent grabs the hammer on the counter. We hear someone RUMMAGING in another room. Vincent tip-toes to...

THE LIVING ROOM

Vincent has his hammer raised and ready. AMY (his 27-year old attractive but neurotic ex-girlfriend) appears.

AMY
Where the hell is my gun!

VINCENT
Amy? What are you doing here? What is going on?

AMY
Are you deaf, dumb, or neither. I want my gun and I want it now.
VINCENT
What gun? I have no idea what you're talking about. And why do you need a gun for anyway?

AMY
That's my business. I know I left my gun here when I moved out and I know you're hiding it in here somewhere. So where'd you put it?

Vincent looks at the cereal poured out on the kitchen table.

VINCENT
What normal person would look for a gun inside a box of Captain Crunch?

AMY
Are you calling me crazy?

VINCENT
Does a pig squeal?

AMY
Did you just call me fat?

Amy pushes Vincent and he falls over some rummage. She grabs a blow torch by the fireplace and runs to...

VINCENT'S BEDROOM - DOWN THE HALL

...and grabs a pair of boxing gloves hanging on the wall. Vincent hurries in the room. She IGNITES the blow torch.

VINCENT
Okay, I'm sorry. Just put the blow torch and the gloves down. You know they are one of the last things my dad gave me before he died.

AMY
Yup. Gun please. Or I'll have to burn daddy's wittle gwoves.

VINCENT
Oh crap. I remember. Remember, you let your friend Debbie borrow the gun that one time cause she said she had a stalker. I bet you that's where it is. Call her. Call her!

Amy thinks, shoves Vincent the gloves. He hangs them up.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Amy has her cell phone to her ear. Vincent stands by.
AMY
Hey, Debbie. Do you still have that gun I let you borrow?
(pause)
I told you it had good aim. I'm on my way to pick it up now.

Amy hangs up the phone and glares at Vincent.

VINCENT
Told you. Now you can go back home to what's his face. Leonar-do.

AMY
His name is Leonard. And he is more successful than you'll ever be.

Amy exits without any remorse. Vincent scopes the damage. Moments later Sandy, now 50, enters the open front door.

SANDY
You boys need a housekeeper.

VINCENT
Hey ma.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

This is their man cave: bar, electronics, huge TV, pool table, the works. Vincent and Conrad play darts- their custom dart board is a large, thick piece of cardboard covered with cut-outs of various celebrities. They call out their exact targets.

CONRAD
I can't believe Sangretti didn't ask me to be the football coach. Mr. T, mohawk.

Conrad fires his dart, but it hits Paris Hilton instead.

VINCENT
Maybe he's still mad about you trying to hook up with his wife at the Halloween party last year. Snoop Dogg, pimp juice cup.

Vincent misses and hits Elvis.

CONRAD
How was I supposed to know. She had on a Snow White mask. Pammy Anderson, left mammary.

The dart hits Anderson in the left mammary.

CONRAD
Bullseye! So how many games do they play for the season?

VINCENT
Don't know. I got the schedule Sangretti gave me in my pocket. Jaws, dorsal fin. Haven't looked at it yet cause I'm not sure I want to do it.

Vincent's dart hits right in the middle of the fin.

CONRAD
Let me see the schedule.

He pulls out the schedule. Gives it to Conrad, who reads it.

CONRAD
Ten games. One game a week. Oh man! The first game...it's against Spencer Rumsfield's team.

Who?

MAN CAVE - COMPUTER DESK STATION - MOMENTS LATER

CONRAD
I can't believe you've never heard of Spencer "The Bulldog" Rumsfield. Wait till you see this.

Conrad goes to a video sharing web-site and plays a video titled "Spencer The Bulldog Rumsfield Brawl 1998".

INSERT 1998 CAMCORDER QUALITY VIDEO

A timeout during an Arena Football League game. A player with the name Rumsfield on the back of his jersey gets heckled by a hot dog vendor in the stands. Rumsfield takes his helmet off, jumps into the stands, and attacks the vendor. Frankfurters go flying everywhere. More fans join the tussle. Rumsfield takes out people left and right. BACK TO SCENE.

CONRAD
He got banned from the Arena League for life after the brawl.

VINCENT
Speaking of football. You wanna get destroyed in some Madden? I mean I understand if you don't wanna play. If I kept losing-

CONRAD
Shut up and bring it, troll!
EXT. COACH JOE'S HOUSE - NEXT DAY

MOVERS carry furnishings and boxes from the house to a large moving truck parked in front. Vincent walks past them, holding a Hallmark card with the words "GET WELL" on it.

INT. COACH JOE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Vincent enters. The place is almost empty except a sofa and a few boxes. Vincent stops a MOVER, who is carrying a box.

VINCENT
Is Joe Gilbert around?

MOVER
Yeah, somewhere around here.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Nice day outside today, huh, Vincent?

Vincent turns to see COACH JOE (55, long flowing hair, wearing a dress and tennis shoes, double-D bust, VERY manly face so there is no confusion it is man underneath it all).

VINCENT
Coach Joe? What happened to you?

COACH JOE
(man's voice)
What happened? I stopped lying to myself is what happened. I've always been a lesbian trapped in a man's body.

VINCENT
Sangretti said you had a stroke.

COACH JOE
Oh no. That was his little lie to tell people if they asked about me.

INT. COACH JOE'S HOUSE LIVING ROOM - LATER

Vincent and Coach Joe sit on the couch.

COACH JOE
No, I didn't get fired. It was ultimately my choice. I got to retire early and got a nice little severance package. I finally have enough money to buy my dream house and pay for the rest of my operations.

VINCENT
You're already...you know. What other operations do you need?

Coach Joe looks down at his crotch to gesture the answer.

VINCENT

(he gets it)

Oh.

(he really gets it)

Oh!

EXT. COACH JOE'S HOUSE - YARD - LATER

COACH JOE

(reminiscing)

I'm really gonna miss coaching all those little knuckleheads. Charging the field. Fighting for every yard. The smell of jockstraps after a hard fought win.

(snaps out of it)

But whatever you decide you have my contact info. So if you ever need to talk about football or just life in general don't hesitate.

Joe hugs Vincent. It's a little awkward. Some of Joe's long flowing hair blows into Vincent's mouth, which he spits out.

COACH JOE

(still hugging)

Thanks for the card.

INT. MAN CAVE - COMPUTER STATION - AFTERNOON

Vincent watches an extreme snowboarding online video. His cell phone RINGS. He answers. It's Sangretti calling from his OFFICE AT PINERIDGE. WE INTERCUT.

VINCENT

Hello.

SANGRETTI

Vincent. It's Sangretti. I know I gave you one more day to give me a decision, but I have something else to discuss. What do you know about Majestic Motors?

VINCENT

I know they're like one of the biggest car dealerships in Dallas and owned by Buckey Ryan. And they always have those great commercials. Have you seen the one with the alligator?

SANGRETTI
No, I haven't. But I went to high school with Buckey and knew him when he was just a pimple-faced jock and not some local Superbowl football hero with a fancy car dealership. You been working here what, three years?

VINCENT

Almost four.

SANGRETTI

Four years as a recreation activity worker barely making over minimum wage. Look, if you help me out with this football coaching situation I can pull some strings and get you a position down at Buckey's dealership.

VINCENT

Really. That would be awesome! But I heard it was impossible to get a job there unless you're in their old boys' network.

SANGRETTI

Hello? Me? I just said I went to high school with Buckey.

VINCENT

Oh. Yeah you did. Hold up. What about my job at the rec center?

SANGRETTI

You're a good kid. You don't need to be stuck working here. You help me, I help you.

INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vincent tosses and turns in his sleep.

DREAM/FLASHBACK  ##BLACK AND WHITE SEQUENCE##

Twelve year old Vincent with a bookbag on, stands in front of Bruce, who is in a recliner looking at Vincent's report card.

BRUCE

Four C's, One D, and One S.

VINCENT

The S stands for satisfactory.

BRUCE

Satisfactory! Well I'm not satisfied! You couldn't get one A. Gimme a pencil.

Vincent gives him a pencil. Bruce writes on the report card.
Look at this.

INSERT REPORT CARD

Bruce has written the letter A to the right of the D.

BRUCE (O.S.)
I gave you an A. Now you hav'uh D-A. You know what D-A stands for?

BACK TO SCENE

BRUCE
It stands for dumbass. Now go to your room.

Vincent sulks to his bedroom as Bruce still belittles him from the other room. Vincent shuts his bedroom door.

BRUCE (O.S.)
You'll never amount to anything!

END FLASHBACK/DREAM - BACK TO SCENE

Vincent jerks up off the pillow.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - MAN CAVE - MORNING

Vincent eats a bowl of cereal at the bar. Conrad does pilates stretches in front of the TV; he is watching a pilates video and mimics the exercisers on the video.

CONRAD
Do you know how lucky you are to get a chance to work at Majestic Motors? This girl I dated, her brother had a friend who worked there, and he said all the car salesguys rake in at least 60k a year. And they get a new car. How the hell did you pull this is off?

VINCENT
I guess like you said, I'm just due for some good luck.

CONRAD
Well any time you have a bunch of good luck means that bad luck is sneaking around the sidewalk. The universe has to balance itself out. You wanna go to the movies tonight? It's Rambo marathon night.

VINCENT
Probably not. I'm tired. I didn't get a lot of sleep last night.

CONRAD
I heard you in kitchen at like three in the morning. Having bad dreams about your old man again?

VINCENT
Yup.

CONRAD
I'll be right back. I just remembered something.

Conrad leaves. Vincent goes over to the TV and tries to do pilates while eating his cereal; he isn't good at all.

Conrad returns from upstairs with a shoe box; he rifles through it.

VINCENT
Those don't look like shoes.

CONRAD
They're business cards. I got a habit of just snatching a bunch of 'em up whenever I go into somebody's office or something and see 'em. It's almost like a hobby.

VINCENT
That's weird.

CONRAD
You're weird... Found one!

Conrad gives Vincent a card. Vincent checks it out.

VINCENT'S POV OF CARD: a picture of DR. KATE HOLLAND (50's, long gray hair, hippie-ish) and her name and contact info.

VINCENT
Who is this?

CONRAD
Dr. Holland. The judge made me go see her for anger management last month. She's a therapist. I think you should go talk to her about all the bad dreams you keep having about your dad.

VINCENT
I don't need it. Here.

Vincent attempts to give the card back.

CONRAD
Keep it. I probably got more.
Conrad's stomach GRUMBLES. He grabs his stomach.

CONRAD
Oh man, I gotta go drop the brown. If you're ever constipated do pilates. It'll loosen you up good.

Conrad takes his box and exits. Vincent takes another look at Dr. Holland's card. He drops it in a nearby trash can.

INT. SANGRETTI'S OFFICE

Sangretti clumsily tosses a football up and down to himself and talks to Vincent.

SANGRETTI
You're really helping us out coaching the team until I can find a replacement. We set up the goal posts yesterday. The rest of the field should be ready by tomorrow.

Sangretti puts the football down on his desk. He picks up a notebook and flings it over to Vincent who misses the catch.

SANGRETTI
That right there is the list of prospect players Joe made.

Vincent picks up the notebook and looks through it.

SANGRETTI
You need to go recruit as many players listed in there as you can. Some names are crossed out cause they're already on the team or told Joe they didn't want to play.

As Vincent's fingers flip through the notebook WE CUT TO:

INT. CONRAD'S CAR - DAY

Vincent's fingers flip through the recruit notebook. Conrad SINGS off beat to an 80's classic love song on the radio.

VINCENT
Thanks for helping me recruit. You want me to tell you the address again?

Conrad continues to SING. Vincent tries again, louder.

VINCENT
I said do you need the address?

CONRAD
No I got it. Here comes the chorus.
Conrad SINGS the chorus and attempts to get Vincent to sing. Eventually Vincent joins in. The car cruises along.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - RECRUITING NEW PLAYERS

A) CLYDE’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Vincent and Conrad watch CLYDE (18, Latino, stone-faced) driving a large dune buggy, doing monster doughnuts on a dirt field. After the display CLYDE gets out the buggy and walks over towards them. Clyde is a 6'5, 290 pound agile behemoth.

B) DAWSON GILBERT’S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - DAY

DAWSON, 18, shaking his head no to Vincent and Conrad.

C) LYNN’S FISH MARKET - DAY

Vincent, Conrad, and a crowd of customers watch PAUL, 50, behind the counter, toss 3-foot long fish to his son DEACON (18, lively) who is wearing ultra grip gloves, and standing more than 20 feet away. Deacon catches the fish in magnificent fashion - eyes closed, behind the back, one handed - and places them on a large fish table full of ice.

D) PHILLIP JONES’ HOUSE - GARAGE - DAY

PHILLIP, 19, working on his car, shakes his head no to Vincent and Conrad.

E) HOMESTEAD DEPOT STORE - DAY

Vincent and Conrad walk up towards the entrance.

VINCENT
I wonder why Coach Joe wrote down bring twenty dollars?

CONRAD
Bribe him probably. You know how much ethics kids have these days.

Vincent, Conrad, and several HOMESTEAD DEPOT EMPLOYEES are gathered around in a circle in the WAREHOUSE AND STOCK AREA. Several employees add money to a pile of cash on the floor. Two other employees enter the circle carrying a new wooden door; they turn it sideways.
JIM (18, muscular build, a wildman) enters the circle being patted on the back by the crowd. Jim steps back, charges, and runs through the door, breaking it in half. Jim picks up the pile of cash on the ground. Jim walks over to Vincent and Conrad, and holds his hand out. Vincent slaps a twenty dollar bill in Jim's palm.

INT. CONRAD'S CAR - DAY

VINCENT
Okay. This is the address here.

Before Conrad can pull into the driveway an SUV, driven by Brooke, travelling in the opposite direction, appears. The vehicles block each other. Conrad stretches out the window.

CONRAD
What are you doing!

Brooke leans out her window.

BROOKE
I live here.

CONRAD
Touche.

Conrad sinks back into the car and backs up. Brooke pulls up in the driveway and Conrad pulls in behind her.

Brooke, holding two paper grocery bags, comes over to Conrad's car window.

BROOKE
Can I help you?

Conrad looks to Vincent. While Vincent is momentarily mesmerized with Brooke again, a few seconds of silence pass.

VINCENT
Oh! Sorry. We're here to speak with Johnny about a summer football league.

BROOKE
He should be inside. Follow me.

EXT. BROOKE'S HOUSE - FRONT PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

Brooke tries to balance the bags while unlocking the front door. Vincent, carrying a football, and Conrad stand by. The bottom of one of the bags breaks, and two dozen small cans of tomato sauce and two loaves of French bread fall out.
BROOKE
Crap.

Brooke puts the other bag down and squats to pick up the fallen items. Vincent puts the football down on a nearby chair and helps her pick up the cans.

BROOKE
Thanks. You can just toss the cans into this other bag. I can come back and get the bread.

Brooke and Vincent pick up cans. They both go for the same can; his hand rests on hers. A brief moment. Their eyes meet. They snap out of it and finish picking up the cans.

BROOKE
Better unlock the door first this time.

Brooke unlocks the door and picks up the bag.

BROOKE
I'll get Johnny.

Brooke goes inside. Vincent picks up the bread.

CONRAD
That was real smooth.

JOHNNY (18, tall, athletic) comes out.

JOHNNY
Yeah?

VINCENT
Hi. I'm the football coach at the Pineridge Rec' Center-

CONRAD
I already told that man lady coach I didn't want to play.

VINCENT
But your name wasn't crossed off.

CONRAD
Well now you can cross it off. Bye.

Johnny takes the bread from Vincent and goes back inside.

INT. CONRAD'S CAR - MOMENTS LATER

Conrad reverses out the driveway into the street.
VINCENT
I wonder if he was any good?

CONRAD
What position was he signed up for?

JOHNNY (O.S.)
Hey!

Conrad stops the car. Johnny stands on the porch. WE INTERCUT between Johnny ON THE PORCH and CONRAD'S CAR.

JOHNNY
You forgot your football!

Johnny comes off the porch and throws the football in a tight spiral through the rolled-down back window of Conrad's car a good distance away. Vincent and Conrad share a look.

EXT. RESIDENTIAL STREET - NIGHT

Conrad lines up beside BARRY (19, Black, dreadlocks, carefree philosopher). Vincent stands 50 yards away down the street.

VINCENT
Go!

Conrad and Barry take off in a foot race toward Vincent. Conrad is fast, but Barry is lightning fast. Barry beats Conrad easily. Conrad bends over trying to catch his breath.

CONRAD
I caught a cramp.

VINCENT
Barry, welcome to the team.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - DAY

Vincent stands in front of the now full team. They are in uniform, helmets off. The field is altered for football.

VINCENT
Since most of us don't know each other I figured we'd start off with a icebreaker. So come up here and say your name, the position you'll be playing, and just for kicks name one person dead or alive you would like to meet if you could.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - FIRST PRACTICE
Progression of the icebreaker activity with the main players and a sequence of the entire team practicing.

A) DEACON'S ICEBREAKER

DEACON
Deacon. Wide Receiver. I would've loved to chill with Jimmy Hendrix.

B) TREVOR'S ICEBREAKER

TREVOR is (18, lanky, a mischievous prankster).

TREVOR
Trevor. Quarterback. The one and only Marilyn Monroe.

C) CLYDE'S ICEBREAKER

CLYDE
Clyde. Defensive End and Offensive Line. Probably...Michael Jordan.

D) KENNETH'S ICEBREAKER

KENNETH is (17, tranquil, always wears his blue-colored Eric Dickerson-like sport goggles while playing and practicing)

KENNETH
Kenneth. All purpose kicker. I would like to meet Al Gore. But if he refused then 2pac.

E) BARRY'S ICEBREAKER

BARRY
Barry. Special teams. Socrates.

F) JIM'S ICEBREAKER

JIM
Jim. Running back. This is a no-brainer. Mr. Danny Devito.

BARRY
Races three other players leaving them in the dust.
THREE SHOTS OF TREVOR, DEACON AND VINCENT

For each shot Deacon stands in the end zone waiting as a receiving target and Vincent stands beside Trevor. First Trevor throws a very wobbly pass from the 35 yard line that falls short. Trevor tries again from the 30 yard line and throws another wobbly pass that is way off target. Trevor tries again from the 25 yard line and the wobbly pass makes it to Deacon who catches it.

SHOTS OF PLAYERS HITTING A TWO-MAN BLOCKING SLED

Shots of players two at a time smashing into the blocking sled with Vincent on the back. Then a shot of Clyde, by himself, ramming the sled and sending Vincent flying off it.

SHOTS OF KENNETH AND VINCENT FOR A FIELD GOAL DRILL

Vincent stands beside Kenneth on the 25 yard line.

KENNETH
I usually make one out of four, which is twenty five percent.

VINCENT
Let's see.

The next three shots are Kenneth attempting 25 yard field goals. Kenneth's first kick misses wide right. His second kick misses wide left. His third kick barely goes through.

VINCENT
One out of three. Looks like you just upped your percentage.

JIM

Running powerfully with the football while dragging a player, who is trying to tackle him, down the field.

SHOTS OF DEACON

Shots of Deacon, about to catch the ball, but when he sees a defender coming he stops running, etc... to avoid getting hit and the ball falls to the ground. He is scared of contact.

SERIES OF SHOTS OF THE TEAM
Doing jumping jacks, sprinting downfield, doing push-ups, sprinting uphill. END MONTAGE.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - LATER

The players, somewhat tired, kneeled down, look at Vincent.

VINCENT
Good practice today. Now go home and get some electrolytes.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - MAN CAVE - NIGHT

Vincent and Conrad are on the couch watching TV.

CONRAD
So how was coaching?

VINCENT
A few of 'em were actually pretty good. A few others, let's just say they need more fine tuning.

CONRAD
You make anybody pass out? If you didn't then you ain't working 'em hard enough.

VINCENT
We got two more days of practice before the first game. So by then we'll be alright. We'll be ready.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - DAY

Vincent, on the sideline in front of his team, looks at the opposing team, Elmwood Rec' Center, across the field.

VINCENT
We're not ready.

The BUG-EYED REFEREE standing in the middle of the field signals Vincent to come over. Vincent runs on the field. The coach for Elmwood, SPENCER "THE BULLDOG" RUMSFIELD (40, smug and rude), runs to the middle of the field also.

BUG-EYED REFEREE
Gentleman. We're gonna toss a coin to see who gets the ball first.

While the ref feverishly fidgets in several of his pockets to find a coin Vincent and Spencer interact. Vincent reaches out to shake
Spencer's hand. Spencer smugly looks at Vincent. Vincent catches on and lowers his hand.

VINCENT
How you doing?

SPENCER
I don't like it when people ask me that question. I mean do people really care when they ask somebody that question?

VINCENT
Oh. Well, good luck out there today.

SPENCER
Luck? Ha.

Spencer lifts his hands: RINGS ON NINE OF HIS FINGERS.

SPENCER
You see these rings. I've coached nine championship seasons in this football summer league. This year I add the tenth to this little digit here. Phil Jackson style.

VINCENT
Man. I wouldn't thought they would give out championship rings.

SPENCER
They don't. They only give you trophies. I got the rings made myself.

BUG-EYED REFEREE
I can't find my coin.

Spencer sighs and gives the ref a quarter.

REFEREE
(to Spencer)
Thanks. Heads or tails.

SPENCER
Tails.

The ref flips the coin.

BUG-EYED REFEREE
(to Vincent)
It's heads. Do you want to kick or receive?

VINCENT
Receive.
Spencer and Vincent jog back to their sidelines. Spencer turns back around and gets his quarter back.

EXT. PINERIDGE SIDELINE - MOMENTS LATER

Pineridge players ready themselves for the game. Sangretti talks with Vincent.

SANGRETTI
Let's try n' hold the fort down.

Sangretti pats a nervous Vincent on the back and exits.

The ref BLOWS THE WHISTLE and both teams take the field. Vincent waves to Sandy who is sitting in the BLEACHERS.

EXT. FIELD - LATER

The Elmwood kicker kicks off the ball. Barry is back to return; his helmet has a gold eye shield visor. He catches the ball and takes off. Barry breaks a tackle and runs 20 yards before being tackled. Barry and the kickoff team return to the PINERIDGE SIDELINE and the offense takes the field.

VINCENT
(patting Barry's shoulder)
Nice run, Barry.

EXT. FIELD - MOMENTS LATER

Trevor behind center, looks left, then looks right.

RORY (18, the defensive end for Elmwood who wears number 66, a tough meathead, plays agitated) points to Trevor.

RORY
You ready to feel the pain!

TREVOR
Blue 1000! Green 2000! Hike! Hike!

The ball is hiked. Trevor, about to throw, gets sacked by Rory. The ball goes straight up in the air. A Pineridge player catches it and runs 11 yards before he is tackled.

REFEREE
First down!

VINCENT
Good pass. Good pass.

Trevor lines up behind the center again. Rory is SNARLING.

TREVOR
Red! Purple Orange! Hike!

The ball is hiked. Rory is coming full steam. Trevor keeps dropping back and throws a wobbly interception which is run back for a defensive touchdown by an Elmwood player.

VINCENT
Don't worry, we still got plenty of time. We're good.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - THINGS ARE NOT GOOD

Shots of Pineridge's progressive collapse in this game.

A) Jim runs with the ball and trucks over a defender. He runs for a few more yards until two other defenders sandwich him.

B) Deacon blows past his man and gets open. The ball is dropping towards him. He sees a defender coming at him and at the last moment Deacon shies away from catching the ball.

C) Elmwood's tight end catches a pass, breaks a few tackles, and runs into the end zone. The tight end's teammates on the field run into the end zone for a touchdown celebration: the teammates line up like bowling pins, the tight end takes off his helmet and rolls it over to them, and they all fall down like pins. They get up and laugh.

D) Clyde, on defense, gets double teamed and knocked to the ground. The Elmwood running back jumps over Clyde and runs in for the touchdown while holding his hand in the air.

E) Rory sacks Trevor again. Rory stands over him and makes the cutthroat gesture and ROARS looking up in the air.

F) Barry waits in the backfield to return a punt, but the ball flies over his head out of bounds. He exits the field.

G) The Elmwood running back high steps into the end zone for a touchdown and dances. Spencer laughs and loves it.

H) Kenneth attempts a 25 yard field goal. He misses.

I) An Elmwood receiver catches a long touchdown pass. Vincent puts his hands over his face. Spencer lights a cigar.

J) A Pineridge receiver gets wide open downfield 35 yards away from the line of scrimmage. Trevor heaves a wobbly pass, which is falling short.
The receiver tries to run back to the short pass, lunges for the catch, but can't get to it.

K) The scoreboard runs down to zero on the time clock. The final score: PINERIDGE 12 and ELMWOOD 38.

L) Vincent looks across at Spencer, who takes a bow.

END MONTAGE

INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vincent tosses in his sleep. His eyes open. He groggily sits up. He stares at the boxing gloves hanging up on the wall.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - DAYS LATER

Johnny, beside a pile of footballs, throws footballs between the goal post uprights 30 yards away. Vincent appears.

VINCENT
Thought you didn't like football.

JOHNNY
I never said that. I said I didn't feel like playing.

VINCENT
That's what it looks like. I had those footballs sitting there for p-

Brooke appears, looking a little impatient.

BROOKE
Do you know I've been waiting twenty minutes for you?

JOHNNY
My bad. I lost track of time. I gotta go get my stuff.

Johnny runs off. Silence between Brooke and Vincent until...

VINCENT
Hi.

BROOKE
Hi.

They both do a nervous laugh after talking at the same time.

BROOKE
I'm Brooke. I didn't catch your name last time we met.
VINCENT
Vincent.

BROOKE
You still trying to get my little brother to play football?

VINCENT
Who? Oh. He's your brother?

BROOKE
Did you think he was my son?

VINCENT
No. You don't look that old. I mean young! I mean you look good for your age. Any age! You look good.

BROOKE
Um, thanks? Well here's a little bit info that could be useful to you. My little brother, he's been spending most of his time this summer trying to figure out how to get this girl he has a crush on to notice him. Maybe-

Johnny reappears, running up to them with his bag.

JOHNNY
You ready?

BROOKE
Yup, let's hit the road big head.

Brooke playfully paws through Johnny's hair. Johnny slaps her hand. Big sis little bro moment. They turn and walk off. Brooke looks over her shoulder back at Vincent.

BROOKE
Bye.

VINCENT
Bye.

INT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The players suit up for practice. Jim does jumping jacks while gripping 30-pound rubber dumbbells in each hand.

DEACON
Better be careful before you hit yourself in the head.

JIM
I do this all the time.
Barry opens the locker in front of him. Trevor, in a werewolf mask, jumps out. Barry stumbles over the bench behind him. Trevor takes off the mask. All the players LAUGH. Trevor gives Clyde and Kenneth a high five.

BARRY

Ha. Ha. You got me.
(gives Trevor a five)
But don't get mad when I get you back.

TREVOR

You shoulda' seen your face.

Trevor does a scared face and the players LAUGH more.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - LATER

The players sit in a group talking with each other.

VINCENT

Okay. Listen up. I've brought along somebody to help conduct practice today.

Conrad steps into frame.

CONRAD

I heard what happened last game! I'm here to turn you little ferrets into non-ferrets! Maybe even real football players! Today you will go through one of my custom training regimens! Your bones will ache! Your bodies will spasm! Today, this is my house! Now hit the track and give me three and a half laps!

All the players look at Conrad stupefied.

CONRAD

Now!

All the players jump up and go to the track to run laps.

CONRAD

Do you think I over-did it?

VINCENT

Nah, I thought you were effective.

CONRAD

I'm telling you, football isn't just physical. It's mental. You can have the x's and o's. Let me take care of the mental stuff.
MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Detailing Conrad's various training programs.

A) Conrad sits behind a table on the field. The team is lined up single file to arm wrestle him one at a time. Shots of Conrad beating Trevor, Deacon, and Kenneth. Each time Conrad wins he tells the loser "Do a lap" and they go off.

B) Players are lined up in two parallel lines armed with paintball guns. We see multiple quick shots, of one player at a time, running between the parallel lines getting pelted with paint balls. When it is Jim's turn he walks through.

C) Players are paired up in two's: one player does handstand push-ups while the other player holds his legs. But it takes one player per leg for Clyde. Conrad walks amongst them.

D) The team engaged in a back and forth tug of war duel.

E) A BUDDY of Conrad driving a dump truck backs onto the field in front of the team and dumps a load of dirt on it.

    CONRAD
    Now I want you tooth fairies to shovel this dirt back on the truck!

    BARRY
    Where are our shovels at?

Conrad smirks. In the next shot we see the players using small beach toy shovels to throw dirt back on the truck.

F) Clyde, Deacon, Barry, and three other players carry a five-gallon plastic bucket full of water in each hand toward the endzone. Water splashes out. Conrad power walks beside them.

    CONRAD
    Jack and Jill went up the field, carrying pails of water.

They make it to the endzone and pass off the buckets to five new players who return back up the field with the water.

G) Conrad calls CADENCE for a grueling up and downs drill that the entire team participates in.

    CONRAD
    Okay. You may stop.

Each player collapses to the ground, exhausted. END MONTAGE.

EXT. PINBRIDGE REC' CENTER - PARKING LOT - EVENING
Vincent walks to his truck, tossing his keys. He spots Kenneth, on the field alone practicing field goals. Vincent watches Kenneth briefly, gets in his truck, and takes off.

EXT. FOOD COURT - NIGHT


CONRAD
That was so fun today. Sangretti said I can keep helping you coach if I want?

VINCENT
You know I'm just doing this coaching thing temporarily right? Sangretti's already setting me up a meeting with Buckey for the Majestic Motors job.

CONRAD
I don't care. I'm going to milk it as long as I can. Can I have those extra chop chops?

He hands Conrad the chopsticks, who will use them horribly.

VINCENT
Still can't figure out why she told me that stuff about her brother.

CONRAD
Well if her brother likes this girl, and we can help him, go out with her, then maybe, he, will join the team. We should go back over there and ask him. And it'll give you a chance to ask her out.

VINCENT
Who? Brooke?

CONRAD
Don't play dumb. I saw the way you were acting all goofy around her. You know you like her. Don't you?

Vincent shakes his head, smiling, not answering.

CONRAD
Yeah, you like her. As your new assistant coach and roommate slash matchmaker, I say we're going.

Conrad is now frustrated with the chopsticks and stabs a nugget with them and eats it off like a shish kabob.
EXT. BROOKE'S HOUSE - PORCH - NEXT DAY

Vincent and Conrad wait at the door. Brooke answers it.

CONRAD
Oh, man. I forgot something in the car. I'll be right back.

Conrad gives Vincent a wink and goes off.

VINCENT
How you doing? Sorry. Do you like that question?

BROOKE
Why wouldn't I like that question?

VINCENT
Nevermind. Um, I was wondering. Maybe if you would like to gooo...

   (wincing, unsure)
   ...out?

BROOKE
Are you asking me out on a date?

VINCENT
Yes. Yes, I am.

BROOKE
I'm not really in dating mode right now.

VINCENT
Oh.

BROOKE
Oh! It's not you. My last relationship was uhhh! And I'm not trying to rush into a new one anytime soon. So please don't take it personally.

VINCENT
No. I completely understand. My ex-girlfriend...

Vincent puts up his hands like paws and makes a CAT HISS. Brooke genuinely laughs and so does he.

EXT. BROOKE'S HOUSE - PORCH - MOMENTS LATER

JOHNNY
Yeah right. It's no way you two could help me with this girl. You don't even look you have any game.

CONRAD
I got plenty of game.
VINCENT
If we do. Then will you join the team?

JOHNNY
(can't believe it)
This, this is crazy.

CONRAD
Since you don't think we can do it why are you scared to say you'll join the team if we pull it off?

Conrad makes CHICKEN NOISES. Johnny thinks for a moment.

JOHNNY
Okay.

CONRAD
Okay?... You saying we got a deal?

JOHNNY
Yeah. But. I'll play if and only if you can help me go out on a date with her. No exceptions. But you're gonna have to wait cause she's out of town till next week.

CONRAD
No problem. More time for us to brainstorm. Get yourself ready to take notes from the romance master.

INT. SPENCER'S HOUSE - TROPHY ROOM - DAY

ANNABEL (35, Spencer's 5-month pregnant wife) polishes a three foot trophy in her hand. She stands in front a TROPHY CASE which has eight other trophies inside. Spencer appears.

SPENCER
Aw, there's my baby.

He walks over and instead of hugging his wife he takes the trophy from her. He holds it close to his chest like a baby.

ANNABEL
Honey, what happened to you this morning? We were supposed to go to Lamaze class.

SPENCER
Something came up.
(exteremly dismissive)
Leave me.

Annabel throws the rag down and turns to leave. While she walks away with her back turned we hear her faint mumble.
ANNABEL
Stupid trophies.

SPENCER
What was that?

Annabel keeps walking out the room.

SPENCER
Yeah, I didn't think so!

Spencer lovingly shines the trophy with his shirt and puts it in the case with the others. We see there is a vacant trophy spot labeled "#10". The other trophies spots are labeled too.

INT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - HALLWAY - DAY

Conrad shakes a thick vending machine trying to get his chips out, which are stuck. Vincent stands to the side.

VINCENT
Try buying another bag so it'll knock that one out?

CONRAD
If you got robbed by a thief would you then give him more money?

Sangretti appears, agitated, out of breath.

SANGRETTI
Vincent, there's a news crew out in front and you need to go talk to them before they cause a scene!

VINCENT
Why is there a news crew here?

SANGRETTI
Because of who we're playing. I just talked to them. Now they want to speak to you since you're the coach. Get out there before this turns into some media frenzy.

Sangretti sees the stuck chips. He gives the vending machine a swift elbow and they fall down. Conrad gets his chips.

SANGRETTI
Now go!

EXT. STREET OUTSIDE OF PINERIDGE - DAY
GAIL ANDREWS (40, reporter) stands with her cameraman HERSHEL (28, grungy) and ATHENA SULLIVAN (30, sophisticated). There is also a news truck and a SMALL CROWD OF WOMEN with SIGNS.

Vincent and Conrad approach.

CONRAD
(does a 180, walks away)
Okay. I changed my mind. You're on your own. I'll be with the team.

VINCENT
Conrad! Get-

Conrad is gone. Vincent continues walking up to Gail alone. He reaches Gail and the others. The picket signs have various "Women are Equal to Men" messages or in a similar vein. Gail shoves her mic in Vincent's face. Hershel records everything.

GAIL
Are you Vincent? The coach of the Pineridge football team?

VINCENT
Yes.

GAIL
Why don't you think women can play the same sports as men?

VINCENT
Hey, I never said that.

Gail ignores him and goes over to Athena with the mic. Gail holds a copy of Athena's latest book titled "Feministo".

GAIL
We're here with Athena Sullivan, bestselling author and lecturer.
(lifting book into camera)
Her latest book Feministo has been on the best-sellers list for six months. What a page turner. We're also here with the coach of the Pineridge football team.

VINCENT
I never said what you said I said.

GAIL
Athena, what do you think about women playing a sport that has traditionally been reserved for men or thought of as a guy sport?

ATHENA
Excluding child birth, both women and men are capable of doing any and everything the other can. Such traditions are
nothing more than socialized dichotomies that serve as false illusions and a means to maintain the status-quo of oppression and divergency.

Gail has no idea what the hell Athena just said.

GAIL
And Vincent when did you start hating women? Were you raised by a single father?

VINCENT
Would you stop doing that!

Hershel lowers the camera from his shoulders.

GAIL
Hershel, what are you doing?

HERSHEL
We're out of tape.

GAIL
Well, go get more out the truck.

HERSHEL
We don't have any more in the truck either. I didn't pack any.

Gail lowers her mic and glares at Hershel, who shrugs.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - DAY

TWO TEENS toss a frisbee around near the outskirts of the football field. TEEN #1 accidently tosses the frisbee into a tall, skinny tree. TEEN #2 shakes the tree. The frisbee falls on the ground, but so does a BEEHIVE. The teens' FATHER arrives. TEEN #2 picks up the frisbee.

FATHER
C'mon it's game time.

The three of them go. Bees begin to swarm out of the hive.

PINERIDGE SIDELINE - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent, Conrad, and the team congregate together.

VINCENT
I want you all to show respect and sportsmanship out there today.
CONRAD
(lowered voice)
No mercy. Play for keeps.

A bee flies right in front of Clyde's face, and he freaks out, wailing his arms at the air.

CLYDE
Ah! Get away! Get away from me!

BARRY
What is wrong with you?

CLYDE
A freakin bee! I can't stand bees.

All of their chatter stops when they look out to...

THE FIELD

Their opponents, the Rio Vista Rec' team, running onto the field. Their entrance is in slow motion. The Rio Vista team is made up of all girls aged 18-20. Some have helmets on some don't. Some wear black face paint under their eyes. Their uniform colors are the Oakland Raider silver and black. Without the attire some would look like adorable girls.

THE FIELD - LATER - FIRST OFFENSIVE DRIVE

Pineridge has possession and is lined up.

TREVOR
Hello ladies. I hope none of you break a nail today.

SUZY (18, elite defensive tackle, 5'11, ponytail) speaks up.

SUZY
If something is gonna get broke it's gonna be your back.

The Pineridge players "OOH" at her comment. Trevor makes a face that says "We'll see."

The ball is hiked and Trevor hands off the ball to Jim for a running play. Suzy sacks Trevor a second right after the handoff. Jim runs eight yards before being taken down by three Rio Vista players.

Suzy stands over Trevor and holds her hand out to help him up. He reaches up for it, and she takes her arm back.

SUZY
Don't forget what I said about your back. My dad's a chiropractor so I know exactly where to aim.

Suzy runs back to the defensive side. Her teammates welcome her with helmet slaps. Trevor, pissed, picks himself up.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE

Compressing the game while the chorus to Cyndi Lauper's song "Girls Just Want Have Fun" plays on the music track.

A) A Pineridge receiver runs with the ball and a Rio Vista player stops him with a nice diving lower leg tackle.

B) A Pineridge player gets crushed by a defensive player as soon as his hands touch the ball. The ball falls incomplete.

C) Clyde trucks ahead, his arms extended about to engulf sack the Rio Vista quarterback, but at the last moment she spins making him miss, and she throws a long pass that is caught.

D) Jim runs with the ball. With the endzone 20 yards away, a Rio Vista tackler comes right at him. He stiff arms her for 10 yards, breaks away, and runs in for the touchdown.

E) The Rio Vista running back runs with the ball in the open field. A Pineridge player charging from the side lunges in. She halts, and the tackler flies by. She resumes running.

F) Deacon runs with the ball. Two growling girls await for him ahead. He runs out of bounds.

G) The Rio Vista quarterback drops back and throws a 20 yard touchdown pass to an open receiver in the endzone corner.

H) Barry catches a punt ball and amazingly breaks tackles with speed and juke moves. The last defensive player in the backfield awaits him. Right as she is about to lunge, a Pineridge blocker sends her flying out the way. Barry scores.

I) Trevor throws a wobbly 15 yard pass to a Pineridge receiver, which is caught. A 6-foot defender with a ponytail delivers a flying waist tackle to bring him down.

J) First shot: the Pineridge team has possession and is in a huddle. We angle in on Clyde and see a large bee crawling on the back of his leg. The team breaks from the huddle.

In the next shot: Clyde, at offensive lineman, is bent down waiting for the ball snap. The bee crawls on his face mask. Clyde sees it and runs off the line freaking out. The ball is snapped. Suzy comes through the hole Clyde left and sacks Trevor. She stands up over him, and blows him a kiss as a taunting gesture. END MONTAGE and MUSIC TRACK
PINE RIDGE SIDELINE

Vincent looks at the scoreboard -- Pineridge 25, Rio Vista 28, 4th quarter, 4 seconds remaining. Vincent addresses the team.

VINCENT
Kenneth. We need that leg of yours.

JIM
He's already missed two field goals.

CONRAD
He's right.

TREVOR
I say pass play.

VINCENT
We're 17 yards from the endzone. We need to take what's on the table, and that's a field goal.

Vincent gives a non-assured Kenneth a nod.

THE FIELD

Both teams are lined up. Kenneth stands back waiting to kick.

KENNETH
(repeating)
Through the middle.

The ball gets snapped to the placeholder. Kenneth runs and kicks it. The ball hits an upright making a WEIRD WHACK sound, and then spins in. The kick is good. The Pineridge players on the field run to and jump on Kenneth.

The Pineridge players on the BENCH take the field to go join the celebration. This battle of the sexes is a tie.

CONRAD
Where are they going? Don't we have to play overtime?

VINCENT
No overtime in the regular season games. Just the championship. At least we got the tie.

CONRAD
In that case...

Conrad takes off SCREAMING to join the team. Vincent looks at them all from the sideline and smiles.
INT. PINERIDGE - HALLWAY OUTSIDE SANGRETTI'S OFFICE - DAY

A sign that says "Coaching Interviews" is outside the door.

SANGRETTI'S OFFICE

Sangretti sits at his desk facing FOREST (35, cotton polo, clean-cut, looks like he could be an athletic director).

SANGRETTI
(reading from resume)
And you even have a personal trainer certificate.

FOREST
Yeah, at my last coaching job every coach had to get one.

A BEEPING SOUND goes off. Forest turns nervous.

SANGRETTI
Did you hear something just now?

ANOTHER BEEPING SOUND.

SANGRETTI
There it goes again.

Forest sneakily hits his lower shin against Sangretti's desk.

FOREST
Maybe it's a bird. Beep.

BURT (40, loud, hyper, a cop) burst into the room holding a taser and a gun. Sangretti sticks his hands up like a holdup.

FOREST
Stupid ankle monitor.

BURT
That's right. Looks like you're taking a ride to the station.

FOREST
(gets up)
Why? I'll just go back home.

BURT
Oh no. You just violated probation by tampering with your house arrest bracelet. Jail-tiiime.

Forest quickly grabs Sangretti and then grabs the phone off the desk, holding it to Sangretti's head like a gun.
FOREST
This is America. I can work if I want to.

BURT
Put the phone and the hostage down now!

FOREST
Give me your passport.

SANGRETTI
I don't have a passport.

BURT
Put it down or I will be forced to taser or flesh wound you!

FOREST
I'm not going back to jail.

Forest throws Sangretti forward and leaps through the window, sending shattered glass flying. Burt helps Sangretti up.

BURT
Sorry sir. Carry on.

Burt goes out the window. Sangretti gathers himself.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - COMPRESSING THE COACHING INTERVIEWS

SERIES OF SHOTS of other misfit applicants sitting across from Sangretti, who now has a band-aid on his forehead.

1) A 30 year old guy in all black with spiky hair. He smiles at Sangretti, which reveals his vampire-fanged teeth.

2) A 40 year old geeky male who looks like a computer tech.

3) A 35 year old guy wearing a tank top and a tie.

4) A 30 year old guy with a giant cheek tattoo of Jesus.

-- Sangretti throwing the vampire guy out, who HISSES.

-- An elderly man with a portable oxygen tank sits at the desk. The man places his oxygen mask up to his mouth for air. When he breathes it sounds like DARTH VADER BREATHING.

-- Sangretti taking the coaching interview sign down outside his door shaking his head in a bleak manner. END MONTAGE
EXT. BUSHES ACROSS FROM JASMINE'S HOUSE - DAY

Vincent, Conrad, and Johnny crouch behind a row of bushes across from JASMINE'S (18, cute, Johnny's crush) house, a nice two story home. Johnny holds a cupcake that has a note sticking out of it.

CONRAD
No. The note has to be signed secret admirer. You don't want to reveal your identity until you know she's feeling flattered.

JOHNNY
How will I know if she's flattered?

CONRAD
Let me worry about that. I'm the expert. So pass over the pastry.

Johnny hands Conrad the cupcake. Vincent and Johnny peep over the BUSHES and watch Conrad go towards the HOUSE. WE INTERCUT.

JOHNNY
Conrad's pretty good. He knows a lot about women.

Vincent rolls his eyes. Conrad moves like he's on recon.

JASMINE'S PORCH

Conrad puts the cupcake on the WELCOME MAT and RINGS the doorbell. He jets off and launches himself over the neighbor's tall fence.

Jasmine comes out the door and confusedly scans around without looking down. FIONA (Jasmine's 3-year old pet labrador) appears from inside and eats the cupcake whole.

JASMINE
Looks like I'm hearing stuff Fifi.

Jasmine and Fiona go back inside, and she shuts the door.

Vincent and Johnny lower their heads down from the bushes. Conrad appears, out of breath.

CONRAD
Did she look flattered?

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - DAY

Vincent watches the team on the ground doing bicycle kicks. Conrad, in front of them in a lawn chair, sips a smoothie.
DEACON
This is hurting my spine.

JIM
You gotta grow one first.

Clyde does his kicks with power and surprising speed.

KENNETH
Clyde it looks like you're stomping bricks over there.

TREVOR
He probably thinks he's stomping on some bees.

This gets a LAUGH out the players. Vincent BLOWS HIS WHISTLE.

VINCENT
That's it for today.

EXT. PINERIDGE RBC CENTER - PARKING LOT - LATER

The players walk to their cars. Trevor discovers his car is completely covered with yellow, blue, and pink post-it notes. The other players, LAUGH and TAUNT him.

TREVOR
What happened to my car!

Trevor looks over at Barry whose taunting wave and mischievous smirk reveal who did it. Trevor glares at him.

INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vincent tosses and turns in his sleep. He wakes up and kicks at his sheets in tired frustration.

INT. MAN CAVE - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent sifts through the trash can he threw Dr. Holland's card in. He finds the card. He's ready to face his issues.

EXT. DR. HOLLAND'S OFFICE BUILDING - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

A nice seven story building in downtown Dallas.

INT. WAITING ROOM - DAY
RACHEL (30's, the receptionist) sits behind a glass window. Dr. Holland appears from around the corner. She wears a stylish hemp dress, and speaks with a British accent.

DR. HOLLAND

Hello Vincent. I'm Dr. Holland. C'mon on back here with me.

Now we see Vincent who sits right beside a WEIRD UGLY MAN (45) who intensely stares in Vincent's face. Vincent gets up relieved and cautiously walks away from the deranged man.

INT. DR. HOLLAND'S OFFICE - MOMENTS LATER

Various degrees, plaques, on the wall. Sofa against the wall. Nice Desk. A black deluxe recliner sits across from a unique contemporary designed chair. Vincent and Dr. Holland enter.

DR. HOLLAND

You can have a seat in the black chair there. I'm glad Conrad...

(goes to small fridge, gets a bottled water)

...recommended you to me. Would you like something to drink?

VINCENT

No thank you.

Vincent sits in the black chair and Dr. Holland sits in the chair across from him. A loud SCREECH surprises Vincent.

VINCENT

What was that?

HOFFA (adult barn owl) stands on his perch in the corner.

DR. HOLLAND

Oh, Hoffa stop making a racket. Vincent meet Hoffa. I rescued him from an owl shelter two years ago.

VINCENT

I thought owls were nocturnal?

DR. HOLLAND

Well most owls, especially the wild ones, do live a nocturnal lifestyle. But it's not uncommon for owls to move about during the day. Want to see something even more uncommon?

Dr. Holland turns on the CD radio on the table beside her and a Frank Sinatra song plays. Hoffa does an owl wiggle dance.

DR. HOLLAND (O.S.)
Hoffa just loves Franky Sinatra.

VINCENT
That is so cool.

Dr. Holland turns off the radio. Grabs a remote control on the table, hits a button on it. Vincent is startled when the chair he sits in begins to recline just a little then stops.

DR. HOLLAND
(lighthearted laugh)
The chair's controlled by a remote. It even has a massage function. So you take control of it. Catch.

Dr. Holland tosses Vincent the remote, who looks at it.

VINCENT
Which button is for the massage? Oh, nevermind I see it.
(turns it on, voice vibrating)
How do you turn it off?

DR. HOLLAD
Press the yellow button.

He does. The chair stops vibrating. Dr. Holland grabs her pen and notebook from off the table.

DR. HOLLAND
First I'm just going to tell you a little about myself and then you can tell me some things about you. After that we can go ahead and discuss why you're here today. So relax. And if you want you can hit the blue button on the remote which will decline the chair.

He does. We stay with image of Vincent reclining in chair.

DR. HOLLAND'S OFFICE - LATER

Vincent sits in the chair, listening.

DR. HOLLAND
Your relationship with your father, his behavior towards you, and the bad memories involving him manifested in your reoccurring dreams, all indicate that his cruel treatment has negatively influenced your self-worth and self-esteem. And when I asked you to tell me ten things you felt you do really well you could only come up with four, which is more evidence that you may have a lowered self-worth, self-esteem perception of yourself.

VINCENT
(stunned, impressed)
Wow. That is... wow.

DR. HOLLAND'S OFFICE - TWENTY MINUTES LATER

Vincent looks at a piece of paper in his hand.

DR. HOLLAND
So on that paper I have listed four things I want you to do. Number one. Think positively. Number two. Reward yourself and your accomplishments more. Three. Find a challenge and take it head on. And the challenge should not be something that you can do easily or quickly The more difficult the better. And four. I want you to come see me again in a few weeks.

INT. MAN CAVE - EVENING

Conrad hangs upside down on an inversion table reading Vincent's list. Vincent plays pool.

CONRAD
Reward yourself. Okay. Find a challenge. Maybe we should go to Vegas. That way you can reward yourself with a vacation and challenge yourself to win some dinero at the same time.

VINCENT
Nah. She told me to find a challenge that wasn't easy.

CONRAD
What are you thinking about doing?

VINCENT
I'll think of something.

Vincent sinks his shot on the pool table.

INT. PINERIDGE HALLWAY OUTSIDE SANGRETTI'S OFFICE - DAY

Vincent nears. An IRATE MAN exits the OFFICE. WE INTERCUT.

IRATE MAN
Well up yours twice! I don't wanna to coach your stupid team anyway!

(to Vincent, nicely)

Bonjour.

The man walks along. Vincent knocks on Sangretti's door.

SANGRETTI
Come in. Just another coaching applicant that didn't work out.

Vincent enters SANGRETTI'S OFFICE and takes a seat.

VINCENT
That is sort of why I came to talk to you. I wanted to ask if I could be the football coach for the rest of the season if you haven't found anyone yet. I mean I'm still interested in the Majestic Motors job, but I would like to finish what I started with the team. If possible.

SANGRETTI
And why this new desire?

VINCENT
It's a challenge I want to do for myself.

Sangretti continues to ponder. He rubs his forehead band-aid.

SANGRETTI
Are you sure you want to do this?

VINCENT
Yes sir.

SANGRETTI
Okay. I don't see why not. It's not like I'm having luck finding another coach in the local talent pool. Also, I've talked to Buckey. He wants to meet you. Once he tells me when I'll let you know. I guess instead of working there right away you can wait till the end of the season.

Vincent gets up and shakes Sangretti's hand feverishly.

VINCENT
Thank you. Thank you so much Mr. Sangretti.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - NEXT DAY

The team practices: offense and defense are lined up against each other. Vincent and Conrad watch from the sideline.

TREVOR
Hike! Hike!

The center hikes the ball to Trevor. Trevor spots a wide receiver open on a route and throws a wobbly pass that doesn't quite get there.

TREVOR
Okay. Let me get that one back.
VINCENT
Same play. One more time.
(to Conrad)
We're still having problems with the passing.

CONRAD
Well you know how we can fix it.

EXT. SIDEWALK - NEXT DAY

Conrad and Johnny stand beside a large, leafy tree with a ladder on the side, looking up at SPARKY, the neighbor's cat, on a high branch above. Sparky comes down the tree and curls up on the sidewalk. Conrad picks Sparky up and talks into a walkie talkie.

CONRAD
Bravo. Bravo. Having some problems with the feline. It keeps coming down the tree. How is the horizon?

INT. VINCENT'S TRUCK - DAY

Vincent, parked AROUND THE BLOCK, with a walkie talkie to his mouth, scans around. WE INTERCUT with Conrad on the SIDEWALK.

VINCENT
Still no sign of them. The coast is clear. I repeat the coast is clear.

CONRAD
Thank you Bravo. Over and out.

JOHNNY
(looking at watch)
We're running out of time.

CONRAD
That we are.

Conrad climbs up the ladder with Sparky and puts him in the tree. As he climbs down the ladder Sparky comes down and curls up on the sidewalk again. Conrad is shocked when he discovers the cat has climbed down again.

JOHNNY
Maybe this is a dumb idea. And by the way, how did you know Jasmine jogs this way every day at eleven?

CONRAD
I have my sources.
SEQUENCE DETAILING CONRAD'S SOURCES

A) One morning Conrad waits behind some bushes outside Jasmine's house looking out at HUGH (40's, businessman, glasses, Jasmine's father) get into his Volvo and pull off.

B) Conrad walks along the side of Jasmine's house lifting on windows to see if they are locked. One window isn't. He makes sure the coast is clear, lifts the window, climbs inside.

C) Conrad enters the den. Fiona appears and starts barking. Conrad puts Fiona in a nearby closet.

D) Conrad in Jasmine's room. He picks up her labeled diary on a dresser next to her picture in a frame. He sits on her bed with the diary, reading through it, engrossed. BACK TO SCENE

Conrad, up the ladder now, places Sparky on the same branch.

CONRAD
(to Johnny below)
And every girl loves a hero. When she sees you saving this cat stuck in the tree she'll be flattered.

VINCENT (O.S.)
(through Conrad's walkie talkie)
The ladies are on course. I repeat the ladies are on course.

VINCENT'S TRUCK: We see Jasmine and her friend STACY (18, athletic) in running gear jogging by Vincent in the truck.

SIDEWALK: Sparky climbs down the tree. Conrad jumps from the ladder onto a tree branch.

CONRAD
Toss the ladder and grab the cat!

Johnny tosses the ladder in the adjacent yard behind a fence, out of view. Then picks Sparky up.

CONRAD
Okay toss me the cat before they get here. I'm going to set it on a branch and climb up higher to hide.

JOHNNY
What?

CONRAD
Stop thinking and toss the cat!
Johnny tosses the cat up to Conrad. It MEOWS. Conrad catches Sparky and sits him on a branch. Conrad then quickly uses other branches to pull himself up higher out of view.

Jasmine and Stacy appear off in distance up the sidewalk.

JOHNNY
Oh crap. They're coming.

Sparky begins climbing down ignoring Conrad's threatening whispers to get back. Jasmine and Stacy are getting closer.

Sparky is down the tree. Conrad's tree branch breaks. He SCREAMS, dangling, now grasping onto another branch.

Conrad's new branch breaks; he starts falling. Johnny catches Conrad in his arms as they both go to the ground, MOANING.

Jasmine and Stacy seeing the rescue, run over concerned.

JASMINE
Are you okay?

CONRAD
(getting up, moaning)
Oooh. Yeah. But who knows what would've happened if this young fella hadn't been here.

Johnny now up, brushes himself off. Conrad will overact his all his next lines to Johnny. The girls look on quizzically.

CONRAD
How can I ever repay you young sir. Luckily for me you were here. Who knew bird watching could be so dangerous?
(going into pocket, pulls out a dollar)
I want you to have this as a token of my appreciation.

JOHNNY
I can't take your money.

CONRAD
I insist. You deserve compensation.
(stuffs dollar into Johnny's pocket)
You all have a nice day. C'mon Sparkster.

Conrad jogs off with a limp and Sparky follows.

JASMINE
That was amazing.

STACY
You're like a hero.
JOHNNY
I guess I was just in the right time at the right place.

Conrad is far off down the sidewalk. He stops and looks back at Johnny and the girls in the distance talking. Still with Conrad's POV we see Johnny jog off with Jasmine and Stacy. Conrad smiles. Sparky licks his paw.

INT. VINCENT'S BEDROOM - EVENING

Vincent, on the bed, reads a football coaching manual. Other football coaching books sit nearby.

EXT. PINERIDGE REC' CENTER - OUTDOOR FIELD - NEXT DAY

The team is paired into two's: one player lays on the ground and his partner stands over him with a 5 lb bag of potatoes.

VINCENT
Don't you think this is a little much?

CONRAD
A little much? Maybe the eight pound bag and definitely the ten bag would be too much. And they have on pads. So it's really only about three pounds of force.

Vincent sighs. Conrad turns to the players.

CONRAD
Okay drop 'em.

The potato holders drop the bags on their partner's stomachs.

CONRAD
This exercise is better than any type of crunches. And Deacon, I thought of you when I came up with this. You have to stop being afraid of contact. It's also for the rest of you too. I can't have players who are scared to take a sack of vegetables to the abdomen! Reload!

The holders pick up the bags and prepare for the next drop.

CLYDE
Coach C?

CONRAD
Yeah?

CLYDE
Potatoes aren't vegetables, they're starches.
CONRAD
What!

CLYDE
Potatoes are starches.

CONRAD
According to who?

CLYDE
Wikipedia.

CONRAD
Wikipedia isn't a reliable source. Go give me two laps. Go.

Clyde gets up and jogs off. Johnny appears, helmet off.

JOHNNY
Sorry I'm late.

VINCENT
That's okay. Everyone I want you all to meet Johnny. He will be joining the team.

CONRAD
You're right on time. We have a vacant opening over there.

Conrad points Johnny over to Clyde's partner, who signals.

TWO SHOTS OF JOHNNY - STILL AT PRACTICE

throwing long, accurate passes to a player running routes downfield. Vincent and Conrad observe. WE CUT TO

SERIES OF SHOTS - PINERIDGE FIELD - 3RD AND 4TH GAMES

GAME 3: Johnny completes a pass. Jim runs in a goaline touchdown. Clyde gets a sack. Johnny throws a touchdown pass to Deacon. Brooke cheers in the bleachers. Kenneth punts the ball, it sails in the air, and as it descends WE CUT TO

GAME 4: Barry catches a punt and runs 40 yards before being tackled. Johnny about to get sacked but jukes away and runs for a touchdown. Sangretti and Sandy cheer in the bleachers; Trevor sits on the bench with his arms folded, not so happy being replaced, looking at offense on the field celebrate.

INT. ZIPPY'S BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT
The team, in street clothes, eat at several tables put together with plates of burgers, fries, etc... in front of them. They all hold up their cups for a toast.

VINCENT
The last two games. Two victories. You all played hard and deserved it. So this toast is for everybody.

Vincent CLICKS his mug against Jim who sits beside him. The players CLICK their mugs together also. When Kenneth lowers his glass he accidently knocks over a pitcher of soda that sits on the edge of the table next to him, onto the floor.

KENNETH
Oops. Sorry.

VINCENT
Don't worry. I'll go get a refill.

CONCESSION STAND
Vincent stands with the pitcher. A MALE CASHIER appears.

VINCENT
(handing over pitcher)
I need a refill. One of my players accidently knocked the pitcher over. We cleaned up the mess.

MALE CASHIER
Sure. And don't worry about paying for the refill. I'll hook you up.

VINCENT
Cool. Thanks.

The cashier takes the pitcher and goes off in the back.

TREVOR
Sits beside Barry who talks and is not paying attention. Trevor douses Barry's dark soda with liquid from a condiment bottle that says "BRONCO BILLY'S SUPER HOT SAUCE".

CONCESSION STAND
Vincent gets bumped by the arriving BETSY (25, vivacious) who is with Spencer on her other side holding her hand.

BETSY
Oh. Sorry. Excuse me.

VINCENT

That's okay.

Spencer spots Vincent and takes his hand away from Betsy.

SPENCER

Hey Betsy. Why don't you go on over to our lane. I'll get the food and drinks.

BETSY

Okay. But get me some skittles.

Betsy goes off. Spencer moves over to Vincent.

SPENCER

Fancy seeing you here. I thought you might not show your face in public again after that beating.

VINCENT

Good to see you too. Bringing the old lady out bowling?

SPENCER

Who her? She's my, um... niece. My niece in-law. It's family night.

VINCENT

I would've guessed otherwise.

SPENCER

And what is that supposed to mean!

VINCENT

Nothing. I'm just saying.

SPENCER

(finger in Vincent's face)

You mind your business Mr. Talk!

VINCENT

Hey. Hey. You're right.

Spencer lowers his finger. Vincent looks at Spencer's rings.

VINCENT

You might have trouble bowling with all those rings on your fingers.

SPENCER

Now you're a comedian. You know, I knew there was a reason I didn't like you. If my niece wasn't around I'd-... You watch yourself huh.
VINCENT
Looks like you need to watch your niece over there.

Spencer looks over at a MAN standing up against Betsy's body and giving her an up-close lesson on how to release the ball.

SPENCER
What the- Move peon!

Spencer knocks Vincent out of the way and goes off.

TABLE WHERE TEAM IS EATING - MINUTES LATER

Vincent is back sitting with team. Everyone chats. Barry picks up his cup and gulps away. He spits out his hot drink, hitting those who sit across from him. Trevor cracks up.

SPENCER

Picks up a bowling ball from the dispenser. He tries to put his fingers down into the holes but his rings get in the way.

EXT. MAJESTIC MOTORS - DAY

A massive, glorious car dealership: shiny new luxury and domestic cars, a giant inflatable football player holding balloons. Various SALESemen assist a multitude of CUSTOMERS.

Vincent, near the showroom, against a car, looks up at a BILLBOARD: Buckey wearing a crown and says "The Car Czar."

He then sees BUCKEY (55, ex-NFL linebacker, larger than life personality, cowboy hat, jeans, boots) coming out the showroom signing and handing off something to a SALESman. Vincent straightens. He notices he left a mark on the car he leaned on. He quickly rubs it off. Buckey approaches.

BUCKEY
Are you Vincent?

VINCENT
Yes sir Mr. Ryan.

BUCKEY
Howdy Howdy. Well God didn't give us legs just to stand on 'em c'mon.

Vincent and Buckey will walk and talk along the lot while passing various SALESmen closing deals with CUSTOMERS.
Greetings to meet you. And you don't have to call me Mr. Ryan, call me Buckey.

LAWRENCE (30, confident) walks by with a CUSTOMER

LAWRENCE
Now all we have to do is sign a few papers and you're off cruising into the sunset in your new car.

Lawrence and Buckey give each other a friendly salute.

BUCKEY
Just another great day of automobile capitalism. That's Lawrence. That boy could sell a pack of salami sausages to a vegetarian. Great closer. You ever sale cars before?

VINCENT
No.

BUCKEY
That's okay. You got a trustworthy face. Selling cars aint no different from fishin'. The fish come to you. You hook 'em and then just reeeeeeel 'em on in.

A FATHER and SON (10, has a Buckey Ryan jersey) appear.

SON
Hi Mr. Ryan. Can I get your autograph?

BUCKEY
You sure can lil' fella.

The SON gives Buckey the jersey, who signs and returns it.

BUCKEY
There you go. Now hold up.

Buckey pulls a lollipop out his pocket and gives it to the boy, who lights up. The father shakes Buckey's hand.

FATHER
Thank you so much Mr. Ryan.

The father and son go off. Buckey and Vincent resume walking.

BUCKEY
I wouldn't trade this job for anything. Except being able to play football again of course. But hey, I always still got those Superbowl memories. I lost a tooth in that game.

VINCENT
Is that your Superbowl ring?

BUCKEY

(lifts hand to show ring)

Yup. Authentic 1978 Superbowl hardware. Win the big game in this town they'll love you forever.

They walk past a SALESMAN trying to close a deal with an ELDERLY COUPLE over by a new Jaguar.

ELDERLY HUSBAND

I don't know. At first I wanted it. But maybe I'm too old for this car.

Buckey walks over to them. Vincent follows and watches.

BUCKEY

Nonsense! You wanna talk about age. This car'll take 10 years off your life. With this car you and the Mss. will be like a king and queen with the open road as your kingdom. Imagine coasting past all your elderly chums driving their boring doowap vehicles looking like senior citizens while you pull up in this baby looking like spring chickens.

ELDERLY WIFE

He's right. We should get it.

ELDERLY HUSBAND

(enthused, to Salesman)

Young man. We want this car.

With one hand for each, Buckey smacks the elderly couple on the rear like athletes do to each other after a good play.

BUCKEY

And there's plenty of room in the back seat for you young lovebirds.

The couple smiles. Buckey returns to Vincent; they walk.

VINCENT

That was great.

BUCKEY

And I wasn't lying. They look like they've both lived a long hardworking life. They deserve to spoil themselves now that they're old. We just don't sell cars around here. We sell luxury and happiness. It just so happens our happiness comes with power steering and a sunroof. And speaking of old. How's my old buddy Sangretti doing?

VINCENT

He's doing pretty good.
Lawrence pulls up beside them in a new convertible Mercedes.

BUCKEY
Lawrence here is going to go take you out to our employee facility down the street to show you around. It has a lounge, weight room, pool, everything. I like to keep my sales force happy. So I'll be talking to you later on when you get back.

Buckey goes off. Vincent goes over to the Mercedes.

VINCENT
Sweet ride.

LAWRENCE
Got it as a bonus. Wanna drive?

VINCENT
Really?

Lawrence gets out the car and gets into the passenger side while Vincent gets in the driver side. Vincent SCREACHES off.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - MAN CAVE - NIGHT

Vincent on the couch with a FOOTBALL COACHING BOOK, adding notes to his PLAYBOOK. Conrad comes downstairs carrying a white 3-foot translucent orb: a big crystal ball like object.

CONRAD
How did it go at the dealership?

VINCENT
It was so awesome. I can't wait to start working there. What the heck is that thing?

Conrad places it down and plugs it in the wall.

CONRAD
It's a moon lamp. Watch this.

He turns it on. The orb shines bright. Then it causes an electrical overload. All the lights and electronics go off.

EXT. PINERIDGE OUTDOOR FIELD - DAY

Vincent, on the sideline, puts footballs into a bag. The team is on the field. Johnny comes up to Vincent.

JOHNNY
Hey.

VINCENT
Hey Johnny. What's up?

JOHNNY
My sister's been asking about you. I think she likes you. I hope you two get together.

VINCENT
You being serious?

JOHNNY
Heck yeah. If she gets a boyfriend then it'll take her off my back. That's all she does,
(mocking Brooke)
Johnny you gotta do this. Don't do that. You gotta do this to get into college, blah, blah, blah.

VINCENT
Sounds like she just wants the best for you.

JOHNNY
She probably does. But she doesn't have to remind me about it every day every hour. Man she needs a boyfriend. Step your game up coach.

Johnny runs off to the field. Vincent smiles with this news.

CONRAD - MOMENTS LATER

Stands in front of the team: some do cone drills, others wait their turn. Jim does a speed cone drill. As Conrad goes to pick up a nearby tackle pad Trevor does the drill after Jim.

CONRAD
Everybody! Everybody stop! Deacon come over here.

Deacon comes over. The team stops and watches.

CONRAD
Deacon you're still scared of contact and that, that is a problem that needs immediate rectification. I figure if someone is afraid of getting hit, then the only solution is... to turn them into a hitter.
(holds up tackle pad)
I want you to tackle me. Hit me hard as you can. C'mon. No fines like the NFL. Run me over if necessary. Unleash the nasty.

DEACON
Do I have to do this?
CONRAD
There are no questions in football! Only answers! C'mon. Let's go.

Deacon charges, hits Conrad with barley average force.

CONRAD
Again.

Deacon backs up, tackles again with same force level. Followed by QUICK SHOTS of Deacon hitting Conrad with average contact force slightly getting better but not by much.

Conrad, not happy with the improvement, tosses the pad aside.

CONRAD
Forget the tackle pad. I want you to tackle me. Full force.

DEACON
But you don't have any pads on.

CONRAD
What did I say? No questions in football. This is your last chance. And just for some extra motivation, if you don't run me over this time then you'll hold that tackling dummy while every player here hits it as hard as they can. And Clyde gets to go twice. Get mean son!

Deacon looks at Clyde who smiles. Conrad positions for impact. Deacon charges with a BATTLE CRY and spear the @@ out of Conrad. They both go to the ground. The team "OCHS."

Deacon gets up, then Conrad a little slower.

CONRAD
(fighting for breath)
Good job. That's what I wanted.
(spits out some blood)
C'mon I want to buy you a root beer.

Conrad pats Deacon on the back and they go off.

EXT. PINERIDGE OUTDOOR FIELD - LATER

Vincent and Conrad watch as the team runs a lap around the field. Vincent BLOWS HIS WHISTLE. WE CUT TO


CONRAD

155
I'm just curious. How can somebody big as you be scared of bees?

CLYDE
Don't know. I've never liked them.

CONRAD
Why? A bee aint nothing more than a flying ant with a razor blade on its ass. Just smack it... I don't know either. Nevermind.

Clyde goes off with the other players. Vincent spots Brooke on the opposite side of the field in the bleachers watching.

VINCENT
I'll catch up with you later.

Conrad sees Vincent looking over at Brooke and smirks. Conrad goes off with the players. Vincent walks towards Brooke.

BLEACHERS

BROOKE
The team's looking good.

VINCENT
We're trying.

BROOKE
I want to thank you for getting my brother to play football again. He hasn't played since he had to quit playing at his last high school.

VINCENT
Why'd he have to quit?

BROOKE
Because we moved. He's been mad about it and a little at me ever since. But he actually looks happy out there playing again. I owe you one.

VINCENT
If you reconsider that date I might be willing to consider us even.

On Brooks interested and smiling face we CUT TO

EXT. PINERIDGE PARKING LOT - DAY
Players, in uniform, load onto the rec center's bus: an old school bus painted blue. Vincent and Sangretti stand outside the bus with Lambert (35, the driver, weird, coonskin hat).

    SANGRETTI
    (to Vincent)
    Our first away game. Good luck. And Lambert, no more speeding tickets.

    LAMBERT
    Of course. I've learned my lesson.

    SANGRETTI
    I would hope so.

The last player steps onto the bus. Lambert gets on.

    SANGRETTI
    I would be there, but duty calls. I think you're doing a great job so far with the coaching. Keep it up.

    VINCENT
    Thanks. We'll try.

Vincent gets on the bus. Sangretti watches as it takes off.

INT. TEAM BUS - 10 MINUTES LATER

Vincent and Conrad sit in the front. The players chat.

    JIM
    Are you kidding me! There is no way Bigfoot could beat Frankenstein.

    DEACON
    Frankenstein's too slow. Bigfoot's speed alone would trump any advantages Franky boy has.

    JIM
    Not really. Frankenstein wins on strength alone. It's strength over speed all day man.

    KENNETH
    I would say their strength is kinda' the same. So wouldn't their power just equal each other out?

    JIM
    Nope. Bigfoot has natural power. Frankenstein... he has supernatural power. And Frankenstein can always be brought back to life. Checkmate! Boom goes the dynamite!

Johnny shakes his head, grinning, at this conversation.
ANGLE ON: Lambert driving. He looks over at his PICTURE OF OPRAH cut out from a magazine, puckering up his lips at it.

EXT. MONROE REC' CENTER FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Vincent on the sideline eyeing the scoreboard: PINERIDGE 6, MONROE 14, 2nd quarter, 16 seconds left. Turns to team.

VINCENT
I'm sure they're expecting pass. So lets hit 'em with a run. Jim the ball's going to you. If you don't find an opening go down so I can call a timeout for another play or get out of bounds.

THE FIELD - LINE OF SCRIMMAGE - 40 YARDS FROM ENDZONE

Johnny gets the snap, pitches off to Jim, who darts to the sideline and rushes ahead. Getting great blocking, Jim jukes and speeds past two defenders, high steps out of a foot tackle, stumbling, barely keeping his balance, runs ahead. He gets pushed into the endzone for the score. WE CUT TO

Kenneth makes the extra point. Score now 13 to 14.

The players on PINERIDGE'S SIDELINE clap and cheer. Vincent sees Trevor on the bench not really into the game at all.

VINCENT
Hey Conrad. Take over for me.

CONRAD
Ew, a whole 2 seconds.

Vincent goes over to Trevor while the end of the half plays out in the b.g. - Monroe taking a knee after the kickoff.

VINCENT
I know you're probably upset not playing quarterback right now. But I've been thinking about it.

TREVOR
I'm goin' back in at quarterback?

VINCENT
No. But I'm going to try playing you at safety in the second half.

Trevor is confused at this.

VINCENT
A safety needs to be able to read the quarterback, right? And you still think like a quarterback. I figure you might be able to read what their quarterback is thinking and where he's trying to put the ball. If it works out then I'll divide up the safety time to keep you in. But if it doesn't then just blame it on my coaching decision.

The half is over. Players walk towards the locker room.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE OF SECOND HALF

DEACON
Catches a long pass from Johnny. He sees a defender 10 yards ahead. By habit he goes toward the sideline, but changes course, runs forward for extra yardage, and gets tackled.

TREVOR
Takes the field with the defense. Trevor is focused. The Monroe quarterback throws to a receiver on the other side of the field who gets taken down. Trevor not involved.

JOHNNY
Getting pressured, rolls out the pocket. Completes a pass.

KENNETH AND VINCENT
Misses a field goal. Vincent claps saying "That's ok"

THREE QUICK SHOTS OF TREVOR ON DEFENSE AT SAFETY
Trevor bats the ball away from the intended receiver. Trevor makes an interception. Trevor bats another ball down. Vincent fist pumps on the sideline. END MONTAGE

VINCENT
On the sideline talking to team. Scoreboard: Pineridge 30 and Monroe 27; 15 seconds left, 4th quarter. Down to the wire.

VINCENT
We stop this drive the game's over. Been a bull fight out there but I think we got one more stand in us.
CONRAD
Do you want it!

DEFENSE PLAYERS
Yeah!

CONRAD
I said... Do... you... want it!

DEFENSE PLAYERS
Yeah!

CLYDE - LINE OF SCRIMMAGE - 45 YARDS FROM ENDZONE

lined up with the defense. Digging foot into the ground. The ball is hiked. Clyde beats his man, crushes the quarterback. The BALL is fumbled. Up for grabs. A Monroe player picks it up and runs downfield, untouched, then horizontally along the 1 yard line to let time expire, then scores. Game Over.

PINERIDGE SIDELINE

Pineridge players walking off the field, heads down, sour.

VINCENT
C'mon guys good effort out there today. We played hard to the end.

His words are lost on the retreating players.

INT. RIVERMONT'S RESTAURANT - EVENING

A fine dining quality restaurant with a Southern ambience. Vincent and Brooke eat at a table in the packed restaurant.

BROOKE
I figured my catering business would do better in Dallas. So we packed up and moved from Midland and came to Dallas.

VINCENT
A catering business. You know I was wondering why you had all those cans of tomato sauce when we first met. I thought you just liked spaghetti alot. Or ravioli.

Brooke laughs. The tone is light. They are hitting it off.

EXT. WHITE ROCK LAKE - EDGE - NIGHT
Brooke stands by as BRIAN (28) hands over a bag to Vincent. They stand next to a huge 2-seater WATER BIKE.

    VINCENT
    Thanks Brian.

Brian goes off. Vincent walks over to Brooke.

    BROOKE
    This is a first.

    VINCENT
    What is?

    BROOKE
    Riding a water bike. I've always wanted to because they look so weird with those big wheels. It's also the first time I've been on a date that involves cardio. I must say. Very original.

    VINCENT
    Well you know they say there's a first time for everything.

    BROOKE
    (looking down at shoes)
    But it's gonna be kinda hard paddling with these heels.

    VINCENT
    I'm two flip flops ahead of you.

Vincent removes a pair of flips flops out the bag.

    BROOKE
    So you've got this all planned out huh? What else you got in the bag?

    VINCENT
    (pulling out items)
    Let's see. I've got some non-alcoholic champagne and two glasses. I'm a firm believer in not drinking and biking. I also have some music for our listening pleasure.

Vincent removes a portable mp3 radio. Turns it on, and an old school Tony Bennett-like love ballad PLAYS. On Brooke's charmed face WE CUT TO

LAKE WATER

Vincent and Brooke paddling along on the WATER BIKE on a romantic full moon night.

EXT. BROOKE'S HOUSE - PORCH - LATER THAT NIGHT
BROOKE
I had a really good time tonight.

VINCENT
Me too. You're a better water biker than I expected. My calves are still sore from trying to keep up with you on that thing.

She laughs. She likes this fella and his charming wackiness. He wants to kiss her, but does an awkward handshake instead. Brooke steps forward and kisses him on the cheek.

BROOKE
Let's do it again some time. Goodnight Vincent.

VINCENT
Goodnight.

He goes down the steps. Stumbles over the last step, looking back at Brooke, who smiles. She goes inside. He's on cloud 9.

EXT. ALLEYWAY ENTRANCE/ALLEY - NIGHT

Spencer stands at an alleyway entrance. He sneakily scans around and ducks into the dimly lit alley. He passes litter, a large rat atop a trash can, and graffiti as he walks further down.

He stops, looks around. Behind him in the shadows a red cigarette cherry burns, and a dark figure steps out of a crevice and walks slowly towards him without his knowledge.

The figure puts his hand on the startled Spencer's shoulder. The figure is Mr. Gray (40's, expressionless) wearing a gray hoodie, hood pulled over his head, smoking a cigarette.

Mr. Gray. Thought you were late.

Mr. Gray takes a puff and retrieves his briefcase from the shadows. Opens it, gathers something, and hands over a thick, filled, manila envelope to Spencer, who gives Mr. Gray a letter envelope. Mr. Gray talks while counting the wad of cash in the envelope Spencer just gave him.

MR. GRAY
Got some extra for you, free of charge this time. Besides the video of their practices I also got photocopies of the coach's playbook inside there.

SPENCER
You know all the money's there. How'd you get to the playbook?
MR. GRAY
Let's just say their secretary at the rec center gave me access in more ways than one. You need me to check out the team you're playing next week? Who is it? Birchwood?

SPENCER
(hands Mr. Gray a paper)
Yup. And see what dirt you can find on this guy. I tried to get him on my team this summer, but he chose to play with Birchwood. Bad choice. Always a pleasure doing business with you Mr. Gray. You want cash or check next time?

MR. GRAY
Straight cash homey.

They shake hands and depart their separate ways.

EXT. PARK - DAY
Vincent and Coach Joe, in a dress, walk along.

VINCENT
I don't know why but the last loss felt way worse than the first one. Maybe it's because we actually had a chance to win this time. How do you get a team ready to play after a loss like that?

COACH JOE
You just do. You can't dwell on the games you've already played.

A MALE JOGGER runs by, checks Joe out, WHISTLES, jogs on.

COACH JOE
You have to move on to the next game whether you win or lose.

VINCENT
I guess you're right.

COACH JOE
Damn right I'm right. Do you think this dress makes my boobs look big?

Joe stops walking, sticks his chest out. Vincent, shocked. A BURLY MAN walking his CAT on a leash walks by seeing Joe.

BURLY MAN
Hot damn. Arm the torpedoes.

VINCENT AND COACH JOE SITTING ON A PARK BENCH - MINUTES LATER
VINCENT
So how is retirement treating you? No more punching the clock. Out playing golf. Living the easy life.

COACH JOE
Don't know about all that. But it's been good. Kinda peaceful.

VINCENT
You know at first I didn't think I would like coaching the football team as much as I do, but it's actually pretty fun.

Joe breaks down CRYING, sobbing hard. Vincent is confused.

VINCENT
What happened? Why're you crying?

COACH JOE
I miss it. I miss coaching. And all those years I coached not one damn championship. Sure, we made it to the championship game a few times but we lost. I still never won the whole thing. Now, now I'll never get that chance again.

Joe lets out a huge WAIL. Causing a scene. Vincent, nervous.

VINCENT
Okay. Okay. But didn't you just say don't dwell on the past games?

Joe looks like he is going to answer, lets out another WAIL. A JOGGER runs by. Vincent waves, smiles at the JOGGER.

VINCENT
C'mon Coach Joe man up. Sorry, I mean get it together... Look you helped put this current team together right?

COACH JOE
Ye......yeaahhhhh.

VINCENT
Well if we, the team, can win the championship this year a huge reason we won it will be because of you and you'll be a part of it.

COACH JOE
(calming down)
Really?

VINCENT
Heck yeah. You're the one who made the roster. You're like, you're like the architect, the foundation of this team. I'm just working with the tools you've... foundationed.

COACH JOE
You're right.

VINCENT
Damn right. I'm right.

Joe smiles, gives Vincent a big hug. A FEMALE JOGGER runs by.

FEMALE JOGGER
Get a room.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - MAN CAVE - NIGHT

Vincent sits at the bar. Conrad fiddles with a bunch wires connected to his moon lamp.

CONRAD
What! You told him you'd try to win the championship?

VINCENT
He was crying. And it's possible. If we win all five of our last games we could get to the championship. We're tied for the third best record in the league right now and still getting better.

CONRAD
Maybe. I think I've rigged the circuits so the lights stop going out when I turn on the moon lamp.

Conrad turns it on. All the lights and electronics shut off.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent and Conrad stand by a TALL TREE (leafless, no branches except at the top) looking at five CARDBOARD GOLD TROPHY CUPS: (5 feet tall, have "#1 NANNY" written on them).

VINCENT
You brought me out here to show me some fake cardboard trophies?

CONRAD
No. You know how they have those fundraisers on TV and they have those thermometer looking things?

VINCENT
What are you talking about?

165
CONRAD
You said you wanted to set a goal to win the next five games right. When I saw these trophies in the store this morning I was thinking about what you said and an idea popped in my head. Look up there in the tree. You see that red rope up there?

Vincent looks at: thick rope tied on the tree 25 feet above.

CONRAD
Each time we win I hammer one of these trophies on the tree. If we win all five of the last games the trophies will reach up to that rope up there in the tree. It's just like one of those goal measuring things telethons use. I know the trophies say number one nanny but the only other choices were number one dad or number one mom. But it's not the text, it's the thought that counts. What do you think?

Vincent ponders for a few moments. Does he like it?

VINCENT
Either you're crazy or you're some weird genius.

CONRAD
I'm thinking a combination of the two. It's time to turn up the heat.

MONTAGE AND FOOTBALL HIGHLIGHT SEQUENCE - TURNING UP THE HEAT

QUICK SHOTS OF THE PINERIDGE PLAYERS AT PRACTICE

All done with a new intense vigor while Vincent and Conrad passionately motivate them: Ramming the blocking sled. Doing jumping jacks. Running in place. Carrying buckets of water.

JOHNNY: 6TH GAME - GREAT TOUCHDOWN PASS
In the pocket, surveying field, throws a long touchdown pass.

JIM: 6TH GAME - TOUGH 15 YARD TOUCHDOWN RUN
Jim gets the handoff. Tries to go up the middle but it's clogged. He cuts back right, breaks a tackle. Scores.

DEACON: 6TH GAME - AMAZING ONE HAND CATCH
Running backwards, jumps, extends arm, catches ball, falls.
VINCENT AND CONRAD AT BACKYARD TREE - EVENING

Conrad nails up the first GIANT CARDBOARD TROPHY.

BARRY - EMPTY PINERIDGE LOCKER ROOM

Sneakily goes into Trevor's locker and takes out his shoes. He sits down with them. Beside him is a JAR OF PEANUT BUTTER.

PINERIDGE PLAYERS - PINERIDGE LOCKER ROOM

After practice chatting, changing clothes. Trevor puts his foot inside his shoe. Something is wrong. He pulls his foot out, the top half covered in peanut butter. Players LAUGH.

VINCENT - DR. HOLLAND'S OFFICE

Vincent in a good mood talking with Dr. Holland.

VINCENT AND BROOKE - SPORTS BAR DATE SEQUENCE

- Standing in the CROWD watching A WOMAN in a cowboy hat get thrown off a mechanical bull. THE HOST gestures for a new crowd member to try the bull. Brooke urges a reluctant Vincent to try. He caves in. Steps forward. THE CROWD cheers.


- Vincent, at home in the kitchen, takes a pack of frozen peas out the freezer, puts them into his pants in the crotch area, grimacing.

BARRY: 7TH GAME - AMAZING 50 YARD PUNT RETURN


JOHNNY: 7TH GAME - CRAZY TOUCHDOWN PLAY CALL

Behind center. Looks over to Vincent, who does the gesturing hand motions baseball coaches use. Johnny nods. The ball gets snapped. Johnny, Jim, and A RECEIVER orchestrate the reverse flea flicker play with Johnny throwing a long touchdown pass.
TREVOR: 7TH GAME - INTERCEPTION PLAY

Playing safety, catches an interception and is tackled. He runs back to the sideline. He and Vincent do a high five.

CONRAD - ON LADDER AT BACKYARD TREE

nails the second trophy over the last one. Vincent observes.

VINCENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Vincent sleeps peacefully with a smile on his face.

CLYDE - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Clyde tosses and turns in his sleep. We go into...

CLYDE'S DREAM

Clyde in a long dimly lit corridor of a foreboding old house standing in front of A CREEPY OLD WIZARD (robe, long white beard) It feels and looks like an odd horror movie. The wizard waves his hand around. A swarm of bees appear.

CREEPY OLD WIZARD

Now get him my honies.

Clyde runs down the long eerie corridor looking back in fear at the bees swarming towards him. He continues running, falls through the floor into darkness. Surrounded by darkness he looks up at the swarm of bees coming at him. BACK TO SCENE

Now back in his BEDROOM, Clyde jerks up from his nightmare.

PINERIDGE PLAYERS DURING PRACTICE - PINERIDGE OUTDOOR FIELD

The team pulls the same dump truck from before up field by a thick rope. Conrad sits on top of the truck filing his nails.

3 SHOTS OF VINCENT AFTER PRACTICE - PARKING LOT/FIELD

- At his truck, the door open, about to get in. He spots Kenneth on the field alone practicing field goals. He thinks.

- Vincent on THE FIELD walking toward Kenneth, who turns and sees him.
- Vincent giving Kenneth pointers. Vincent steps back and Kenneth kicks another field goal that goes in.

VINCENT AND THE TEAM - BOARDING TEAM BUS FOR NEXT GAME

Vincent stands at the door; players, in uniform, get on.

LAMBERT AND COP - SIDE OF THE ROAD

A police car, lights blinking, sits behind the team bus that has been pulled over. The team sits on the bus watching as A COP writes Lambert a speeding ticket. As the cop writes Lambert flicks him off, makes faces. The cop looks up and Lambert quickly halts his taunting, looking innocent.

JOHNNY AND DEACON: 8TH GAME - TOUCHDOWN CONNECTION

On the line of scrimmage, nod to each other. The ball gets snapped to Johnny, who pump fakes, waits for Deacon to get open and launches a long pass to him. Deacon catches it. A defender waits ahead. Deacon lowers his shoulder and plows over the defender, but gets taken down 5 yards later. Deacon returns to the SIDELINE, is met by Jim. They do a jumping chest bump with Deacon getting knocked down.

KENNETH: 8TH GAME - MAKES A 30 YARD FIELD GOAL

Kenneth makes the field goal. Vincent raises his arms to do the "it's good" signal from the SIDELINE.

JIM: 8TH GAME - TOUGHEST TWENTY YARD RUN EVER

Johnny hands off to Jim in their own endzone. Jim runs over the first defender; throws the next off him; rams through the pile; hopping on one leg going forward sideways; defenders all over him; 2, 3, then 4 defenders finally bring him down.

CONRAD - ON LADDER AT BACKYARD TREE

nails the third trophy over the last one. Vincent observes.

BUCKEY - MAJESTIC MOTORS: FILMING A COMMERCIAL

A FILM CREW records Buckey, wearing a turban, riding atop a camel. A GRIP with a carrot on a stick leads the camel ahead.
ANNABEL - LAMAZE CLASS

The only one without a partner. Looks at her watch. Pissed.

SPENCER AND ATTRACTIVE WOMAN - DINER

Sitting across from each other at a table sharing a milkshake with two straws, and giggling with one another.

EXT. CATERING BY BROOKE - ESTABLISHING SHOT - DAY

Vincent enters her CATERING SHOP carrying a bouquet of flowers. The outdoor sign says "Catering By Brooke".

INT. CATERING BY BROOKE - KITCHEN

Vincent sneaking up behind Brooke, who is in an apron giving instructions to A CHEF. Vincent gestures the chef to "ssshh". He covers Brooke's eyes. She turns around. He gives her the flowers. She lights up, kisses him. OTHER STAFF "Aw" at them.

THE TEAM - RIDING ON TEAM BUS TO NEXT GAME

Trevor, behind Lambert, snatches his coonskin hat, puts it on and dances in the aisle. Lambert jerks around, yelling. The bus swerves. Lambert returns to the wheel to control the bus.

CLYDE: 9TH GAME - DEFENSIVE BIG MAN SACK

The ball is snapped. Clyde bull rushes the BLOCKER backwards into the QUARTERBACK taking them both down to the ground.

CONRAD AND MIDGET REFEREE: 9TH GAME - INTENSE MOMENT

Argue on the SIDELINE. Then Conrad drops to his knees to yell face to face. Really going at it. Vincent pulls Conrad away.

SERIES OF SHOTS SHOWING BIG HIT TACKLES IN 9TH GAME

by PINERIDGE PLAYERS mixed with hits from the OPPOSING TEAM'S PLAYERS. It's like Rocky on the gridiron. Hit for hit.

CONRAD - ON LADDER AT BACKYARD TREE
nails the fourth trophy over the last one. Vincent observes.

VINCENT - MAN CAVE - DAY

Vincent looking at a playbook manual. The TV is on. A FEMALE MOANS on the TV. He looks up at the TV to check it out.

INSERT TV SCREEN PLAYING COMMERCIAL:

A spa commercial with a LADY getting a massage as she MOANS, more images of people getting, facials, etc...

LADY VOICE ON TV
Working hard? Breaking your back? It's time to reward yourself. Come on down to Total Spa and totally treat yourself like you deserve.

QUICK SHOTS OF VINCENT GETTING THE TOTAL REWARD TREATMENT

Vincent walks into TOTAL SPA. Vincent getting a massage by TWO FEMALE MASSEUSES. Getting a mud facial. Getting a simultaneous manicure and pedicure. Then Vincent, no clothes on, wrapped up in a giant leaf, laying on a table, cucumber slices on his eyes, as an overhead sprinkler sprinkles water on him: the new herbal osmosis treatment.

END MONTAGE

INT. CATERING BY BROOKE - KITCHEN - DAY

BROOKE
(to staff)
Okay this is a big but easy order. We need to make 200 whipped cream pies. So let's get to it.

EXT. PINERIDGE OUTDOOR FIELD - NIGHT

Vincent and Conrad roll out a large field tarp on the field.

INT. PINERIDGE LOCKER ROOM - DAY

The PLAYERS "sshh" each other so Vincent, who waits, can talk. Conrad stands beside him.

VINCENT
Even if we win our last game of the season tomorrow we'll still be tied for the second best record. Meaning we might
not make it to the championship. Regardless if we play in the championship or not I want you all to know that you've played one hell of a season. Just awesome.

The PLAYERS CHEER, STOMP, GET ROWDY.

CONRAD
So today for practice we got a special surprise for you.

EXT. PINERIDGE OUTDOOR FIELD - DAY

Vincent, Conrad, and the team stand by the edge of the field tarp, which has 200 whipped creams pies randomly arranged on it.

CONRAD
As you can see we have meticulously laid out a plethora of pies. And there's only one rule.

VINCENT
Every man for himself!

Vincent and Conrad dash on the tarp and each pick up a pie, tossing them at the surprised players. The players look at each other and rush the tarp. What happens next is an...

AMAZING SLOW MOTION PIE THROWING GAUNTLET: Everyone getting whip cream pied to the face, back, ears, etc... It's a messy fun time. The pie fun doesn't end until almost all the pies are gone, and everyone is covered in whip cream and...

Sangretti walks on the tarp, gets hit in the face with a pie. Sangretti finger swipes some pie off his face, tastes it.

EXT. HERITAGE REC CENTER - FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

PINERIDGE PLAYERS, the ones not on the field, are on the SIDELINE looking at and COUNTING DOWN with the scoreboard: Heritage 24, Pineridge 36, 4th quarter, 9 seconds, while the PLAYERS currently on the FIELD for both teams shake hands.

PINERIDGE PLAYERS
Nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one! Ahhh!

The Pineridge players jump, CHEER, CELEBRATE. Clyde bear hugs Conrad, who can barely breathe. Kenneth shakes Vincent's shoulders. The Pineridge players that were on the field run over to join the sideline celebration.

Trevor, carrying an uncovered gatorade bucket of water sneaks up behind Barry and pours it on him while other players near Barry get out the way. Barry isn't too amused and chases Trevor on the field. Trevor zig
zags toward the goal post, looking back at Barry closing in, and rams smack into the goal post. Trevor falls to the ground. DISSOLVE TO

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD TREE - NIGHT

Vincent is up the ladder NAILING the 5th trophy to the tree. It reaches the red rope. Conrad stands below with a camera.

The text "#1 Nanny" has been crossed out and written underneath is the new text: "#1 Coach"

CONRAD
Okay. Okay. Now look at me.

Vincent looks at Conrad, who SNAPS a picture of him.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - BACKYARD TREE - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent is down the tree, admiring the nailed up trophies.

CONRAD
So let me get this right. If Monroe beats Taft in their last game, we play in the championship against Rumsfield's team?

VINCENT
No. Our record is 7-2-1. Before we won today our record was 6-2-1 and we were tied with Monroe in second place. Are you listening?

CONRAD
Patronizing is unnecessary.

VINCENT
If Monroe wins their last game they'll go from 6-2-1 to 7-2-1. The same record we have. But since Monroe already beat us before, it breaks the tie breaker and they go to the championship. But if they lose they'll be 6-3-1, and we go to the championship game. Got it?

CONRAD
Oh, okay. So we need Monroe to lose. I'll include that in my prayers tonight. You think I should pray for a blowout?

Vincent shakes his head, doesn't know how to answer that.

EXT. MONROE REC CENTER - FOOTBALL FIELD/STANDS - DAY
WE INTERCUT between Vincent, Conrad, and Lambert in the STANDS and the Monroe and Taft PLAYERS on the FIELD.

LAMBERT
Which team is Monroe?

VINCENT
The green and yellow team.

LAMBERT
(stands up)
Booo you Monroe! You suck the fatty!

FANS sitting around them turn and look at them. Vincent pulls Lambert back down on the bleachers to sit him down.

VINCENT
(to fans)
He has Tourette's. It's unfortunate.
(to Lambert, sotto)
Sit down. The game hasn't even started. And tone it down. Huh?

LAMBERT
Yeah. Just showing some spirit.

CONRAD
I like it. You should keep it up.

Vincent gives Conrad a look. WE CUT TO

THE GAME STARTS: A MONROE PLAYER gets the kickoff and runs for 20 yards and is tackled. Followed by:

QUICK SHOTS OF THE GAME: A TAFT RUNNING BACK jukes around defenders to score. A MONROE RECEIVER catches a touchdown pass. A MONROE FULLBACK leaps over a pile at the goaline to score. A TAFT RECEIVER scores. Score 14-14; End of 2nd qtr.

STANDS: Lambert hands Vincent and Conrad mirrors.

VINCENT
What are these for?

LAMBERT
To reflect the sunlight in the Monroe players' eyes. Strategy.

The FANS sitting near them, turn and look at them, aghast.

VINCENT
(to fans)
It's the Tourette's talking.
Vincent snatches all the mirrors and puts them away.

QUICK SHOTS OF THE GAME: A MONROE PLAYER is hit so hard his helmet pops off. Lambert throws cheese balls into Conrad's open mouth. TAFT SCORING TWO TOUCHDOWNS; MONROE JUST ONE.

End of game: The MONROE TEAM and TAFT TEAM shake hands. The SCOREBOARD reads: TAFT 31, Monroe 24. CUT BACK TO STANDS

LAMBERT
(repeating, doing shimmy)
Monroe sucks.

CONRAD
We're going to the championship! My prayers have been answered!

LAMBERT
Hallelujah!

INT. BROOKE'S HOUSE - KITCHEN - EVENING

Vincent stirs a milky mix in a large bowl and Brooke stirs a thick chocolate syrup mix in a bowl while giving him instructions. Other ingredients, pots, etc..., laying around.

BROOKE
Just alternate between clockwise and counterclockwise.

VINCENT
I've been wondering. What ever happened to you guys' parents? You don't have to answer if it's too personal. I understand.

BROOKE
I don't mind. About ten years ago they went on a cruise out in the Caribbean and their ship just disappeared without a trace. No trace of any wreckage, foul play, anything. Sort of like those stories you hear about the Bermuda Triangle you know. It was just like they vanished. This might sound weird but I've always had this dream that they got deserted on an island like Gilligan and are still out there somewhere.

(thinking back, emotional)
I still remember the last day we saw them. They were so happy to be going on that trip and made me promise to make sure I didn't let Johnny stay up late.

VINCENT
Sorry to ask you that.

BROOKE
No don't be. I was 18 when it happened and Johnny was 8. And ever since then I've been like the big sister and the parent figure for him. Making sure he stays on the right path. I made a vow to myself to make sure he went to college, and now since he's been accepted to University of Texas I can step back and finally say to myself yeah you did an okay job.

VINCENT
No. I think you've done great.

BROOKE
You got something on your face.

Brooke dips her finger into the bowl of mix, takes her covered finger and swipes it on Vincent's nose. She LAUGHS. He dips his finger in his bowl and returns the favor twofold. They come together and kiss, messy faces and all.

INT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - MAN CAVE - NIGHT

Conrad getting dressed, almost done. Vincent on couch.

CONRAD
Sure you don't wanna go? It's Chuck Norris the Musical. Doesn't get any better than that. Unless it was 3D.

VINCENT
I think I'll pass on this one.

CONRAD
Okay. You're going to miss savoring the Norris experience.

Conrad gives him a fist bump, exits with Chuck Norris chops.

MAN CAVE - LATER

Vincent watches the THREE STOOGES eating from a large bowl of popcorn, LAUGHING. THE DOORBELL RINGS. He gets up.

FRONT DOOR/LIVING ROOM

He opens the door. It's Spencer, with a PORTABLE DVD PLAYER. Spencer ducks under Vincent's arm, let's himself inside.

SPENCER
May I come in thank you.

Vincent shuts the door. Spencer scans the room, unimpressed.
VINCENT
Yeah just come on in. If you came to talk trash about the championship game you coulda waited til' next week when it actually happens. Great to see you though.

SPENCER
Still have jokes. I like that. I did come to talk about the championship game, but not to talk trash. I think you better have a seat. I have something to show you.

We CUT TO Vincent and Spencer on the couch watching a video.

INSERT VIDEO FROM DVD PLAYER

Johnny and Trevor on the Pineridge outdoor field bleachers. The video zooms in showing Johnny bending down sniffing a pile of white powdery stuff. Johnny brings his head back like he just experienced a rush, rubs his nose. It looks like he is sniffing cocaine. Johnny and Trevor laugh. BACK TO SCENE

VINCENT
Why you showing me this? What do you want?

SPENCER
Right to the point. Nice. Looks like your quarterback enjoys a little nasal activity. I want you to call your boss right now n' quit as the coach. You quit right now I promise this video won't make it to the college admissions office of your girlfriend's little brother. Oh yes, I know about him going to college and you cozying up to the sister of one of your players.

VINCENT
What? You've been spying on us!

SPENCER
Let's stick with the issue at hand.
(pulls out cellphone)
Use my phone. It has speakerphone.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Vincent, mad, looking at Spencer and holding Spencer's cell phone, which is on speakerphone, and RINGING.

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)
Hello.

VINCENT
Mr. Sangretti it's Vincent. I need to talk to you about something.
I have... I have
(glares at Spencer)
to quit as the football coach.

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)
I know you're quitting at the end of the season. We already
talked about that. Remember?

VINCENT
No. I'm quitting now. I can't coach the team for the
championship game.

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)
What! Those kids are depending on you! You can't quit now!
This is... And why can't you coach the game?

VINCENT
I'm sorry, sir. Some unforeseen circumstances came up I
can't really tell you about.

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)
Sorry doesn't cut it. And how can I expect you to work at
Buckey's dealership without you just walking away whenever
you feel like it? I'm using a big favor to get you a job
there that I could save for something else! I'm not wasting
my favor on someone who isn't dependable.

VINCENT
But-

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)
No buts. You have a choice to make. Be responsible and
finish what you started with those kids or quit and forget
about the dealership job. So which is it?

Vincent glares at Spencer, who mimics sniffing cocaine.

VINCENT
I'm going to have to quit.

I see.

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)

OPEN FRONT DOOR - MINUTES LATER

Spencer holds a DVD and DVD player. Vincent in front of him.

SPENCER
Remember, you don't say anything to anyone what happened
here tonight and I forget this home video here.

VINCENT
And how can I trust you?

SPENCER
You don't have a choice. Besides I figure you're the heart of the team. Take away the team's heart they buckle. I'm all about winning baby. It's nothing personal. Well maybe just a little. Here, you can keep the DVD I got plenty of copies of course.

Vincent, fuming, doesn't take the DVD Spencer holds out. Spencer drops it on the floor and exits with a smug chuckle. Vincent slams the door, sits on the couch, devastated. After a few seconds his cell in his pocket RINGS. He answers it.

VINCENT
Hello.

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)
I was just thinking about everything. I'm also going to have to suspend you from work too.

VINCENT
What! For how long?

MR. SANGRETTI (O.S.)
For now, at least a couple weeks. I can't have some of those same players seeing you working at the rec center right after you quit like nothing happened. It's not setting a good example. I'll call you when I think enough time has passed.

Vincent hangs up. He slouches down on the couch.

MONTAGE SEQUENCE - THE BLUES (WITH 'OLDIE' BLUES MUSIC TRACK)

DAY ONE BLUES

1) Vincent in the MAN CAVE depressed, throwing darts at the custom dart board, with little energy, no focus. Each dart is way off or bounces off the board. He could care less.

2) Vincent preparing stress eating meal: douses a waffle inside a bowl already filled with ice cream with maple syrup; adds chocolate syrup on top. Eats at it using large spoon.

3) Vincent holds his ringing cell phone. The caller ID says it's Brooke. He could care less right now. Puts phone aside.

DAY TWO BLUES
4) Vincent and Conrad at home watching a sitcom. Conrad is cracking up and trying to cheer him up. Vincent remains sour.

5) Vincent pours milk into a punch bowl already containing a full cake. He looks at his ringing cell phone; the caller ID says it's Brooke. He ignores the call. Starts eating meal.

6) Vincent tosses and turns in his sleep. He wakes up and looks over at the boxing gloves on the wall.

D A Y T H R E E B L U E S

7) Conrad and the team at Pineridge running laps. Conrad runs amongst them trying to cheer them up. They look sour also.

8) Vincent placing the last bits of his ripped up cardboard trophies into the trash bin outside his house.

9) Vincent walks along a sidewalk downtown. A few people bump into him; he doesn't care. He stops when he comes upon a GROUP OF OLD BLACK MEN (B.B. King-looking, various instruments: harmonica, guitar, etc...) singing the blues. Vincent rocks back and forth, connecting deeply with the pain in their voices. Sensing Vincent's blues, one of the men gets Vincent to join them. Vincent sings the old-school blues song on the music track so it's if he's singing the music track. PASSING PEDESTRIANS put money into a shoe box on the ground. END MONTAGE

I N T . C U N N I N G H A M ' S - N I G H T

A small bar. Vincent sits at the bar. He was drunk 3 beers ago. A TV behind the bar plays an episode of "I Love Lucy." A DRUNK MAN (40's) sits two stools over. Vincent finishes his latest MUG, SLAMS it down, calls to BARTENDER behind the bar:

VINCENT
More beverage!

BARTENDER
You think you had enough buddy?

VINCENT
Fulfill my glass!

THE BARTENDER shakes his head, takes Vincent's mug to fill it up. THE DRUNK MAN two stools down, moves next to Vincent.

DRUNK MAN
You wanna know why I got fired?

Vincent doesn't answer, but all the drunk man heard was yes.
DRUNK MAN
I embezzled their money. But they'll never find it. I buried it. Do you think the sun is real?

THE BARTENDER returns, gives Vincent a filled mug.

DRUNK MAN
Why aren't you talking to me! Are you a mute? Mute. Are you mute?

THE BARTENDER changes the TV, as he flips channels he passes one playing "The Longest Yard" - the 1974 version.

DRUNK MAN
Go back! Back! I love that movie!

THE BARTENDER flips back, until he gets back to "The Longest Yard" -- showing a football game scene, which will continue to play-- and the DRUNK MAN shouts to him:

DRUNK MAN
Stop! Yeah! This movie!

THE BARTENDER goes off. Vincent sips his refill.

DRUNK MAN
When my son was born I bought this movie for his birthday. Do you like football? I love football I do too.

Vincent looks up at the TV, seeing the game being played. He frowns. Then throws all the liquid in his mug on the TV screen. THE DRUNK MAN is shocked, gets up to leave.

DRUNK MAN
You're a bad man.

Vincent snarls at the man as he leaves. When he looks up THE BARTENDER, pissed, stands there with his arms crossed.

EXT. BROOKE'S HOUSE - BEDROOM

Brooke reads a book. Her CELL RINGS. She answers. It's Vincent at THE BAR, THE BARTENDER stands by him. We INTERCUT.

BROOKE
Hello?

VINCENT
Can I speak to Brooke?

BROOKE
Vincent? Is this you?
BROOKE
Can you give Brooke a message? Can you tell her to come
pick me up at-
    (to BARTENDER)
Where am I?

BARTENDER
Cunningham's. Downtown.

VINCENT
Cunningham's. Towndown.

BROOKE
You sound drunk? How much have you been drinking?

VINCENT
Two....morrow. Conrad won't answer his phone. Can you give
Brooke a message to pick me up? And tell her I'm sorry I
didn't answer her call apologize.

Brooke hangs up. She gets her coat and exits the bedroom.

INT. CUNNINGHAM'S - LATER

Brooke, concerned, enters. She sees Sandy and THE BARTENDER standing by
a slumped down Vincent. Brooke goes over to them.

BROOKE
Hey, he just called me to come pick him up.

SANDY
You must be Brooke. Nice to meet you. I'm Sandy. His
mother.

VINCENT
Hey, it's Brooke. How are you? Do you like that question?

Brooke and Sandy shake hands. Odd 1st meeting circumstances.

SANDY
Help me get him outta here to the car will you?

Sandy and Brooke carry Vincent in between them out the bar.

INT. SANDY'S HOUSE - VINCENT'S CHILDHOOD BEDROOM - MORNING

Vincent wakes up, with a terrible hangover. Gets out of bed.

STAIRWAY/LIVING ROOM
He makes his way slowly downstairs to the LIVING ROOM. He is met by Sandy. He stands in the floor, rubbing his head.

SANDY
So you're finally up?

VINCENT
What happened? How'd I get here?

SANDY
We brought you here.

VINCENT
We?

Brooke comes out the kitchen with a tray containing a fresh gourmet breakfast. She gives it to Sandy, who sits down.

SANDY
Thank you. Yes we. Brooke stayed the night last night.

Brooke walks up to Vincent. She clubs him on the shoulder and then immediately kisses him.

VINCENT
What was that for?

BROOKE
The hit was for not telling me about that video with Johnny and the kiss is for what you did.

VINCENT
How'd you know about the video?

Brooke picks up the DVD off a nearby table.

BROOKE
You told us all about it last night. And even where you put it. We got Conrad to bring it over.

SANDY
Never could handle your alcohol.

BROOKE
(putting on coat, stern)
C'mon.

VINCENT
Where are we going? Can I get breakfast too?

BROOKE
To get to the bottom of this video. No.
SANDY
(tasting her food)
Oh, I like her.

EXT. BROOKE'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM

Brooke, Vincent, and Johnny, watching the video of him and Trevor. Brooke glares at Johnny, wanting an explanation.

JOHNNY
(laughing, amused)
I can't believe this. Let me get my laptop.

LIVING ROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Johnny plays the DVD on his laptop using professional video viewing/editing software. Brooke and Vincent stand there.

JOHNNY
Now watch this when I zoom in.

INSERT VIDEO PLAYING ON LAPTOP

Johnny pauses the video. Zooms in. Selects an area, zooms in more, just like CSI cops do. There, in high definition, clear as day, is a bottle labeled "Toughman Smelling Salt" right next to Johnny and Trevor. BACK TO SCENE.

JOHNNY
I can't believe you thought I was doing drugs. Me and Trevor were just trying to see who could sniff the smelling salt the longest. Wow. I can even take a drug test if you want. Very disappointed in you two.

Brooke is a little embarrassed. Vincent is flat out shocked.

INT. SANGRETTI'S OFFICE - DAY

Vincent has Johnny's laptop, and is showing Sangretti the same exact zoomed-in video image we just saw.

SANGRETTI
I can understand why you did what you did. It was admirable. Perhaps looking back I did come down on you a little too hard, but you know how I feel about obligation. I'll call Buckey right now and tell him to forget about me telling him to not give you the job.
VINCENT
That's not necessary.

MR. SANGRETTI
What do you mean?

VINCENT
These past few days I've been able to do a lot of thinking. I can't lie, the thought about losing the job at Buckey's dealership crossed my mind a few times. But what really bugged me, what really kept me down was not being able to coach anymore and being away from the team. Not working here the last few days made me realize how much I love working here with the kids. So if you would allow it, I would like to keep my job working here, and also fill in as the permanent football coach?

Vincent awaits an answer. After a few moments, a stern-faced Sangretti finally smiles, and couldn't be prouder at him.

MR. SANGRETTI
Welcome back.

VINCENT
A raise would be nice though.

MR. SANGRETTI
I think I can arrange that.

Mr. Sangretti and Vincent shake hands, smiling.

INT. ELMWOOD REC' CENTER - SPENCER'S OFFICE

Giant pictures of Spencer from his Arena League playing days fill the walls. In one pic he does the Heisman pose. Spencer sits behind his desk, nonchalant, hands behind his head. Vincent stands in front of him, drops the DVD on his desk.

VINCENT
And you can have your little spy video back. The only thing it shows is them sniffing smelling salt. It's right there for you to see if you zoom in.

SPENCER
Maybe so. It doesn't matter anyway. I whipped you before. I'll whip you again like a ugly stepchild. I've won nine out of the last eleven championships. I can't be beat.

VINCENT
I'm not great at math, but if you've only won nine out of eleven doesn't it mean you lost twice?
Spencer thinks extremely hard for a comeback, getting mad.

SPENCER
I don't care about your algebra! Get out of my office!

VINCENT
My pleasure. See you on the field Saturday. Enjoy your lunch.

Vincent exits. Spencer, pissed, returns to eating a sub on his desk. He chews for a bit, then throws sub across the room

SPENCER
What an asshole.

INT. DR. HOLLAND’S OFFICE

Vincent and Dr. Holland in the middle of a session.

DR. HOLLAND
That's a good question. It's possible that you were looking at the level of your occupational achievement and using it as a measuring stick for your own self worth. But adhering to that type of logic is flawed because one's occupation isn't an absolute reflection of one's worth or merit. What really matters most when it comes to occupation is that you find a job that you enjoy doing.

VINCENT
Yeah. You know I just feel different...better. It's hard to explain it. I don't know. It's like I feel lighter, like some weight has been lifted off me.

DR. HOLLAND
I know exactly the feeling you're talking about. You've probably heard this saying before. Sometimes you have to take two steps back to take one step forward. I believe you're now on that step forward. And I have another saying for you. One that uses your American football terminology. Whenever negative things are starting to weigh you down face 'em head on and

(a dramatic pause)

Just blitz the interference.

VINCENT
I like that. I think-

Hoffa flies back in the open office window onto his perch. They look over at the owl, who has brought something back.

VINCENT
Hoffa's back.
DR. HOLLAND
See, told you he'd be right back.

VINCENT
What's he got? Is that a squirrel?

They go to Hoffa, who drops the object. Holland inspects it.

VINCENT
Be careful it might be alive!

DR. HOLLAND
(picks it up)
It's a toupee.

Hoffa has scalped some poor bald-headed victim.

EXT. VINCENT'S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT
Vincent pokers a big fire in the fireplace. Conrad appears.

CONRAD
I was thinking about starting up the fireplace too. It is a little chilly tonight.

VINCENT
That's not why I started it.

CONRAD
Why'd you start it?

VINCENT
Wait here, and you'll see.

Vincent goes off. Conrad pokers the fire. Vincent returns with the boxing gloves from his wall, throws them in fire. They talk, watching the gloves as they melt down.

CONRAD
What are you doing? I thought you loved those gloves.

VINCENT
I said they were important to me. But they were important for all the wrong reasons. I've been using them as motivation to prove my dad wrong that I would never amount to much. But I'm done with all that. It's time to move on. Now let's go finish prepping for this game tomorrow!

CONRAD
Yeah! That's what I'm talking bout!

Vincent and Conrad leave. We stay with the burning gloves.
INT. STADIUM LOCKER ROOM - GAME DAY

Vincent, Conrad, and the team gather around. Vincent begins with the converse of his dad's speech from earlier.

VINCENT
C'mon gather around. Winning isn't everything. Second, or even third place aint too bad either. What matters is: You play hard! You play with confidence! You play together! Now Pineridge on three! 1! 2! 3!

PLAYERS
Pineridge!

EXT. SMALL LOCAL STADIUM - GAME DAY

The Pineridge team runs onto the field as fans cheer. Sandy and Brooke, sit together in the packed stands. Spencer looks over at them with disgust. Vincent has a word with Johnny.

VINCENT
They're a good team. But, I like ours better. Let's take it to 'em.

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE: PINERIDGE HAS THE BALL

RORY
A new quarterback! I'mma break you!

JOHNNY
Ready! Fly 95! Hike!

Johnny gets the snap, connects with Deacon on a 20 yard pass. Shots of fans, players cheering, which we continually show.

JIM - 20 YARD TOUCHDOWN RUN

Gets the pitch from Johnny. Takes it in for the score from the 20 after breaking a few tackles. Fans, players cheer.

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK: LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK
Set! Hut! Hut!

Gets the snap. Drops back. Completes a long pass. The receiver gets knocked out of bounds.
ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK

Eagle 42! Set! Set! Hut!

Gets the snap. Escapes from Clyde's stretched hands to avoid the sack. Fires off a touchdown pass to complete the drive.

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS - OF THE FIRST QUARTER

Mixed with shots of the game clock winding down in the 1st quarter with the game staying tied at 7-7. Vincent and Spencer patrolling their sideline with intensity. Johnny completing passes to receivers. The Elmwood Quarterback doing the same. Jim picking up hard short yardage. Kenneth punts.

JOHNNY - ON THE FIELD IN HUDDLE

Looks over at Vincent on the sideline who gives him a play using hand signals. Johnny nods, turns back to huddle.

    JOHNNY
    We're going deuce flag. On three.

    ALL PLAYERS IN HUDDLE
    Break!

JOHNNY - LINE OF SCRIMMAGE - AT THEIR OWN 30 YARDLINE

    JOHNNY
    Blue 72! Set! Hike! Hike! Hike!

The ball gets snapped. Deacon takes off on a straight line.
Rory gets around his man. Makes his way towards Johnny.
Deacons makes a cut toward the sideline.
Johnny pump fakes right, turns left and launches a pass to Deacon just before Rory sacks him hard.
Deacon makes the catch, his momentum takes him out of bounds.

    RORY
    I'm here to put you to sleep all day baby! Woooooo!

    SPENCER
    That's my boy.
SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS: PINERIDGE MOVING THE BALL

Jim picking up more hard yardage, running over people. One play Johnny runs 8 yards, slides to avoid a hit. Vincent on sideline giving encouragement - "Nice run" "Yeah" etc...

VINCENT AND CONRAD - SIDELINE

CONRAD

What you think?

Vincent looks at the SCOREBOARD: Elmwood 14, Pineridge 7, 2nd quarter, 4 minutes 20 seconds left, and it's 4th and 8. Vincent thinks hard. Then turns to Kenneth.

VINCENT

We're goin' field goal. Kenneth.

KENNETH: SET TO KICK FIELD GOAL

The ball is snapped. Kenneth's kick misses to the left. The Pineridge fans in the stands let out an "Aw." Shots of Brooke and Sandy; and Sangretti in another section in the crowd.

Kenneth returns to the sideline. He takes his helmet off and throws it to the ground, mad. Vincent beside him, clapping.

VINCENT

It's one kick. Don't worry about it. Stay focused. Think positive.

TREVOR: ON DEFENSE AT SAFETY

Focused on the Elmwood Quarterback, who gets the snap and launches a pass. Trevor darts across the field and breaks up the play by batting the ball away from the intended receiver.

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK: LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK

Hut! Hut!

Gets the snap. Hands the ball off the running back who runs for 30 yards down to the 15 yard line before being tackled. The Elmwood players on the field rush down to try and run another play real quick. Vincent calls a timeout.

SCOREBOARD: Elmwood 14, Pineridge, 7, 2nd qtr, 8 secs left.
VINCENT AND TEAM ON PINERIDGE SIDELINE

VINCENT
They're going for it. Let's try and stop 'em here and get a little momentum going into the next half.

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK: LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK
Ready! Set! Hut! Hut!

He gets the snap. Gets great protection. Looking for it. Trevor is sticking to his man like glue.

The Elmwood quarterback finds an endzone target, fires. Trevor leaves his man trying to break up the play, kicking up turf, but can't get there. The other receiver catches it.

The refs signal touchdown. REF #1 BLOWS HIS WHISTLE. The gameclock is at 0. Elmwood 21, Pineridge 7. Spencer moonwalks on his sideline. A good moonwalk too. End of 2nd qtr.

PINERIDGE SIDELINE

We go right to the start of the second half. Players are hyping themselves and each other up. Barry can't hype himself because Conrad stands in front of him doing it for him.

CONRAD
They can't stop you! They can't stop you! How they gonna stop you if they can't catch you! You're lightning! N' it's time to strike!

EXT. FIELD - BARRY

Waits back for the kickoff. Determined. Wiggling fingers.

ANGLE ON: The Elmwood kicker kicks off the ball. The Elmwood special team players rush down the field. The ball sails...

BARRY catches the ball. Dashes forward. He stutter steps then side steps past the first defender. He hops backwards to avoid the next defender stretching out to tackle him, and cuts right. He does the same to the next defender. They can't even touch him. Running ahead, most of the defenders are now loaded up on one side, so he cuts back to the other side, finds a hole and burst through it speeding past every defender near. He cuts to the sideline. Spencer going bezerk.

SPENCER
Get him! Tackle him!
No defender has a chance to catch Barry, as he darts up the sideline. It happens to be the same sideline Spencer's team is on. Spencer nonchalantly steps up to the boundary line, places his foot on the field, a coy tripping attempt. Barry reaches SPENCER'S FOOT ON THE GROUND and easily jumps over it to continue into the ENDZONE for the score. Barry spins the ball on the ground like a top. REF #2 runs over to Spencer.

REF #2
Stay off the field.

SPENCER
What? I didn't do anything.

TREVOR - ON DEFENSE AT SAFETY

Looks at SCOREBOARD: Elmwood 21, Pineridge 14, 3rd qtr, 7 minutes, 19 seconds. Returns focus to Elmwood Quarterback.

TREVOR
What's up? Where you goin'?

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK
Hut! Hut!

The quarterback gets the snap, looks for targets, and launches a high floater to one of them running downfield. Trevor eyes the ball in the air. So does Vincent. Trevor darts toward the throw. The way the ball was floated allows him to make up ground, and he leaps in front of the intended receiver right before the catch for the interception. The receiver touches him down. Trevor gets up, excited.

The Elmwood quarterback returns to his sideline. Spencer snatches his jersey and gets all up in his face.

SPENCER
What are you doing! What was that!

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS: OF THIRD QUARTER PROGRESSING

All mixed with shots of the time clock counting down in the 6, 5, 4, and 3 minute marks with the score staying Elmwood 21, Pineridge 14. Johnny throws an interception. Vincent talking to Jim on the sideline. Spencer yelling at his players. Johnny completes a pass. Sangretti, Brooke cheering.

JOHNNY: LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

JOHNNY
Blue 22! Blue 22! Hike!
Johnny fakes a handoff to Jim. Throws a quick slant to a receiver that picks up 6 yards.


**SPENCER**
He thinks this is baseball? Idiot.

**PINTERIDGE HUDDLE PLAYERS**
Break!

They return to the line of scrimmage. Clyde covers Rory.

**JOHNNY**
Set! Hike! Hike!

The ball gets snapped. Clyde and Rory come together. Johnny waits for his target to get open. Rory spins around Clyde and bulls toward Johnny who doesn't see him coming. Rory crushes Johnny from behind, who manages to hold onto the ball.

**RORY**
Yahhhhhhh! Stay down!

**QUICK SHOT** of a concerned Brooke looking on from the stands.

Johnny slow to get up, gets helped up by Clyde.

**TREVOR: ON DEFENSE AT SAFETY**
Ready to cause more havoc. Waiting for the snap.

**ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK**
Beachboy 32! Beachboy 32! Hut!

Trevor picks up a streaking Elmwood Receiver going downfield. The Elmwood Quarterback launches a deep throw to that same receiver. Trevor runs side by side with him. But the pass is perfect, thrown to where only the receiver can catch it, he does. The receiver bumps Trevor as he catches it. Trevor falls. The receiver runs to the endzone untouched to score. Spencer does the robot dance.

Vincent finally shows signs of worry as he looks up at the scoreboard: Elmwood 28, Pineridge 14, 3rd qtr, 1 mins 40 secs. Also quick shots of worried Pineridge players on bench.

**CLYDE: LINE OF SCRIMMAGE**

**CLYDE**

193
Gotta get a sack. Time for a sack.

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK
Set! Hut! Hut! Hut!

The ball is snapped. The Elmwood Quarterback hands off to the running back, who fumbles. The ball rolling on the ground. Players rush toward the ball. Jumping and piling on it.

But the ball pops out from under the pile, none of them aware of it, as more players from both teams jump onto the pile. An Elmwood Player unknowingly kicks the ball as he runs to join the pile, sending it rolling 15 yards downfield.

All the players are focused on jumping onto the pile, not the ball. All except Clyde. Everything that happens next with Clyde is in SLOW MOTION and with DISTORTED VOICES.

Clyde runs down to where the ball has stopped as all the other players jump onto the pile in the b.g.

He reaches the ball. Bends to pick it up. But, crawling on the ball is: a large bee. He snatches his hand back, in fear.

He gingerly kicks at the ball, scared, which does nothing to move the bee. Both benches are screaming and pointing for the players on the pile to go get the ball. The players on the pile look up and point down to Clyde.

Clyde sees the players on the pile pointing and starting to come his way. He musters his courage and kicks the ball harder. The bee flies off the ball coming right at him.

CLYDE

Nooooooooooo!

His eyes widen, seeing his fear flying right at him. He lets out a PRIMAL ROAR and smacks the crap out of the attacking bee. He bends down, grabs the ball, and runs upfield. Rumbling 30 yards before they can finally bring the big man down.

BACK TO REGULAR SPEED as we CUT to Clyde returning to the sideline and getting mobbed for coming up with the ball.

EXT. FIELD - JIM

Running while stiff arming one defender, dashing ahead, throws the next defender off him, still going, bouncing off another, and finally being brought down 12 yards later.

PINERIDGE OFFENSE PLAYERS IN HUDDLE
PLAYERS

Break!

They line up. Line of scrimmage 35 yards from the endzone.

JOHNNY

Set! Hike! Hike!

Johnny gets the snap. Deacon and the other receivers jet off.

Deacon turns it up another gear, gets in front of his man.

Johnny sidesteps the oncoming defender and rolls to buy time. He launches a tight spiral to Deacon. Deacon, two full strides in front of his man, looks over his shoulder at the ball coming his way. The endzone 10 yards ahead. The ball is dropping in front of him. He leaps, feet off the ground, horizontal in the air, extends his arms, and catches the ball, sliding into the endzone.

Shots of: The Pineridge bench going crazy, fans cheering, Spencer stomping on the ground, irate.

KENNETH

Makes the extra point. And we see the SCOREBOARD: Elmwood 28, Pineridge 21, 4th quarter, 9 mins, 14 secs.

Kenneth returns to the sideline. Vincent meets him.

VINCENT

See. Just keep your head in the game. You haven't missed an extra point yet. You're doing good out there.

Kenneth allows himself to smile, and forget about his earlier mistake.

SERIES OF QUICK SHOTS: OF FOURTH QUARTER WINDING DOWN

All mixed with shots of the clock winding down in the 8,7,6,5 minute marks with the score staying Elmwood 28, Pineridge 21. Vincent and Conrad on the sideline emotionally into the game. Spencer patrolling his sideline, heated, stealing looks over at Vincent. Johnny overthrowing and making a few incomplete passes. Pineridge defenders tackling Elmwood offensive players and vice versa. Neither team giving up much.

SPENCER: ON THE SIDELINE

Isn't moonwalking anymore. He berates his players.
SPENCER
Stop letting him catch the ball! Let your sacks drop and hit him! I am not about to lose this game!

Spencer snatches BOWEN (18, defensive player) by the jersey.

SPENCER
Bowen, I want you take him out!

BOWEN
But coach-

SPENCER
Buh, buh, nothing! You take him out! Or I'll tell the team about your dirty little secret! Now you all get out there and get it done!

The defense takes the field. Rory comes back to Spencer.

RORY
I'll take him out coach.

SPENCER
Good man.

EXT. FIELD - JOHNNY AND OFFENSE IN HUDDLE

JOHNNY
It's right here for us to take it.

He eyes all the players in the huddle. Deacon one of them. As Johnny talks we see that one of Deacon's shoes is untied.

JOHNNY
Let's do it for us, and do it for coach. Shotgun 20 on three!

PLAYERS
Break!

They break from the huddle and go on the line of scrimmage.

RORY
Isn't lined up on the line. He's playing safety now.

JOHNNY
Green 42! Set! Hike! Hike!
Johnny gets the snap. We follow Deacon as he easily beats his man and runs a cross route upfield. Johnny launches a pass to Deacon, who is open. As the ball is in the air dropping to him we go to SLOW MOTION and see Bowen charging from the left and Rory charging from the right on a collision course to sandwich Deacon, who has no idea because he is looking at the ball dropping down to him. It doesn't look good at all. Just as Rory and Bowen are a few feet from contact we:

NEW ANGLE: See Deacon's feet as he trips over his untied shoelace and starts falling backwards.

Deacon falls out of the way as Bowen lowers his head and crashes into Rory's knee. The same knee Rory just lifted, hoping to ram it into Deacon. BACK TO REGULAR SPEED.

The ball drops the ground. So does Rory and Bowen.

RORY
(grabbing his knee)
Oh my knee. I'm gonna cry!

ELMWOOD SIDELINE

Rory is brought back; he is between two players with his arms around them since he can't walk on his own because of the injury. Spencer is combustible, MUMBLING weird word combos.

SPENCER

SCOREBOARD: Elmwood 28, Pineridge 21, 4qtr, 4 mins, 37 sec.

PINERIDGE SIDELINE: VINCENT PEP SPEECH TO TEAM

VINCENT
When I was a kid there was this one race where I never made it to the finish line. But I want you to look out there to the field.

Players look back and forth from the field to Vincent, as his words soak in, and they buy into it.

VINCENT
Today your finish line is out there on that field. We're in the home stretch right now n' the finish line is right there in front of us. Now all we gotta do is cross it. So everybody get your hands in here and let me hear you say finish line on three. 1,2,3!

ALL PLAYERS
(put their hands in)
Finish line!

All the players are hyped. The hyped offense runs out to the field. After they go off, Conrad, impressed, comes to him.

CONRAD
Man that was good. Where'd that come from?

VINCENT
I wrote it last night.

JOHNNY: LINE OF SCRAMMAGE

We hear the chants of fans who have broken out into the chorus of "Let's go Pineridge let's go"

JOHNNY
Ready! Set! Hike! Hike!

Johnny gets the snap. Bouncing in the pocket waiting for an open receiver. They are all being covered well. A defender less skilled than Rory comes towards him and he easily avoids the sack and breaks out running through a huge hole. Johnny continues running upfield, getting great blocking, some at the last second, all the way to the endzone basically untouched. Touchdown on a 35 yard run. He spikes the ball.

Shots of the Pineridge bench, Brooke, Sandy, and other fans cheering. Spencer takes off his belt, whips the ground.

PINERIDGE SIDELINE

The offense return and are mobbed. Kenneth jumping on them.

VINCENT
Kenneth you gotta go kick.

KENNETH
Oh.

Kenneth and the special team players take the field.

KENNETH - SET TO MAKE THE EXTRA POINT

Now you can hear a pin drop. Kenneth awaits for the snap. Shots of anxious players, Vincent, and Conrad on sideline.

KENNETH
(repeating)
Through the middle.
The ball gets snapped. The kick is...GOOD. Tie game. SCOREBOARD: 28-28, 4th qtr, 3 mins, 49 sec. Shots of the cheering fans, Kenneth and the players returning to the Pineridge sideline getting lots of high five, etc...

ELMWOOD RUNNING BACK

being tackled for a 2 yard run at midfield. Spencer calls a timeout. 34 seconds left. 3rd and 5

ELMWOOD SIDELINE

SPENCER
All we need is 5 stinking yards! C'mon! They can't be that good!
(grabs running back)
Now go out there and get me my 5 yards! I want my trophy!

PINERIDGE SIDELINE

Vincent and Conrad and a few players hype up the defense.

CONRAD
Let's get this stop!

PLAYERS
Yeah!

VINCENT
C'mon guys.

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK: LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK
Ready! Red 42! Set! Hut! Hut!

He gets the snap and hands off to the running back, who is tackled on a short yardage run. It's close.

The refs bring out the chains to measure if it was enough. Both sidelines are tense waiting for the verdict. Nope. A few more inches are needed. It's 4th and inches.

The Pineridge bench cheers. Spencer calls a timeout. 27 seconds left in the 4th qtr. Decision time for Spencer.

ELMWOOD SIDELINE
Spencer pissed, hollering at the running back and offense.

**SPENCER**
You couldn't reach your arm two inches more! You have to know where the line's at! What are you, remedial! And the rest of you! Where were the blocks! You're killing me! Now I want you to go get that first down! You hear me! You go get it!

**ELMWOOD OFFENSIVE PLAYER**
Coach, we should punt. If we don't get it they have two more time outs with time left on the clock.

Spencer is shocked at this insubordination. He begins de-jerseying the player (takes the players jersey off)

**SPENCER**
Give me this jersey. Go sit on the bench. You don't deserve to play.

The player sulks to the bench. Spencer turns to team.

**SPENCER**
Punt? I'm not punting. You play to win the game! You hear me! You play to win the game! So go win it!

The offense takes the field. Spencer sends a replacement player to take the place of the benched player, and whispers the new play call he wants to him before the player goes off.

**EXT. FIELD**

The offense and defense line up for the crucial play.

**ELMWOOD QUARTERBACK**
Red 47! Set! Hut! Hut! ... Hut!

The ball is snapped. The quarterback keeps the ball and tries to push his way forward. But the wall in front of him doesn't move, as the Pineridge line pushes them backwards. The quarterback falls backwards for a 2 yard loss.

Vincent calls a timeout. The Pineridge players on the bench and field are jubilant. Spencer's head is down in his hands.

**PINERIDGE SIDELINE**

The players can barely keep still. 22 seconds in 4th qtr.

**VINCENT**
Okay. We got one more time out and we can still go to overtime. So let's not panic out there. Jim. How you feeling?

   JIM
   (smiling)
   Like a bulldozer.

JOHNNY: LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

The Elmwood defense is set up for a deep threat. Perfect.

   JOHNNY
   Blue 99! Blue 99! Hike! Hike!

The ball is snapped. He pitches off to Jim. Jim runs left towards the sideline, defenders await. He cuts all the way back across the right and dashes forward through a gap. Jukes a defender. Stiff arms another. And gets tackled after picking up a 17 yard run. Now just 34 yards from the endzone.

VINCENT - PINERIDGE SIDELINE

Waits for the clock to go down to four seconds. He calls his last time out. Conrad and the offense stand by him.

   VINCENT
   Trevor, Barry, get over here. It's time to pull out the special.

Trevor and Barry join the offense as Vincent goes over the "special" with them again. We can't hear what is being said.

ELMWOOD SIDELINE

   SPENCER
   All we gotta do is get this one stop and we go to overtime! You hear me! One stop! I want you to double team that receiver! I don't care if you have to triple team him! Don't let him get open!

EXT. FIELD

This could be it. Both teams approach the line of scrimmage. Elmwood begins setting up for deep coverage prevention. But Pineridge does something peculiar.
The Pineridge players line up in the A-11 formation: Johnny and Trevor standing 7 yards behind the line of scrimmage across from each other, and the remaining players, including Barry and Deacon, on the line of scrimmage as if they were all wide receivers, with one center. The Elmwood players are confused already.

REF #2 is near Spencer on the sideline.

SPENCER
Hey, what are they doing? Timeout!

REF #2
You don't have any more timeouts.

The Elmwood players confusingly shift around becoming disorganized. Two Elmwood defenders position to double team Deacon. Spencer runs toward and hollers at a deep defender.

SPENCER
Go to the middle! Go!

As the deep defender moves up, the ball gets snapped to Trevor on a silent snap count. Elmwood is all confused.

Barry, Deacon, and three other offensive players take off downfield. Deacon still getting double teamed.

Trevor jogs up a few yards pretending he is going to run, stops and pump fakes to a receiver, then turns and throws a wobbly pass backwards to Johnny.

The two defenders swarm Deacon. But not only is Barry lightning fast, his legs are pretty fresh compared to the other defensive players. To make matters worse the A-11 formation has caused the Elmwood defense to get out of wack, which makes it not that hard at all for Barry to cut and find an open space on the field to set himself up.

As Johnny waits for the right moment, an Elmwood defender comes for him. But Trevor is there and makes the crucial block as Johnny rolls out of the way and launches a tight spiral to a wide open Barry who:

catches the ball in the endzone. Touchdown! Game over. Pineridge wins! Pineridge wins! Score: 34, 28.

PINERIDGE BENCH

All the players are going crazy. Conrad bear hugs a jubilant Vincent. The offense runs back over and joins the celebration. High fives, hugs, jumping, yelling, etc...

Sandy and Brooke appear. Johnny runs to Brooke, hugs her.
BROOKE
You played great.

Johnny lets go of her and is immediately mobbed by Jim, yelling and shaking him. It's pandemonium all around.

Vincent sees Brooke and goes over to her.

VINCENT
We did it!

He picks her up and twirls her around. He puts her down, and a hand comes on his shoulder from behind.

COACH JOE (O.S.)
Now that was a good game.

Vincent turns around and sees him.

VINCENT
Hey, I didn't know you were here.

COACH JOE
Yup. Saw the whole thing.

Conrad comes over, hugging both Vincent and Coach Joe.

CONRAD
This is the second happiest day of my life!

Brooke and Sandy, by each other, look at the celebration.

EXT. FIELD - SAME TIME

Spencer walks onto the empty field. He stands there in disbelief, and then drops to his knees, where he will stay.

Annabelle appears over him. She throws down a bunch of large black and white photos of: Spencer with different women going on dates, making out, etc... She also holds some papers.

Spencer picks up some of the photos, shocked that she knows of his adultery. The spying tables have been turned.

SPENCER
What is this?

ANNABEL
(smiling, she's been waiting for this)
Means for divorce. Here's the papers.
She throws down the divorce papers. Spencer looks at them.

SPENCER
You can't divorce me!

ANNABEL
(calm, confident)
Shut up. Your days of trying to order me around are over. See you in court shit stack.

She walks away, confident, happier than ever.

SPENCER
Go! I don't need you! I don't need anyone!

His life sucks right now. With some photos in one hand, divorce papers in other, he looks up to the sky and lets out a pitiful YELL.

PINE RIDGE SIDELINE

Players still celebrating, cheering. Vincent and Conrad stand by each other. Before they know it they are both hoisted up by all the players and are passed along over the players' heads as Queen's "We Are The Champions" starts playing.

Sandy, Brooke, Coach Joe, and now Sangretti stand beside each other, smiling, looking at the players pass Vincent and Conrad over their heads. But this only last for about 10 seconds because WE IMMEDIATELY CUT TO

INT. LAMBERT'S LIVING ROOM

With Queen's "We Are the Champions" still playing.

Lambert changes the radio station on his radio, and Queen's "We Are the Champions" stops playing and switches to a dance song on the radio that Lambert changes it to.

Lambert starts dancing and continues reading a newspaper article that we see: titled "Elmwood Coach Fired After Cheating Scandal Exposed" with a large photo of a disgraced Spencer yelling at the photographer.

EXT. OCEAN SURFACE

We travel over the ocean surface. Surrounded by water. Nothing else. We continue traveling and come upon a beach.

EDGE OF BEACH
STEVE AND TERRY (50's) clothed in garments made from palm tree leaves and seashells, sit on the beach. Steve's arm around Terry, his wife, looking out in the distance, thinking of far away loved ones, not too sad, just remembering.

TERRY

Holds a locket that has two pictures inside: of Brooke when she was 17 and Johnny when he was 7. Terry looks down at the pictures. Steve holds her a little tighter.

MAN'S VOICE (O.S.)
Hey Steve and Terry! It's limbo time!

We pull back and see a bunch of other ADULTS, all dressed in palm tree leaves and shells, having a luau. And they have just started a limbo contest using bamboo sticks.

Steve and Terry, look at each other and smile. Then they go join the festivities and limbo contest. A LARGE MAN starts BANGING on some makeshift congos and all the DESERTED ISLANDERS cheer and PARTY IT UP!

FADE OUT
REFERENCES


