

"AN EVERYDAY HERO"
(based on a true story)

EXT. MOUNTAINS - MORNING

A LEGEND READS: CALVI RISORTA, ITALY 1943

Nestled between the robust Italian countryside, this war torn impoverished village sports broken down homes and shacks.

EXT. SHACK - SAME

The weathered door of a two room shack FLINGS open. Emerging from within are TWO BOYS, one (6), the other, (12). Both youngsters wear tattered clothing with no shoes. They quickly make their way to a large crater in their front yard, oblivious to the camouflaged GERMAN TIGER TANK some FIFTY feet away. Several well armed GERMAN SOLDIERS sip rationed coffee adjacent to the behemoth.

SUDDENLY, AN AXIS JEEP - Pulls up to the home. Exiting from the vehicle, a GERMAN SS OFFICER and a young ITALIAN MAN. The MAN, along with two SOLDIERS, escort the OFFICER to the front porch. One of the SOLDIERS kicks in the front door.

IMMEDIATELY, THE TWO BOYS - Sprint toward their home, but are stopped midway by the SOLDIERS positioned at the tank.

INT. SHACK - SAME

A sickly MOTHER (28), stands stoically as the Italian MAN leads the OFFICER to the back wall of the building. The OFFICER kicks in the wall, revealing a small CACHE of foodstuffs. The WOMAN is dragged from the home.

EXT. SHACK - SAME

Terror can be seen in our two BOYS, as their MOTHER is lined up in front of a nearby tree. The OFFICER shoots the Italian MAN dead, then gestures to his SOLDIERS who promptly point their machine guns toward the WOMAN.

WITHOUT HESITATION - Our six year old runs toward his MOTHER, clinging onto her torn dress. One of the SOLDIERS removes the BOY. The others reluctantly cock their weapons and prepare to fire.

A MOMENT LATER - All look toward the sky. Flying overhead, dozens of AMERICAN BOMBER planes. All scatter to the sounds of 500 pound bombs filling the sky. The GERMANS head for their tank and adjacent foxholes.

THE WOMAN AND TWO BOYS - Sprint toward a makeshift foxhole, adjacent to an old WELL some SEVENTY-FIVE feet away.

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The SIX year old jumps in first, followed by his BROTHER. A large explosion sends the MOTHER onto her six year old, her right knee inadvertently hitting the boy in the back.

THE GERMAN TIGER TANK - Is hit directly by a bomb, sending it hurling into the air. All the GERMAN SOLDIERS inside the tank and adjoining foxholes are vaporized.

THE MOTHER AND HER - Two SONS lift their heads from the foxhole. The devastation is tremendous. As the family exits the foxhole, the six year old grabs his side and collapses.

INT. SHACK - DAY

Lying on his stomach, affixed to a makeshift wooden operating table, our six year old grabs his MOTHER'S hand, as his older BROTHER holds a slab of ICE on the youngster's back.

A local SURGEON sterilizes his instruments in alcohol. The older BROTHER is hesitant to remove the ice. The DOCTOR nods, the twelve year-old reluctantly concedes. The SURGEON begins the operation.

INT. SHACK - NIGHT

The shack is illuminated with two small lights. With no running water, heat or other facilities, the young BOY is covered in blankets. The DOCTOR finishes checking the BOY, glances to his MOTHER, a look of concern on his face.

EXT. MESSINA - DAY

STOCK FOOTAGE - GENERAL GEORGE PATTON'S THIRD ARMY, sporting hundreds of TANKS and thousands of AMERICAN SOLDIERS, are greeted by tens of thousands of liberated ITALIAN CIVILIANS.

INT. SHACK - DAY

Sitting on a dilapidated COT, our six year old is visited by several family members. One of the MEN approaches, reaches into a paper bag and removes a pair of USED SHOES. He then hands them to the young boy, then assists him in tying his shoes for the first time. The older BOY smiles, receiving a used pair as well.

EXT. ELLIS ISLAND - DAY

A LEGEND READS: ELLIS ISLAND, NEW YORK 1950

EXT. SHIP - DAY

Leaning against the railing of the freighter ship, CONTE BIANGIO MANO is our young BOY. Now (13), the frail teenager is very small and thin for his age.

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His BROTHER who is now (18), stands nearly 6'0" tall. He is dressed in a weathered suit. The BOYS and their MOTHER are mesmerized by the view of the STATUE OF LIBERTY in the harbor.

INT. ELLIS ISLAND - DAY

Hundreds of immigrants are herded through the turnstiles at the CUSTOMS area. Our two BOYS are tagged with a number and sent to one area, their MOTHER to another.

INT. ELLIS ISLAND - LATER THAT DAY

The MOTHER and BOYS are reunited. Approaching the exit, they are met by a MAN in his early (50's). The MOTHER hugs the MAN, her estranged HUSBAND of 15 years. The older BOY shakes his hand. Our thirteen year old stares at him confused. The HUSBAND holds up four TRAIN tickets. On the face of the tickets the inscriptions read: BUFFALO, NY. A family reunited exits the terminal.

ROLL MAIN CREDITS:

EXT. STEEL PLANT - DAY

A LEGEND READS: BUFFALO, NY AUGUST 1978.

A large orange light contrasts the otherwise blue sky. Its source, the mammoth BETHLEHEM STEEL PLANT located on the edge of mighty Lake Erie. The THREE blast furnaces are operating at full capacity, thus causing the intense light.

INT. STEEL PLANT (ELECTRIC SHOP) - DAY

A WORKER finishes attaching electrical wires to the outside casing of a motor. A second WORKER storms into the shop, approaches our MAN, tapping him hard on the shoulder.

BOBBY (V.O.)

A product of the old country, my Pop believed in two things; an honest day's work and family. Nothing was more important to him. Well almost nothing.

Our MAN removes his goggles and mask revealing: FRANK "CHEECH' MAGGIO. FRANK is a handsome, (41) year old tough-as-nails Italian immigrant. Our second WORKER begins screaming at FRANK, points to the clock on the wall it reads: 3:10PM.

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BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Pop always believed in doing more than you had to -- even if that meant being harassed by his fellow union workers at the steel plant.

At 5'4" tall, FRANK stands ready to confront the much larger MAN. A third WORKER enters, REVEAL: BRUCE KILPATRICK, (55). A stern look from BRUCE and the MAN immediately exits.

BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

That's my, Uncle Bruce. He's not my real uncle, but I call him that out of respect. He took a liking to Pop at the plant, taught him a lot of what he knows.

FRANK retrieves a container of food from his locker, hands it to BRUCE who then exits. FRANK returns to his locker. Affixed to the inside, a photo of a woman and two children.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

That's me, my mom and sister. Family was a big thing with my dad. Without family he used to say, you have nothing. Well, nothing except football. Pop ate, slept and breathed it.

FRANK removes a plaque from his locker.

BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

He carried a football plaque of Vince Lombardi with him everywhere. He loved Vince -- quoted him all the time. "It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up." That was his favorite.

INT. SPORTING GOODS STORE - DAY

FRANK approaches the counter, MESH colored shirts and helmet in one hand, a new pair of football cleats in the other. FRANK pays for the items with the last of his cash. The OWNER hands FRANK back a twenty. He refuses.

BOBBY V.O

And when came to buying equipment for his favorite pastime, Pop believed in getting the best -- even if that meant spending the family's last dime.

On his way out, FRANK assists a young BOY with tying his new football spikes.

EXT. BACKYARD - DUSK

Complete with sideline markers, hash-marks and a white striped goal line, this makeshift football field, twenty yards in length and ten yards wide, would make any grounds keeper proud. A four foot high FENCE surrounds the field. The entire area is illuminated with two large HALOGEN LIGHTS affixed to the back of a modest home.

BOBBY (V.O.)

Looking back on it, I think I may have been the only kid in America whose father built a football stadium in their backyard. It wasn't regulation or anything, but it sure seemed that way, especially to a 13 year old back then.

DRESSED IN FULL - Football gear and warming up for tonight's contest, REVEAL: BOBBY MAGGIO (13). BOBBY is a handsome boy who appears smaller and lighter than the other BOYS present.

BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

Pop would schedule games every Friday night. Kids from all over the neighborhood came to play. And we used to draw some big crowds, too. Although, I'm pretty sure they came for the Italian food. Pop was a great cook.

Positioned outside the fence, several SPECTATORS enjoy plates full of homemade macaroni and meatballs.

BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And at the end of each summer the two best teams got together for the championship. And Pop got right in there with us.

THREE-ON-THREE GAME - FRANK gives final instructions to his SON'S three MAN team. Quarterback BOBBY MAGGIO takes the snap from center and unleashes a bullet down field that sails over his receiver's head. The FANS observe an irate FRANK lash out at his son. A MAN in the crowd glares at FRANK. REVEAL: (47) year old, 6'0 tall, PASQUALE "PAT" MAGGIO.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Uncle Pasquale was the best. He always wore tailored suits, loved fast cars and kept his brother in check. Pop and my uncle were best friends. I guess going through a war together without a father around will do that to you.

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ON THE NEXT PLAY - BOBBY hits his receiver diving into the endzone for the touchdown. REVEAL: CHARLIE ANDERSON, a tall, blond haired, blue eyed boy of (14).

BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

And then there was Charlie, who never seemed to miss a beat. We were like brothers, thick as thieves we were. Charlie was around a lot, especially after losing his dad in a car accident a few years earlier.

BOBBY approaches CHARLIE. The two boys high-five each other in the endzone. BOBBY glances toward the back of the house. Standing by the refreshment table, REVEAL: CATHERINE MAGGIO, a no-nonsense fair skinned woman of (38). Next to her, REVEAL: DENISE MAGGIO, (17). DENISE resembles her mom and stands 5'7" tall. CATHERINE, a shade less.

BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

My mom and sister were always there to cheer us on. Mom knew the game pretty well. Denise -- well, she liked medicine.

EXT. BACKYARD - NIGHT

With five seconds remaining in the game the scoreboard reads, HOME 12 AWAY 16. With their team down by 4, BOBBY, CHARLIE and another BOY approach the line of scrimmage. Opposing them are, REVEAL: TOMMY 'FITZ' FITZPATRICK, a very large boy of (15). FITZ'S two teammates are even bigger.

THE BALL IS SNAPPED - BOBBY fakes a pitch, positions himself behind CHARLIE. As the two head around the corner, CHARLIE throws a great block, leaving BOBBY one-on-one with the much larger FITZ.

BOBBY GATHERS HIS COURAGE - Then plows full speed into FITZ standing at the 5 yard line. The collision knocks FITZ several yards back. BOBBY continues fighting. And with great effort, he finally crosses the goal line for the TD.

THE CROWD ERUPTS - At the home team's victory. A disappointed FRANK glares at his son.

EXT. BACKYARD - LATE NIGHT

FRANK and BOBBY are the only two remaining. It is obvious from BOBBY'S appearance that the youngster has been doing drills ever since the game ended.

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BOBBY SNAPS THE BALL TO HIMSELF - At the ten yard line. He picks up speed, heads toward his father, who digs in, pounding his chest at the 5 yard line. The two collide head on. FRANK initially gives ground, then recoils -- lifting his son high into the air, before slamming him down hard on his back into the mud. The overpowering force knocks the wind out of BOBBY.

FRANK RISES - Grabs his side, then shakes it off. An irate CATHERINE exits the house, attends to her son on the gridiron. She then glances up toward FRANK.

CATHERINE

Have you lost your mind?!

FRANK

The boy's not a little Mary, Catherine.
He just got the wind knocked out of him.
He'll be fine.

BOBBY

I'm okay, Ma.

UNCLE PAT watches from the window, as BOBBY struggles to get to one knee. FRANK takes a knee, joins him.

FRANK

"It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get up." The great Italian/American Vince Lombardi said that. Next time, complete that first pass, then run over your boy Fitz in one fell swoop.

BOBBY exits into the house. CATHERINE glares at FRANK. She then picks up a football off the ground, fires it hard at her husband, who makes a nice catch.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Excellent throw, Kiddo.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

BOBBY sits on the edge of the steps removing mud and debris from his cleats. Suddenly, he begins crying. UNCLE PAT enters. BOBBY hides his tears.

UNCLE PAT

(Italian accent, broken English)
You play good out there.

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BOBBY

Until your brother slammed me into
the ground.

UNCLE PAT approaches a wine VAT a few feet in front of him.
He pours himself a full glass, his nephew, half that. The
two drink.

UNCLE PAT

Biene'. (Pause) You walk with me
out front?

BOBBY

You got the car, Uncle Pat?

UNCLE PAT nods. BOBBY jumps up, begins changing his clothes.

UNCLE PAT

My brother, sometime he a little Patso.
You take it not personal capice? (off
nod, then) Your father -- he a good man.

UNCLE PAT and his nephew exit up the stairs.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

FRANK enters dressed in a towel. CATHERINE sits at her desk,
a stack of bills and checkbook in hand. FRANK begins
dressing. CATHERINE stands, turns on the television. On the
station, an AFRICAN/AMERICAN local TV news REPORTER.

TV REPORTER

And behind me you can see federal workers
in protective gear. Today in Niagara
falls, the Love Canal was officially
designated a federal disaster area.
One can only speculate what the level
of contamination will be in the years
to come.

CATHERINE glances at the television then back to FRANK.

FRANK

Again with this, Catherine? (Off look)
A toxic leak at some dumb canal has
nothing to do with my safety at a
steel plant thirty-miles away.

CATHERINE

They have radiation -- you have asbestos.

FRANK

I wear my mask.

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FRANK resumes dressing. We observe for the first time his back. On it, several inches below his left shoulder, a three inch hole with a large scar. CATHERINE glances at the scar, then returns to her paperwork.

CATHERINE

What time can you start tonight?

FRANK

Not til' one-thirty. Recchio says I'm bad for business.

FRANK continues getting ready.

CATHERINE

You can't keep this pace up, Frank.

FRANK

What choice do I have?

CATHERINE

I could --

FRANK lashes out at her.

FRANK

You could nothing! No wife of mine is getting a job. You're a good mother, that's the most important thing in life. Remember, family's all we got.

CATHERINE

Well, family's not going to pay our gas and electric bill. (pause) We have to cut back somewhere -- you're spending way too much on these football games you keep organizing. And Denise's prom is this month -- she's going to need a new dress.

FRANK

What's the matter with the old one?

CATHERINE

It's from her eighth grade graduation.

FRANK

(pause) How much do we need? To cover everything for the month?

CATHERINE

(flips through figures)
Fifteen-hundred.

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FRANK finishes dressing, looks into the mirror.

FRANK

That include Nesi's dress? (off nod)
Fine. Set the alarm for 6:30 before you
go to sleep? (searches) Where's my
wallet?

FRANK begins searching. A moment later CATHERINE holds up
his wallet.

CATHERINE

Frank? (pause) What happened with you
and Bobby tonight--

FRANK

Is between him and me. Let me have the
wallet.

CATHERINE

Between who?

FRANK

(frustrated) He's my son, Catherine. I
know what I'm doing.

CATHERINE

Your son, Frank?

She glares at him, then hands FRANK the wallet, before
returning to her paperwork. FRANK begins to exit, stops at
the door, then calmly turns to face his wife.

FRANK

Okay. What happened out there
tonight, it never happens again.
(pause) Satisfied? (off nod).

FRANK grabs his bowling ball and exits. CATHERINE listens
for FRANK'S car engine, then opens a bottom drawer, removing
a book on nursing. A second check -- she then begins
reading.

EXT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

FRANK stands in an alley outside the BOWLING LANES. He looks
to his watch it reads: 1:30AM. He moves toward the entrance.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - SAME

FRANK enters the building, heads to the front desk. Standing
behind the counter, REVEAL: SONNY FAGETTI, big, slow, (45).

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SONNY

Cheech, I got four and five waiting for you. Heavy oil on four.

FRANK approaches lane four, sets down his bag. The remaining alleys are dark and silent. FRANK opens his bag, revealing a plethora of adhesive tapes, bowling gloves, etc.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - LATER THAT NIGHT

The overhead screen shows FRANK'S score through nine frames at 217. He approaches the line. In the background, a large group of SPECTATORS have gathered for the finish.

SPECTATOR I

He needs two in the tenth. (turns)
Double your bet, Pasqualto? I say
your goombah brother chokes.

UNCLE PAT

Mio' Fratelo, he never choke.

SPECTATOR I

Lanes get blurry at three-thirty in
the morning, garlic eater.

FRANK approaches, delivers a solid pocket strike. A DRUNK PATRON interjects.

DRUNK PATRON

Hey, Tatoo from Fantasy Island! A
hundred says you can't do that again.

FRANK looks to the board, first prize reads: 1500 dollars. He turns to the heckler.

FRANK

Double that and you got a bet.

DRUNK PATRON

Two hundred it is. (to crowd) God Damn
guy's smaller than the pins.

STANDING TO THE SIDE - Lane owner JOE RECCHIO, (35).

FRANK delivers a devastating ball. It sends all TEN pins sailing off the lane and into the pit.

UNCLE PAT

Mio' Fratelo, he never choke.

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SPECTATOR I
(hands him money) Go take some
English lessons -- dago.

The CROWD disperses. The DRUNK PATRON hands FRANK 200 dollars, exits. JOE RECCHIO follows with 1500. UNCLE PAT joins them. An uncomfortable JOE looks to PAT then back to FRANK.

JOE
Frankie, maybe you should take three,
four weeks off with the jackpots okay?

UNCLE PAT
(in Italian)
Giuseppe, why you ask him to do this?

JOE (CONT'D)
(in Italian)
People see him in here bowling, they
don't come anymore. Your brother wins
almost every week now. It's bad for
business. Cheech, you understand right?

FRANK nods. UNCLE PAT grabs his brother's bowling bag. The two exit, PAT sliding an arm around his little brother.

INT. KITCHEN - DAY

DENISE glances toward her mom, then opens a large box on the kitchen table, revealing a gorgeous new PROM dress.

FRANK ENTERS - DENISE attempts to hug her dad. Uncomfortable with the moment, FRANK sheepishly smiles at his child's joy. CATHERINE grins at her dozen roses on the counter.

EXT. BETHLEHEM STEEL PLANT - DUSK

A LEGEND READS: BETHLEHEM STEEL PLANT, BUFFALO, NY 1983

The sleeping GIANT is down to one blast furnace operating at twenty-five percent capacity.

INT. STEEL PLANT (ELECTRIC SHOP) - DAY

Entering the room Foreman, BRUCE KILPATRICK. In his right hand, PINK SLIPS. The WORKERS stop for the news, all except FRANK who continues repairing a water cooler motor. BRUCE approaches HARRY FROST, (40)-- hands him a slip.

BRUCE
Sorry, kid.

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FROST

Guess I'll finally take that trip I've been promising the Mrs.

BRUCE then passes by two other MEN before stopping at FRANK'S station. FRANK, working on a weld, looks up.

FRANK

Something you needed, Chief?

BRUCE

Just got the word from management this morning. (hands him slip) The best worker I got and I'm forced to let you go because of a damn seniority union rule.

FRANK

I'm just gonna' finish here, okay?

BRUCE

(Nods) Lock up when you're through.

BRUCE exits, glaring at the two remaining MEN. The MEN approach FRANK. REVEAL: BRIAN HAGAN, (55). HAGAN is Irish, blue collar, and the same man who harassed FRANK earlier. Next to him, African-American RODNEY HARRISON, (50).

HARRISON

We're gonna really miss you, Maggio.

HAGAN

So get back on that ship you came here in and sail it back to your guinea homeland. And while you're at it, take that Kraut Kilpatrick with you, you little kiss ass.

FRANK readies himself to strike. An OFFICIAL passes by, looks to the men. HAGAN and HARRISON exit.

INT. PIZZERIA - NIGHT

The place is buzzing with activity. The four phone lines are lit up like a Christmas tree. The customer line extends out of the building and onto the street.

BOBBY (V.O.)

Pop took that layoff pretty hard. He'd been with the plant twenty-seven years. And although he had the assistant coaching job at the high school where I grew up, high school head coaches made only five-hundred dollars a season.

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BOBBY (V.O.) (CONT'D)

So Pop went to work doing anything he could to stay off the unemployment line.

THREE LARGE OVENS - Decorate the back. Several EMPLOYEES man their stations, creating pizzas almost effortlessly. A WORKER removes a pizza from one of the ovens. He turns, we see it is FRANK, the sweat glistening off his brow.

INT. BUTCHER SHOP - DAY

A MAN removes a full cart of BEEF from inside the cooler. He stops at a station where a BUTCHER lifts the side of beef, tossing it onto the counter.

MOVING IN CLOSER - We see the butcher is FRANK. He takes a knife and with surgical precision begins slicing the beef.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

SONNY turns on the lights to lanes four and five. A KID in his early-twenties joins FRANK as his scorekeeper. The clock on the wall reads: 4:00AM.

BOBBY (V.O.)

But no matter how many hours he worked, or tournaments he bowled, Pop always had one focus, football.

INT. GARAGE - DUSK

RACING CAR posters blanket the walls of this modest backyard dwelling. On the east wall, a poster of pinup girl CHERYL TIEGS. Adjacent to her, Indy winner MICHAEL ANDRETTI.

MALE (O.S.)

-- That's the third time your old man hit the horn. He sounds pissed.

A FIGURE covered in grease rolls out from under the front section of a 79 FORD LTD. The figure is BOBBY, now (18).

BOBBY

Tell him I'll be out in a minute will you, Charlie?

REVEAL: CHARLIE ANDERSON. CHARLIE, also (18) is 6'2" and weighs around 200 pounds. He is dressed in a "ROCKY" cut off T-shirt, paisley sweats and CLOG shoes. Surrounding the boys, tools and disassembled engine parts. BOBBY rises. At 5'8" and 170 pounds, He is wearing jeans and a T-shirt.

CHARLIE

Yo, I think maybe you should tell him.

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An agitated FRANK enters still dressed in his work clothes.

FRANK
 Didn't you hear me calling you?

BOBBY
 Yeah Pop, but --

FRANK
 But nothing! The biggest game of our lives in less than two hours, and you're in here playing with your damn toys!

BOBBY
 I'm fixing --

FRANK
 Nevermind that, let's go.

FRANK looks to a very excited CHARLIE.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 You ready, Charlie Boy?

CHARLIE delivers a flurry of punches to a HEAVY BAG in the garage, then responds a la ROCKY BALBOA from "ROCKY".

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Rocky went down, then got right back up.

CHARLIE
 Abso-freaken-lutely coach. (Charlie hi-fives Frank).

FRANK
 Okay gentlemen, let's go. We got a championship to win.

CHARLIE
 Coach, okay if Bobby drives with me to the game?

FRANK looks to CHARLIE'S arms.

FRANK
 Whadda' you benching now?

CHARLIE
 Around 285.

FRANK
 And 4.6 to boot? (off nod) Wait in the car, he'll be with you in a minute.

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CHARLIE exits. FRANK approaches BOBBY collecting his things.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You better learn to get your priorities straight son. Be more like your friend there. You want out of this neighborhood don't you?

BOBBY

285 and 4.6. Is that my ticket out, Pop?

FRANK

That's right, kiddo. "If you aren't fired with enthusiasm, you'll be fired with enthusiasm." The great Italian-American Vince Lombardi said that.

As BOBBY exits, he rolls his eyes. FRANK looks to the disassembled engine parts.

EXT. STREET - SAME

Parked on the street, a brand new silver 1984 Trans Am. Standing in front of it, CHARLIE and REVEAL: 5'9" LINDA MIRANDA. An (18) year old beauty, LINDA is dressed in shorts, a tight halter top and clogs. BOBBY approaches.

BOBBY

This yours, Linda?

LINDA

My dad got it for me yesterday.

CHARLIE

(Rocky voice) Yo Adrian, Mick's coming with us okay?

LINDA glances toward her purse, then back to CHARLIE.

BOBBY

(off look) I can take my car.

LINDA

No, that's fine, let's go.

INT. CAR - SAME

LINDA drives. BOBBY gets in back, CHARLIE the passenger seat. LINDA looks down at her watch. CHARLIE sees this, throws up his hands.

CHARLIE

Apollo's going down in three, Adrian.

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LINDA

(to Bobby) We must have seen both movies at least fifty times.

CHARLIE cranks up the "ROCKY" theme on LINDA'S new cassette player. The car then exits.

INT. FOOTBALL LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

A number of PLAYERS are scattered about the locker room. A banner reads: "GO TIMON BEAT HUTCH TECH."

CHARLIE and BOBBY dress by their lockers. Next to them, REVEAL: RICKY BEAMISH, a (20) year old senior on the five year plan. BOBBY reaches into his locker, pulls out a black satin pair of panties. He looks to CHARLIE.

BOBBY

Is this your idea of a joke? Little small don't you think?

CHARLIE

That was the biggest size they had.

FITZ

You finally found a heifer that'll date you huh, Bobby?

REVEAL: TOMMY "FITZ" FITZPATRICK. TOMMY is now, (19) and also a senior. He is 6'4" and 230 pounds.

BOBBY

Yeah Fitz. I stopped by your house and got'em from your sister.

RICKY

Hey Bobby, what time you stop by Fitz's?

BOBBY

Around seven, why?

RICKY

Must've just missed you.

FITZ throws his shirt at RICKY. In steps head football coach TOM DANESCO, (40). TOM is tall in stature, but short on speeches. FRANK enters behind him.

COACH DANESCO

Gentlemen, listen up. (pause) Coach.

The players give their full attention to assistant head coach FRANK MAGGIO. An OFFICIAL enters, looks to DANESCO.

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OFFICIAL

Five minutes, coach.

The OFFICIAL exits. FRANK looks to DANESCO, then distributes hand outs to the team.

FRANK

For you seniors -- this is it -- your last shot at a championship.

FRANK turns to the chalkboard. The board displays the numbers of the starting players on the opposing team.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I assume you've all looked at your scouting reports? Right. Blow an assignment, screw up an audible, you're out, no excuses. (To Charlie) If you win the toss we want the ball. If not, we'll kick with the wind. (to group) One more thing, their right corner has a bad ankle -- first play from scrimmage we go right at him. Okay gentlemen, let's bring it in. Lord, we know none of us should wish adversity on our fellow man, but last year Hutch Tech stuck it to us pretty good. This year, we figure it's our turn. So please help us kick some butt.

FRANK draws an X over the number 22 on the blackboard.

GROUP

Amen.

The OFFICIAL reenters, taps his watch.

FRANK

The spirit of the great Vince Lombardi is with us tonight gentlemen. Take a listen while you're getting dressed.

FRANK retrieves a BOOM BOX, sets it on the desk, hits play. On the tape, a speech from the late VINCE LOMBARDI. The team half-listens, while making their final preparations.

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.)

"Winning is not a sometime thing: it's an all time thing. You don't win once in a while, you don't do things right once in a while, you do them right all the time. Winning is a habit. Unfortunately, so is losing."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

COACH DANESCO motions to the BOYS to gather their gear and begin heading toward the exit.

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"It's a reality of life that men are competitive, and most competitive games draw the most competitive men, that's why they're there, to compete."

AT THE DOOR - As the team exits, VINCE LOMBARDI'S speech continues in VOICE OVER and OFF SCREEN in the b.g.

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.) (O.S.) (CONT'D)

"They know the rules and objectives when they get in the game."

EXT. LOCKER ROOM - SAME

The PLAYERS exit the building. To their left, an old graveyard. Up ahead in the distance, the TOWERING lights of the football stadium illuminate the night sky. The TEAM begins the half-mile walk to the gridiron.

MOMENTS LATER - BOBBY notices he's forgotten his chin strap and mouthpiece. He quickly heads back inside.

INSIDE THE LOCKER ROOM - BOBBY retrieves the items. On his way out, he notices the training room door slightly ajar. He opens it revealing CHARLIE with his uniform pants down to his ankles. Standing over CHARLIE, syringe in hand, is LINDA. BOBBY exits. CHARLIE instructs LINDA to give him the shot.

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.)

"The objective is to win - fairly, squarely, decently, by the rules - but to win."

INT. LACKAWANNA FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

The Timon FANS have come prepared. Wine flasks and thermoses are well represented. FIVE UNDERCLASSMEN have the school letters written across their bare chests. The Timon CHEERLEADERS lead their fans in several tantalizing verses of an old favorite. Leading the CHEERLEADERS is LINDA. The PLAYERS head to the center of the field.

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.)

"And in truth, I've never known a man worth his salt who in the long run, deep down in his heart, didn't appreciate the grind, the discipline.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

There is something in good men that really yearns for, needs discipline and the harsh reality of head-to-head combat"

Timon wins the toss. CHARLIE returns the opening kick. After receiving two great blocks from FITZ and BOBBY, He is finally knocked out of bounds by two DEFENDERS who slam him hard into the GATORADE table at the TIMON 40 yard line.

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.) (CONT'D)

"I don't say these things because I believe in the brute nature of man or that men must be brutalized to be combative. I believe in God, and I believe in human decency."

BOBBY BRINGS HIS TEAM - Up to the line of scrimmage, takes the snap and drops back to pass. He hits CHARLIE on a FLY pattern down the sideline. The play covers 80 yards. The CROWD erupts, as Timon takes a 6-0 lead. The FIVE bare chested UNDERCLASSMEN harass the beaten defender.

INT. LACKAWANNA STADIUM - LATER

The scoreboard reads: HUTCH TECH 20 TIMON 17. Timon has the ball on its own 20 yardline. Two minutes remain in tonight's contest.

BOBBY TAKES THE SNAP FROM CENTER - Fakes a handoff to his half-back, then heads around the right side. He sprints past two DEFENDERS and over another. The play gains thirty yards. The scoreboard clock is down to 45 seconds.

ON THE NEXT PLAY - BOBBY throws a wobbly pass to CHARLIE at flanker. CHARLIE avoids several defenders and gains yardage up to mid-field before stepping out of bounds. BOBBY calls time-out with 5 seconds remaining on the clock. He and CHARLIE make their way to the sideline, grab some water.

COACH DANESCO

How you guys feeling?

BOBBY

Charlie can --

CHARLIE

I can beat number 22.

DANESCO looks to his play sheet, then glances over toward FRANK. FRANK steps in, grabs his son by the helmet.

FRANK

Only spirals from you, got it? (Off nod)
Alright, listen up. We're out of time outs so this is it. Thirty-two swivel pass, and tell those linemen to hold their blocks.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE AND BOBBY - Return to the huddle. Moments later, the team breaks the huddle in unison. The crowd SURGES, as the announcer's voice kicks in. REVEAL: JOE COREY, (44).

JOE (O.S.)

Hold onto your seats folks, there are five seconds remaining in this thriller. Timon is down by three and they're out of time-outs. It's first and ten at midfield. Maggio takes the snap from center, drops back to pass. He steps up, throws, no he fakes, pumps once and rolls to his right, eluding two defenders. Anderson's gotten by the defense -- he's open in the endzone. Maggio sees him, unleashes a bomb down field. Can the ball get there? Yes! Touchdown, Charlie Anderson! Did you see that folks? Bobby threw that pass fifty yards on the run!

FINAL SCORE - TIMON 23 HUTCH TECH 20. The bare chested underclassmen lead the crowd in a wild celebration.

VINCE LOMBARDI (V.O.)

"But I firmly believe that any man's finest hour - his greatest fulfillment to all he holds dear - is that moment when he has worked his heart out in a good cause and lies exhausted on the field of battle - victorious."

An exhausted BOBBY stands with FRANK. CHARLIE joins them, seemingly unaffected by the physicality of the game. He hugs FRANK. BOBBY settles for a handshake. A moment later, several REPORTERS crowd around CHARLIE. A FEMALE REPORTER, early 20's, rushes between the others.

FEMALE REPORTER

Here we are with Charlie Anderson, tonight's hero and Blue Chip prospect. Charlie, you snagged 11 passes tonight for over 200 yards, and three touchdowns. How do you feel?

An exuberant CHARLIE throws his hands into the air.

CHARLIE

Like the champion of the world!!

FEMALE REPORTER

You single handedly led your team to victory. How'd you do it?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CHARLIE brings BOBBY into the shot.

CHARLIE

Can't catch pass one without this guy.
Western New York champs baby, number
one. (hugs, Bobby) Yo, Adrian!!!

Another REPORTER approaches. REVEAL: DICK BARRY, (50's).

DICK

Charlie, I understand you have several
top schools looking at you for next
season. At 6'2", 200 pounds, and with
4.6 speed, do you think you'll go DI?

CHARLIE

That's the plan, Dick.

The REPORTERS follow CHARLIE, as He and LINDA exit the field.
FRANK sees this, makes a B-Line toward DICK BARRY.

DICK

Hey, coach.

FRANK

Dick, what about interviewing my boy?
The kid had a great game.

DICK

That he did.

FRANK

Then why aren't you talking to him?

DICK

Anderson's big news -- there's several DI
schools knocking on his door.

FRANK

My boy could still go DI.

DICK

Your son, tough as nails he is -- just
wasn't blessed with the size and speed.

FRANK

Hey, Flutie's at Boston College.

DICK

Great season, coach.

DICK turns, begins to exit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

We're going DI, Dick -- you'll see.
Lombardi weighed 170 when he played D-
line at Fordham. A division one school!

EXT. MAGGIO HOUSE - DUSK

Dozens of cars crowd the driveway, front lawn and street in front of the home.

INT. MAGGIO HOUSE - SAME

The living room is inundated with 25 or so; PLAYERS, CHEERLEADERS, etc. Seated at the head of the table is FRANK. To his left, CATHERINE, DENISE, UNCLE PAT and his wife JO JO (35). FRANK raises a glass of wine.

FRANK

On behalf of my wife and children, I'd like to congratulate all of you on a heck of a season. "A man can be as great as he wants to be. If you believe in yourself and have the courage, the determination, the dedication, the competitive drive and if you are willing to sacrifice the little things in life and pay the price for the things that are worthwhile, it can be done." The great --

GROUP

(unison)

-- Italian/American Vince Lombardi said that -- we know coach.

FRANK

To Timon! The number one small school in the state.

The room erupts with excitement.

DENISE

Dad, sing that Italian song!!

FRANK

Which one?

DENISE

The Cella Luna -- due -- tre song.

FRANK stands, begins singing. After several verses, the entire room joins in. Laughter and applause follow.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

RICKY

Hey Charlie, I hear you got Penn State looking at you?

CHARLIE

Penn State, Syracuse and Michigan, thanks to you guys and Bobby.

FITZ

Bobby, where you headed?

BOBBY

I was thinking of taking a year off. Maybe move up to Alaska, do some deep sea fishing.

FITZ

Where's he headed, coach?

FRANK

Division II if he doesn't stop wasting time playing with cars, and get his priorities straight.

Silence fills the room. CATHERINE shoots FRANK a stern look.

CATHERINE

Frank, could I see you in the kitchen please?

BOBBY

It's okay Mom. Pop's right -- need to get my priorities straight.

Masking his hurt, BOBBY raises a glass of wine.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

A toast. To priorities.

FRANK and CATHERINE exit to the kitchen.

INT. KITCHEN - SAME

CATHERINE is livid.

CATHERINE

Why do you insist on speaking to him that way?

FRANK

I was just telling it like it is.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE

Your wine was telling it like it is.

FRANK

I had two glasses. And what's the big deal anyway?

CATHERINE

Well, besides embarrassing your son in front of his friends, there's that little situation with your heart.

FRANK

I didn't embarrass the kid -- and there's nothing wrong with my ticker, Catherine.

FRANK finishes his glass, then sits at the kitchen table.

CATHERINE

You've been acting strange ever since the game ended. Anything the matter? (pause) I know you, Frank. What is it?

FRANK

Dick Barry thinks Bobby's too small to play DI. Danesco feels the same way.

CATHERINE

That boy brings home A's and B's every quarter. Life's not all about playing football in a certain division. (pause) You need to be proud of our son.

FRANK

I am proud of him.

CATHERINE

As for his size -- that's something he can't control -- nor can you. Height doesn't make the man, Frank.

FRANK

Nor should the lack of it stop someone from achieving their dream.

The phone rings. CATHERINE answers it.

CATHERINE

Hello. Hi, Bruce. Fine thank you. (pause) Yes he is, just a second.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

(takes phone) Chief. We won the game.
Bobby threw for three touchdowns.
(Pause) When do you need me? Don't you
worry about that, I'll work anywhere
they want to put me. Thanks, chief.
(Hangs up).

CATHERINE

They call you back?

FRANK

Bruce pulled a few strings, got me
in under a union loop hole. C'mon,
let's go celebrate.

INSIDE THE LIVING ROOM -

A number of the guests are preparing to leave.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Where's everybody going?

RICKY

We got some other parties to go to
coach. Thanks for everything.

FITZ

You too, Mrs. Maggio, the food was great.

The group exits. BOBBY stays behind talking with UNCLE PAT.

CHARLIE

Bobby, you coming?

BOBBY

I'll meet you at Rat's later.

CHARLIE exits. UNCLE PAT turns to FRANK.

UNCLE PAT

Cheech, they got a race at the track
tonight. I take my nephew?

FRANK

(off nod, to Bobby) But then it's back
to the weights and speed training
first thing in the morning.

FRANK walks BOBBY to an empty corner of the room.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK (CONT'D)

"It's not whether you get knocked down,
it's whether you get back up." (adamant)
We're going DI, you got that? (off nod)
Marino, Testaverde, Montana -- no
problems for any of them. (pause) Go
have a good time.

UNCLE PAT and BOBBY exit.

EXT. MAGGIO HOME - SAME

UNCLE PAT throws BOBBY the keys to his 57 Chevy. BOBBY
enters the car, starts the engine. FRANK, CATHERINE and JO
JO observe from the front porch.

CATHERINE

(over engine noise) You be careful
driving.

BOBBY waves, the car then exits. CATHERINE turns to JO JO.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)

Jo, I'll take you home.

JO JO

That's okay, Catherine. I drove our
other car. I ain't getting in that thing.

They reenter the house.

EXT. WATKINS GLEN SPEEDWAY - NIGHT

ECU - On two STOCK cars heading into the final turn. Car #13
accelerates leaving his opponent in the dust.

EXT. PIT AREA - LATER THAT NIGHT

Car #13 pulls into the pit area and is immediately surrounded
by an elated crew. The DRIVER exits the vehicle and is
hugged by an older MAN in a mechanics uniform.

STANDING BEHIND THE FENCE - Just outside the pit area, is
BOBBY and UNCLE PAT. They look to the MECHANIC. He gives
UNCLE PAT the thumbs up sign. BOBBY is impressed.

BOBBY

You know him, Uncle Pat?

UNCLE PAT

He come with us from the old country.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

(looks to car) That car's awesome. I'm gonna' have one of those some day.

UNCLE PAT

You want to race cars?

BOBBY

No, just build'em and fix'em.

UNCLE PAT

Then you will.

The two MEN begin to exit. BOBBY stops, looks to his uncle.

BOBBY

Uncle Pat? (pause) Why is your brother so tough on me all the time?

UNCLE PAT

Your father -- he tough on all of us.

BOBBY

You think he'd be upset if I didn't play college ball?

UNCLE PAT

You want for my advice?

BOBBY

Yeah.

UNCLE PAT

You play, it pay for a good education. After that, you do what you want, capice?

They reach the Chevy. The two men enter the car.

BOBBY

Uncle Pasquale, what was it like for you and my dad growing up in Italy?

UNCLE PAT

(reflects) It was same as here, maybe a few things different.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Grungy dilapidated toilets and broken mirrors decorate this facility inside the Bethlehem Steel Plant. A WORKER, dressed in protective gear, rests on one knee while scrubbing a toilet.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ENTERING THE BATHROOM - Is BRUCE. He moves toward the urinal, notices the MAN on his hands and knees. The MAN rises, removes his mask and safety glasses, it's FRANK.

BRUCE

Frank, no one's cleaned in here in years.
Wipe a few mirrors and screw it.

FRANK

Plant's paying me same wage as before,
Chief.

BRUCE

I filed another grievance for you.

FRANK

You think it'll do any good?

BRUCE

We gotta' try -- right?

FRANK resumes cleaning. BRUCE moves to exit, turns.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

I'm forced to send out jobs at five
times the cost, while my best worker
scrubs damn toilets. It's no wonder
this country's going to hell.

FRANK

Union protects the lazy. You always
said that, chief.

BRUCE exits. FRANK sprays the mirror, wipes it, then looks at his reflection.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

FLASHBACK: A LEGEND READS BUFFALO, NY 1957

The kitchen wall clock reads: 12:30AM. Sitting at the table, a 20 year-old FRANK. Across from him, BRUCE. The two MEN are working on a book equation.

CATHERINE ENTERS - Newborn in her arms. She retrieves a bottle from the fridge, then joins the men at the table. All admire the new baby girl.

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

PRESENT DAY:

FRANK turns, standing behind him are HAGAN and HARRISON.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAGAN

Finally doing something your people are good at huh, Maggio? Cleaning shit.

HAGAN unzips his pants, approaches the urinal, then misses the receptacle on purpose.

HAGAN (CONT'D)

Aim isn't as good as it used to be. No matter, your guinea ass is small enough to get in there and clean it.

FRANK

I don't want any trouble.

HARRISON

Too late for that now. (off look)

HAGAN

Your German friend won a grievance with the union. To keep our jobs, we gotta take classes and learn what the hell we're doing. I'm too old for that shit!

HARRISON

I'm with him.

HAGAN washes his hands, throws the paper towel on the floor, purposely missing the waste basket.

HAGAN

Either way, you stay working here in the toilets.

The MEN move to exit. HAGAN turns.

HAGAN (CONT'D)

Hey Frank, you think your grease ball hero, Lombardi would be proud of how you turned out -- you cleaning toilets and all? (pause) I hear your boy's gonna follow right in your footsteps. Should be no problem, you're both about the same size.

FRANK attacks, quickly hitting HAGAN several times in the stomach and twice in the face, before sending him hard to the ground. FRANK stands over HAGAN, full trash can in hand.

FRANK

Maybe I'm what you say, but not my boy! Not my boy!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK sets down the trash can, exits. HARRISON helps his bloodied friend off the floor.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

CHARLIE and BOBBY head into the final turn of the 440 yard track. LINDA waits at the finish line, stopwatch in hand. BOBBY crosses the line several steps ahead of his winded friend. He checks with LINDA, then approaches CHARLIE.

BOBBY

You okay?

CHARLIE

I hate distance. What'd you come in at?

BOBBY

4:58.7.

CHARLIE

You broke five minutes. (Rocky voice) Way to go, Mick.

CHARLIE high-fives his partner, as LINDA approaches.

BOBBY

You break five, I'll lift 275 and run a sub 4.6.

The three sit on the bleachers. LINDA hands BOBBY some water.

LINDA

You want to break 4.6 -- get your father off your back?

BOBBY

Ain't gonna happen, Linda. Not in this lifetime.

CHARLIE

Happened for me didn't it?

CHARLIE motions to LINDA, who pulls out a syringe.

BOBBY

(pause) That stuff really work?

CHARLIE

And it's perfectly safe too.

LINDA

And it's perfectly safe too.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

How do you guys know that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

LINDA

My dad's a doctor, gives this medicine to his patients all the time. You just have to know how to administer it -- and keep the needle clean.

BOBBY

I'd really be able to run a 4.6?

LINDA

It dropped Charlie from 4.7 to 4.55.

BOBBY

It just seems like that's cheating --

CHARLIE

Cheating hell! All the D1 players are juicin' up. And they did it in High School too!

A car approaches, hits its horn several times. Exiting the vehicle is FRANK, stopwatch and clipboard in hand.

FRANK

"If you're fired with enthusiasm, you'll be fired with enthusiasm." Lets go, Kiddo!

BOBBY looks to the syringe, then to LINDA and CHARLIE.

EXT. FOOTBALL - FIELD - LATER THAT DAY

FRANK stands at the finish line. BOBBY and CHARLIE 40 yards down the track.

FRANK

Charlie, you're up first.

A couple of REPORTERS join FRANK at the finish line.

FRANK (CONT'D)

On your movement.

CHARLIE glances toward the REPORTERS, digs in at the starting line, then sprints off. Seconds later, he crosses the tape.

FRANK (CONT'D)

4.53! Hell of a time, son! Hell of a time. (pause) Okay Bobby, time to show us what you got.

BOBBY sprints down the track, crosses the finish line, his effort great. FRANK looks to the stopwatch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DICK
What he run, coach?

FRANK
I missed the time.

The REPORTERS swarm CHARLIE. A disappointed FRANK approaches his son.

FRANK (CONT'D)
"A man can be as great as he
wants to be."

FRANK shows BOBBY the time. The stopwatch reads: 4.75.

EXT. STREET - DUSK

A small crowd has gathered outside the MAGGIO home. An exhausted BOBBY takes a knee in the middle of the street. FRANK and DENISE stand at the finish line 40 yards away.

FRANK
On your movement, son.

DENISE
C'mon, Bobby.

BOBBY moves into his starting position, then sprints off. With half the neighborhood cheering him on, BOBBY forges across the finish line. FRANK looks to his stopwatch.

FRANK
4.75. Let's go. Let's go, right now!!

FRANK hands the stopwatch and a handkerchief to DENISE.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Can you drop the hanky and start the
clock at the same time?

She nods. BOBBY and FRANK head back to the starting line.

FRANK (CONT'D)
4.75 gets you D3 at best.

BOBBY
I'm trying, Pop.

FRANK
Try harder, damn it!!

FRANK reaches in his pocket, removes two pages of xeroxed instructions. He and his son take a knee.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)

I think we can pick up some speed on your technique. You need to really swing that right arm on the take off. See it here?

FRANK shows BOBBY a picture of a SPRINTER in perfect form. The two then make their way to the starting line.

BOBBY

Pop, what are you doing?

FRANK

Forty-one years old and I can still eat thunder and crap lightning. Let's go.

FRANK looks down to his daughter.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Wait until were set, then drop the flag.

DENISE rolls her eyes, nods. BOBBY and FRANK take their starting positions. DENISE drops the flag and the two are off. CATHERINE and a host of NEIGHBORS watch from her porch, as FRANK and BOBBY cross the line together. The CROWD erupts with excitement. FRANK approaches his daughter.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Who won? Who won damn it?

DENISE

It was a dead heat, dad -- a tie.

FRANK

(pause) What was the time?

DENISE

(smiles) 4.72 flat.

FRANK turns to BOBBY.

FRANK

You shouldn't have to be pushed like that. Get your head out of your ass, Kiddo.

FRANK exits. BOBBY remains back with his sister.

BOBBY

I'll say one thing, Pop's real subtle.

DENISE

He's not good with words, but that doesn't mean he doesn't care.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

The two make their way toward the house. BOBBY notices his dad struggling up the front porch stairs.

BOBBY
(to sister) He really run
a 4.72?

DENISE
Yeah, you guys really did.

DENISE hands the stopwatch to her brother.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

A mostly teary eyed MAGGIO family, watches the final episode of the hit television show MASH. FRANK sits in a recliner chair, ice on his right hamstring.

INT. BEDROOM - LATER THAT NIGHT

The walls in the room are decorated with famous race car drivers, and pin up model JACLYN SMITH. Tossing in bed is BOBBY. He opens his eyes, notices bright lights coming through his bedroom window. He crosses to the window, notices the light is emanating from the street.

EXT. STREET - NIGHT

Two cars, high beam headlights on full blast illuminate the course and finish line. Appearing out of the dark, and crossing the finish line is FRANK. Stopwatch in hand, he checks his time, then returns to the starting line. A steady drizzle cascades off the blacktop.

INSIDE THE HOUSE -

Standing by the front picture window is BOBBY. CATHERINE joins him.

BOBBY
(looks out window) Please tell me you
know he's taking this thing way too far?

CATHERINE glances out the window.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Always quoting the great Italian/America
Vince Lombardi on everything. Well, I'm
sick of it, Ma. I have a life too.
Maybe football's just not in the cards
for me.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE

Then fold in your hand, Bobby -- move on.

BOBBY

Right, Ma. You wanna' tell him that? Pop wants me to continue playing so he can keep some stupid dream of his alive!

CATHERINE

Is that why you think he's out there?

BOBBY

He's running sprints at midnight -- in the middle of a the freaken' pouring rain! Why else would anybody be out there?

CATHERINE

He's out there because he cares about you.

BOBBY

Oh no. Pop only cares about two things; Vince Lombardi and Charlie's forty times. There's no room in there for me.

CATHERINE

He may not say things as eloquently as some others, but no one loves you more than that man out there running forty yard sprints.

BOBBY

That's how you show love?

CATHERINE

That's how he does. (pause) You really don't know why he's out there do you?

BOBBY

Yeah I do. To practice so he can humiliate me some more tomorrow.

CATHERINE grabs her son's hand. The two then sit on a plastic covered couch.

CATHERINE

He's out there because he knows one day, one day very soon, he won't be able to beat you anymore.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

And is that so bad, Mom? It's gonna happen eventually.

CATHERINE

Your father knows that. He just wants to prolong helping his son get better for as long as he can. Let him have his time with you, Bobby. The man's earned it.

BOBBY stands, stares out the window at FRANK crossing the finish line. FRANK looks to his stopwatch, then returns to the starting line.

INT. STEEL PLANT - DAY

FRANK empties several containers of refuse into a large dumpster. BRUCE approaches. FRANK follows him.

INT. STEEL PLANT (ELECTRIC SHOP) DAY

Several of the MEN are cleaning out their lockers, including HAGAN and HARRISON. FRANK walks with BRUCE into his office.

INT. OFFICE - SAME

BRUCE

Have a seat.

A concerned FRANK sits.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

The word came down this morning. The shop's closing for good, Frank.

FRANK

When?

BRUCE

Six weeks, but all lockers need to be cleaned out by 5PM today.

FRANK

What happened?

BRUCE approaches a hot plate, mixes two cups of hot tea, hands one to FRANK.

BRUCE

The plant bought out the shop's union contract.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

They can do that?

BRUCE

Made the union an offer they couldn't refuse. (pause) A huge amount of money.

FRANK

Why'd they offer so much?

BRUCE

Because it's cheaper than fixing the motors in house. (off Frank's confusion) Frank, you're the only guy in here who knows what the hell he's doing. To get to you, I've got to bring in Hagan and Harrison -- pay those lazy pricks overtime, while you're busting your ass on a double. Management had enough.

FRANK

(pause) What about the job I'm doing now? Do I still get to keep it, Chief?

BRUCE approaches the window, looks out.

BRUCE

(struggles) Permanent layoffs hit end of the month. I'm sorry.

BRUCE turns. FRANK sits there speechless.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Regan's killing us, Frank. Allowing all that cheap import steel into the country. We can't compete -- not with the unions the way they are.

BRUCE removes a brochure from his desk.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

Anyway, I think I may have some good news for you.

BRUCE hands FRANK a brochure.

FRANK

What's this?

BRUCE

The plant's offering to pay for any guy who wants to go back to school. You should give it some thought.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

Me, go back to school? (Laughs) It's been twenty-five years. No, I've gone as far as I can. Plus, I can't afford it with Bobby going to college next year.

FRANK stands.

BRUCE

Full tuition's paid, as long as it's in a related field. I'd think very seriously about the offer. You're a bright guy, Frank. I'd help you out wherever I can.

FRANK

Appreciate that.

FRANK moves toward the exit, turns.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You said something earlier about a shop buyout. Am I entitled to any of that?

BRUCE

Only guys with thirty-years or more seniority.

FRANK

(pause) What they get? (off look) Hagan and Harrison?

BRUCE

10,000 each, and a cushy job in maintenance changing light bulbs.

BRUCE approaches FRANK.

BRUCE (CONT'D)

I'm sorry, Frank. I wish there was something more I could do.

FRANK

You've done more than enough. And I'll always be grateful.

The two shake hands. FRANK then hugs his long time friend.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

FRANK empties his locker. HAGAN and HARRISON do the same. Only they use larger duffle bags, stealing the shops tools.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

HAGAN

Plant thinks they can screw us after
35 years.

HARRISON

Take what you want, Frank. We earned it.

FRANK

You didn't earn anything.

FRANK grabs his gear, exits. HARRISON moves toward him.

HAGAN

Let'em go. (fills bag) That little Wop
doesn't know his place. Comes to our
country, takes our jobs, then expects us
to carry him. He's why this country's
going to hell. At least your people
appreciate what we gave you.

HARRISON glares at him.

EXT. FATHER BAKER BRIDGE - DAY

The GRAND TORINO travels over the large structure.

INSIDE THE CAR - Behind the wheel is FRANK. He glances into
the rear view mirror, a partial view of the steel plant in
the background.

EXT. VEGETABLE FIELD - DAY

FLASHBACK: A LEGEND READS: BUFFALO NEW YORK 1951

Several immigrant WORKERS labor in the hot sun, picking and
filling baskets full of string beans and other items. (14)
year old FRANK toils with the other WORKERS.

A LARGE MAN APPROACHES - Notices FRANK'S high volume output.
The MAN smiles, then hands the boy a handful of change.

INT. CAR - DAY

PRESENT DAY:

The steel plant in the mirror becomes a distant memory.

FRANK

(to himself)

"The good Lord gave you a body that
can stand most anything. It's your
mind you have to convince."

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

Overwhelmed with the day's activities, FRANK begins crying.

EXT. PARK - DAY

The Grand Torino stops by a large abandoned building. FRANK exits the car, heads toward a group of little league football PLAYERS practicing behind the building. On his way toward the players, FRANK notices a group of teenage BOYS drinking and smoking in an alcove of the building. He approaches.

FRANK

You boys mind going somewhere else?

A SINISTER BOY of (15) approaches. Sporting a leather jacket and costume jewelry, the BOY gets in FRANK'S face.

SINISTER BOY

Who died and made you Boss? You ain't my old man.

FRANK

Lucky for you I'm not. (off little leaguers) Those kids don't need to see this.

SINISTER BOY

My big brother drank and hung out here when I was playing little league. It didn't seem to affect me any -- right, guys?

GROUP

Right.

FRANK

Please leave before I call the cops.

The SINISTER BOY is thrown a baseball bat.

SINISTER BOY

You ain't calling nobody.

The TEENAGER lunges toward FRANK, who quickly disarms the boy, sending him to the ground. The GROUP moves in.

SUDDENLY, FITZ, RICKY - And a few other TIMON players intercede. FITZ steps through the group, approaches FRANK.

FITZ

Everything alright here, coach?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

I was just talking to these boys about maybe coming out for the team next year.

FITZ

(To boys) Take off.

The BOYS begin to scatter. The SINISTER BOY glares at FRANK on his exit. FITZ takes the bat, flings it into the creek.

RICKY

What are you doing down here, coach?

FRANK

Looking for new recruits to take your place.

RICKY points to the TEENAGERS exiting.

RICKY

Those guys?

FRANK

(off look) The little leaguers.

FRANK glances over to the pee wee football PLAYERS.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Something tells me they may listen a little better.

RICKY

Kinda' like us huh, coach?

FRANK glares at RICKY -- points to his untied shoes. RICKY offers an apologetic grin, motions to secure the laces.

THE BOYS EXIT - As FRANK joins the little leaguers. He receives a warm welcome from several of the coaches. Moments later, FRANK hands copies of xeroxed papers on KICKING to several of the interested kids.

INT. MAGGIO BEDROOM - NIGHT

CATHERINE readies herself for bed, brushing her hair in front of the mirror. FRANK skims through a number of brochures from prospective colleges.

CATHERINE

How'd your meeting go today?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

They told us to explore other job options. (Laughs) What other job options?

CATHERINE

(pause) Are they letting you go?

FRANK flings several brochures across the room.

FRANK

Twenty-seven years of working my ass off. I suppose I should be grateful though. They extended my unemployment benefits and offered to send me back to school.

FRANK gathers the brochures off the ground.

CATHERINE

Frank, we can't live on --

FRANK

(explodes) Don't you think I know that! I'll go back to Paulini's, the pizzeria, whatever! Actually, Pat and I were thinking of going to a few cities where the bowlers don't know me.

FRANK removes his bowling ball from its bag, sits at the end of the bed and begins cleaning it.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I don't want you telling the kids about the layoff -- especially Bobby. That boy's going DI, even if I have to pay for it myself!!

CATHERINE joins FRANK at the foot of the bed.

CATHERINE

Frank, what if the bigger schools don't want him? It's time you start thinking about that.

FRANK

Don't say that! Don't you ever say that!!

CATHERINE

Bobby wants to attend UB. He really likes their automotive and engineering department.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

My son ain't becoming some damn mechanic!

CATHERINE

Design engineer --

FRANK

Whatever.

She rises, makes her way toward the dresser.

CATHERINE

His decision has to be made soon --

FRANK

Fine, it will be! (pause) The coach from Syracuse is supposed to get back to me later this week. He said he'd look at the tape I sent him on Bobby.

CATHERINE moves to exit, turns, faces her husband.

CATHERINE

Frank, there's something else I need to tell you.

FRANK

Now what? (sudden fear) You're not --

CATHERINE

No. But it does have something to do with the hospital. (off look) I start at Mercy next week as an LPN.

FRANK

An LP what?

CATHERINE

A nurse. I passed my college finals two weeks ago.

FRANK

I didn't even know you were in school.

CATHERINE

Then you won't miss me while I'm at work.

FRANK looks to her speechless. She exits.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

MONTAGE:

EXT. UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO CAMPUS - DAY

Bobby parks his car in front of the admissions office, exits.

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.)

To say Pop was a little upset over my attending a division three football school was an understatement. But the fact was no big time programs would return my father's calls.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

FRANK slams down the phone, glares at several college brochures, then flings them about the room.

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.)

A few division II schools offered, but they didn't have very good academic programs. UB was a solid school. Pop even grew to like it -- especially after they let him attend football practices whenever he wanted. Fortunately, He went back to school that next season and didn't have a lot of free time. My mom was happy working with my sister. And as for Charlie, He kicked butt and got a full boat to Michigan.

MONTAGE: NEWSPAPER CLIPPINGS AND ACTION SHOTS.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER CLIPPING READS: LOCAL FOOTBALL STAR CHARLIE ANDERSON ACCEPTS FULL RIDE TO UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN. TEAMMATE AND BEST FRIEND, BOBBY MAGGIO ACCEPTS SCHOLARSHIP TO LOCAL DIVISION III SCHOOL UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO. FRANK sifts through the paper at the dinner table, his fury evident. UNCLE PAT, AUNT JO JO and CATHERINE sit across from him.

FRESHMAN YEAR ACTION SHOTS. BOBBY and CHARLIE unpacking in their respective dorm rooms. 2. FRANK and BOBBY looking over game film late at night. 3. BOBBY running extra laps at dusk. FRANK stands at the finish line, stopwatch in hand.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER CLIPPING READS: FRESHMAN SENSATION LEADS MICHIGAN TO WIN OVER NOTRE DAME 2. CHARLIE ANDERSON'S AERIAL ASSAULT CATCHES LEADS MICHIGAN TO 10-1 SEASON.

ACTION FOOTAGE: FRANK paces in the stands, his family present with him at BOBBY's game. The QUARTERBACK sustains an injury and BOBBY enters, throwing an interception on his first attempt. FRANK storms out of the stands.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK, WITH SEVERAL BOOKS - Strewn across his desk, finishes taking a practice test. BRUCE sits across from him.

ACTION FOOTAGE: Of MARY LOU RETTON winning 2 gold medals at the Olympics. FRANK gestures to his son about her size.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER CLIPPING READ: SOPHOMORE SENSATION CHARLIE ANDERSON 5TH IN NATION IN TOUCHDOWN RECEPTIONS.

NBC REPORTER - Comments on the CHALLENGER explosion that killed 7 ASTRONAUTS. The footage is played on the television.

ACTION FOOTAGE: BOBBY, CHARLIE, FITZ, LINDA and a few of her friends racing go-carts at the beach in Canada.

ACTION FOOTAGE: FRANK at RECCHIO'S winning another jackpot. UNCLE PAT collects from the crowd.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER CLIPPING READS: LOCAL FOOTBALL STAR LEADS UNIVERSITY OF BUFFALO TO FIRST WINNING SEASON IN 20 YEARS.

ACTION FOOTAGE: FRANK sits in a classroom at a local college, once again the oldest member of his class.

ACTION FOOTAGE: TIMON'S field goal KICKER hits a 35 yard game winning field goal. FRANK smiles from the sideline.

ACTION FOOTAGE: FRANK helping at little league football.

LOCAL NEWSPAPER CLIPPING READS: MICHIGAN FRONT RUNNER, CHARLIE ANDERSON, INTERESTS PRO SCOUTS IN UPCOMING NFL DRAFT. 2. UNIVERSITY BUFFALO FINISHES 5 AND 5.

ACTION FOOTAGE: BOBBY AND UNCLE PAT - working on UNCLE PAT'S car inside a garage.

ACTION FOOTAGE: On TV, VINNY TESTAVERDE winning the Heisman Trophy. A large group has gathered at the MAGGIO house. FRANK offers a toast to the group.

ACTION TV FOOTAGE: On the death of college basketball star LEN BIAS. CAPTION: BIAS dies of apparent cocaine overdose.

ACTION FOOTAGE: FRANK talking to some troubled youths behind an abandoned city high school.

ACTION FOOTAGE: Of BOBBY and CHARLIE back home working out vigorously. FRANK stands there eager to help.

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.) (CONT'D)
Those four years went by in a hurry. Pop got his degree and finally had a job worthy of his talent.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.) (CONT'D)
 Charlie made 2nd team All American, and I made 3rd team division III Academic All-American. The truth is, there were few athletes in the league with solid grades. But that didn't stop Pop from thinking his son was headed for a tryout in the NFL.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

An unidentified object speeds toward us. Suddenly, a figure appears snatching the object out of the clouded sky. Simultaneously, both entities come crashing down into a puddle on the fifty yard line. The sudden jolt separates the two. OFF SCREEN we hear FRANK yelling.

FRANK (O.S.)
 Cradle the ball in your arms before you hit the damn ground!

REVEAL: BOBBY, totally exhausted. FRANK is at the goal line, video-camera in hand. FITZ and RICKY stand next to him.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 Let's try it again.

BOBBY returns to the goal line. RICKY is at quarterback, FITZ on defense. BOBBY sprints down field, puts a sweet move on FITZ, sending the big man to the ground. RICKY unleashes a strike over the middle. BOBBY snags it at shoe top level.

FRANK (CONT'D)
 That's the way to look the ball into your hands. Diversification, Bobby. You need to be more like Lou Piccone with the Bills. That man's only one inch taller than you, one inch! And, He's the best damn receiver and special teams guy they got. (to Fitz, Ricky) Thanks, fellahs.

They wave to BOBBY and then exit.

FITZ
 Coach forgot to mention Piccone runs a 4.4 and benches nearly 400 pounds.

RICKY
 He's pushing him way too hard, Fitz. Even if he does get a tryout, Bobby won't have anything left.

BOBBY stands at the goal line, FRANK 40 yards down field.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

On your movement.

BOBBY attacks the course, crossing the tape exhausted.

FRANK (CONT'D)

4.71. You won't make it past rookie camp. C'mon, one more, let's go!

BOBBY returns to the line. His second effort returns --

FRANK (CONT'D)

4.75!! Damn it, Bobby, I couldn't even get you a tryout with the girl scouts at this speed.

BOBBY notices a new MUSTANG CONVERTIBLE pulling into the stadium. Exiting the car is CHARLIE. LINDA remains behind.

BOBBY

2nd team All-American, 2nd round draft pick of the Miami Dolphins. How you doing, Charlie Boy?

CHARLIE

I'm doing good. How you doing?

The two MEN hug.

BOBBY

Still running sub -- 4.8's.

CHARLIE

We should work out together while I'm home.

BOBBY

(Rocky) Absolutely.

FRANK approaches.

CHARLIE

Hey coach.

BOBBY

Pop's a college man now, Charlie. Works for the city.

CHARLIE

Way to go, coach.

CHARLIE high-five's, FRANK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK
Nevermind me gentlemen. What are you
running now Charlie?

CHARLIE
(reluctant, finally) 4.5, pretty
consistently.

FRANK
And your bench?

CHARLIE
385 -- but I barely got that up once.

FRANK glares at his son.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)
Hey Coach, okay if Bobby goes with me in
my new ride?

BOBBY
That yours?

CHARLIE
Cost me half my signing bonus, but what
the hell right?

CHARLIE and BOBBY look to FRANK.

FRANK
(pause) Go have fun.

The two begin heading toward the car. FRANK stops CHARLIE.

FRANK (CONT'D)
Charlie, you got a second?

BOBBY looks to his dad.

BOBBY
I'll wait by the car. (exits)

FRANK
(to Charlie) Hey, had yourself a nice
college career. Congratulations.

CHARLIE
Couldn't have done it without you and
Bobby.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

Bobby maybe -- not so much me. (pause)
You think the kid would have a shot in
the NFL?

CHARLIE

I don't know coach --

FRANK

You probably played with or against half
the guys playing in the NFL right now.
(pause) You think my son can hang with
those guys?

CHARLIE

Bobby's real tough coach -- Lombardi
would've been proud.

FRANK

Yeah, but how is he on talent?

CHARLIE

I think he's got some.

FRANK

I'm trying to get him a tryout, but
nobody will listen.

LINDA hits the car horn. She then hits it a second time.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You gotta go -- don't want to keep that
young lady waiting.

FRANK and CHARLIE begin walking toward the car.

FRANK (CONT'D)

She's a very pretty girl.

CHARLIE

Thanks coach.

FRANK

You like her a lot do you?

CHARLIE

A real lot.

FRANK

Why don't the two of you stop by the
house tonight for dinner? I think Bobby
would enjoy that.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

CHARLIE

You still making that homemade wine of yours coach?

FRANK

Along with Eggplant Parmesan, wild mushrooms and sauce.

CHARLIE

We'll be there.

FRANK and CHARLIE reach the car. BOBBY glances toward CHARLIE, then back to his dad.

INT. MAGGIO KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

CHARLIE and BOBBY approach FRANK and UNCLE PAT, their right fists clinched.

CHARLIE

Ready coach? USA vs. Italy, round two.

The usual SUSPECTS gather to watch CHARLIE and BOBBY challenge the MAGGIO BROTHERS in MORDE, a traditional Italian game using five fingers. FRANK vs. BOBBY.

FITZ

Shut him out guys.

The two men raise their right hands, then lower them, extending several fingers from their hands.

FRANK

Siete!

BOBBY

Quattro!

FRANK

One for the old country. Pasquale.

A second throw of the hands and PASQUALE defeats CHARLIE. Another series of throws and BOBBY and CHARLIE are shut out. The small crowd in the background erupts with excitement.

CHARLIE

You got us coach.

FRANK

One more.

CHARLIE

You and Uncle Pasquale took us fair and square. We'll get you boys next time.

CHARLIE grabs his dessert, joins LINDA.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

What do you mean next time? Let's go again now! "In great attempts, it's glorious even to fail."

UNCLE PAT

(In Italian) Cheech, leave the boy alone.

FRANK glances about the room.

FRANK

Next time it is.

CHARLIE

Coach, Mrs. Maggio, thanks for dinner.

CHARLIE looks to FITZ and RICKY.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

You boys need a ride? (off nods)

FITZ

Thanks coach --

RICKY

Mrs. M. --

LINDA

You guys are the absolute best cooks in the world.

The group moves toward the exit. DENISE assists her parents in packing leftovers for the guests in tin foil wrappings.

FITZ

Little extra on the Parmesan if you don't mind Denise? You cook like this too?

DENISE

I'm a career woman Fitz.

FITZ

Oh, one of them woman libbers?

CATHERINE looks to RICKY.

RICKY

Maybe some more of the mushrooms Mrs. M.

FRANK approaches CHARLIE and LINDA.

FRANK

What about you guys?

CHARLIE

I'm full -- really.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

LINDA

I'll take some more meatballs --

FRANK packs their doggy bag, adds a little extra. CATHERINE notices the extra attention, as the guests make for the exit.

EXT. PORCH - SAME

BOBBY walks RICKY down the steps. FITZ walks with DENISE. FRANK stays back a moment with CHARLIE and LINDA.

FRANK

Charlie, you got a second?

CHARLIE glances toward LINDA.

LINDA

I'll wait by the car. (she exits)

FRANK guides CHARLIE to a quiet section of the porch.

FRANK

Listen, Charlie, uh -- you pretty tight with the staff down there in Miami?

CHARLIE

I wouldn't say tight -- I'm just a rookie trying to make the team like everybody else.

FRANK

Yeah but you're not a free agent or anything. You got a contract, a signing bonus. And with your ability, you're a shoe in for making the team -- probably even start if you ask me.

CHARLIE

Appreciate the vote of confidence.

FRANK

Hell you deserve it son.

CHARLIE motions to leave. Frank grabs his arm.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Charlie, I'm not having any luck getting Bobby a tryout. The teams are all saying the same thing -- you know, division III, his size and speed don't measure up. Hell, they told Lombardi he was too small, it didn't stop him right?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

Coach, Lombardi played line 50 years ago. Things were a little different back then.

FRANK

"A man can be as great as he wants to be." Bobby's got greatness in him -- I can feel it.

CHARLIE

I agree. But what can I do?

FRANK

Call down to Miami, get him a free agent tryout. I guarantee he won't let you down.

CHARLIE

Coach, I don't think I have that kind of pull. I wouldn't even know who to call.

FRANK

He's worked for this chance all his life, wouldn't you agree?

CHARLIE

Yeah, but -- (off Frank's look) okay coach. The staff's out this week, but I'll call first thing Monday morning.

FRANK

Thank you.

CHARLIE

I don't know if it'll do any good --

FRANK

It will Charlie. I can feel it in my gut.

FRANK hugs CHARLIE. BOBBY notices this from the car. CHARLIE joins his friend.

BOBBY

What the hell was that all about?

CHARLIE

He was wishing me luck down in Miami.

CHARLIE enter his car.

CHARLIE (CONT'D)

Hey, we working out tomorrow?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

(frustrated) I don't know Charlie. I'm afraid my football days are numbered. Pop doesn't think so, but you and I know better.

CHARLIE

Gotta do what's in your heart.

BOBBY

I hear you. (pause) Of course, there's no reason I can't stay in shape -- maybe help you out a little at the same time.

CHARLIE

Just as long as you know we ain't running no freaken' mile! (pause) Later Bobby.

CHARLIE enters his car, exits.

INT. STUDY - MORNING

A desk calendar includes phone numbers and names of all 28 professional football teams. The clock on the wall reads: 7:45 AM. FRANK is on the phone.

FRANK

(into phone) -- I'm looking for the person in charge of free agent tryouts. No, a player of mine. He's a quarterback -- 5'9, 180. Hey, if you don't want to give him a shot, fine. He'll play for Coach Shula down in Miami. Hello?

FRANK slams down the phone, grabs his things and exits.

EXT. BUFFALO CITY HALL - MORNING

FRANK exits his car, adjacent to the 85 year-old antiquated structure. Placing his building inspector medallion on the dash board, FRANK then makes his way up the city hall stairs, passing by dozens of EMPLOYEES, several of whom nod to him.

INT. CITY HALL - SAME

FRANK makes his way into the elevator. Two MEN enter with him. The elevator begins to rise, before one of the MEN stops it. REVEAL: JOHN CONRAD, (50's). JOHN is overweight and old school. Adjacent to him, RON SARGENT (45).

CONRAD

We don't take kindly to people down here rocking the boat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK glances at the men, his confusion apparent.

SARGENT

Hagan told us all about you.

CONRAD

We run things down here at the hall.

SARGENT

Capice?

FRANK

No, I don't capice.

CONRAD

Then I'll spell it out for your dumb Italian ass. Three inspections a day -- that's our agreed upon quota.

FRANK

An inspection takes a half-hour, forty-five minutes tops. What do you suggest I do for the rest of the day?

SARGENT

That's your business.

FRANK

Fine.

CONRAD

Good. Now we're all starting off on the same page. Welcome aboard Mr. Maggio.

CONRAD restarts the elevator.

INT. BUILDING INSPECTOR OFFICE - MORNING

FRANK enters the office, looks to the only EMPLOYEE in the room, a SECRETARY early (20's). She continues typing at her desk, then hands him some documents, never looking up.

SECRETARY

Fill out everything, get it back to me by the end of the day. Today's inspections are in your inbound mail basket.

FRANK

Thank you.

She looks up apologetic. REVEAL: AFRICAN/AMERICAN -- ALLISON O'LEARY, (25).

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

ALLISON

Sorry. My name's Allison.

FRANK

Frank. (pause) Where is everybody?

ALLISON

(smirks) Log in sheet's over by the water cooler. Once they sign in -- (throws up hands).

FRANK

Got it, thanks.

FRANK signs in, retrieves a dozen or so inspections from his in basket. He reflects a moment, returns half the stack to the basket, then exits.

EXT. INNER CITY STREETS - DAY

FRANK pulls up to a low income property on Buffalo's East Side. He exits his car, checks the address, then moves toward the front door. Several children, all dressed in tattered clothing, smile at him.

AT THE FRONT DOOR - FRANK is greeted by a grungy looking Caucasian WOMAN, (40). The WOMAN is dressed in a tacky nightgown. Sporting a cigarette and a beer, she sizes up FRANK.

WOMAN

You the inspector man?

FRANK

Yes ma'am.

WOMAN

I got me four kids, sick all the time cause' the roof leak, and we ain't got no heat.

FRANK

Anybody been down here before?

WOMAN

I been calling for months, you the first. What you here for?

FRANK

I'm here to inspect the premises.

WOMAN

You got power to okay me some money?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

If you qualify.

The WOMAN eyes FRANK. She then unloosens her robe. FRANK responds, turning away quickly.

FRANK (CONT'D)

That's not going to help your cause.

She shrugs, tightens her robe. They continue into the home.

INT. HOUSE - SAME

The three bedroom home has trash scattered all over the floor. A RAT skirts by. The WOMAN has no reaction. Three young CHILDREN, dressed in their underwear only, play oblivious to their surroundings. FRANK removes a document from his briefcase.

FRANK

Are you Mrs. Johnson?

MRS. JOHNSON

That's me.

FRANK

I looked at your application on the way over here. I'm pretty sure you'll qualify for the program. But you've got to promise me you'll clean up the place.

MRS. JOHNSON

(insulted) And if I don't?

FRANK

Then I'm not approving your grant.

MRS. JOHNSON

That's blackmail.

FRANK

No child should have to live this way.

MRS. JOHNSON

What you know bout' living this way?

FRANK looks in the refrigerator. It's stocked with beer and little else. He closes the door.

FRANK

And get some food in here for these kids.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK moves toward the exit.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'll be back on Friday. That should give you enough time to take care of things.

AT THE DOOR -

MRS. JOHNSON

I do what you say, you give me the money?

FRANK

The city will write a check to the approved contractors.

FRANK exits.

INT. WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

BOBBY spots CHARLIE at the bench press. CHARLIE lies on his back and without assistance, he lifts 350 three times, then lets out a huge roar. The BOYS switch positions, reducing the weight to 275. BOBBY struggles getting two reps in.

BOBBY

Screw this, man -- that's good for me. You ready to hit the track?

CHARLIE

Yes sir. I'm feeling it today Adrian! I'm thinkin' 4.5 flat or better.

BOBBY

Let's do it.

The BOYS gather their things.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Hey, Charlie? (pause) How does all this feel? I mean with you getting drafted -- and all the publicity and everything?

CHARLIE

It feels great! More money than I've ever seen. I got hot chicks sending me marriage proposals in the mail!

BOBBY

Really?

CHARLIE finishes tying his laces, looks up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CHARLIE

I also got people asking for my time, hitting me up for money, and telling me I'm the great White Hope of South Buffalo.

BOBBY

How do you handle all that?

CHARLIE

I just keep thinking of my Mom -- and all the things I'll finally be able to do for her.

BOBBY

I hear that.

BOBBY and CHARLIE exit the locker room.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

BOBBY and CHARLIE warm up on the track. LINDA sits in the stands. Several REPORTERS stand outside the gate, cameras in hand. BOBBY glances over to them.

BOBBY

I could get used to this Charlie Boy.

CHARLIE smiles.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

You up for a ladder?

CHARLIE

I figured we'd warm up, stride out a couple laps, then hit the 40's.

BOBBY

Stride outs it is Brother.

BOBBY and CHARLIE begins their stride outs. After several moments, CHARLIE looks to the ever increasing crowd and REPORTERS now in the stands. He glances toward BOBBY. A look between the two, and both MEN turn on the after burners.

FLYING DOWN THE - Straight away, BOBBY gives ground to his friend, who rounds the turn, then sprints across the finish line, raising his arms up in triumph. The CROWD erupts in excitement. The CAMERAS continue rolling, as CHARLIE continues in celebration. (a la ROCKY II)

SUDDENLY, CHARLIE - Stops his celebration fifty-yards down the track and turns.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

He grabs his chest, retreats to one knee, then looks to a fast approaching BOBBY and LINDA before collapsing.

A SMALL CROWD - gathers, and the CAMERAS continue rolling, as a REPORTER performs CPR on the fallen athlete. BOBBY and LINDA look on in horror.

INT. FATHER BAKER CHURCH - DAY

A large group of fellow ATHLETES, family MEMBERS and PRESS have gathered inside the magnificent facility. The PRIEST continues his sermon. BOBBY, CATHERINE, DENISE, UNCLE PAT, his wife and CHARLIE'S MOM fill the front row.

PRIEST

-- Thou preapest a table before me in the presence of mine enemies: thou anointest my head with oil; my cup runneth over. Surely goodness and kindness shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.

CROWD

Amen.

PRIEST

In closing, the family has asked Mr. Robert Maggio to say a few words.

BOBBY, dressed in a fine suit, approaches the podium. The somber CROWD focuses on the 21 year-old.

BOBBY

We're all here today to pay our respects to my best friend Charlie Anderson. I loved Charlie. (looks up) But I gotta' tell you Lord, I'm feeling pretty angry at you right now. My friend Charlie was 22 years old. You took him at 22. (pause) That's not fair. All the guy ever wanted to do was make in the NFL and take care of his mom.

BOBBY breaks down, returns to his seat. The PRIEST ends the service. BOBBY, FITZ, RICKY - And three other former PLAYERS take their positions at the casket.

IN THE CHOIR - A powerful voice sings the hymn, "Amazing Grace." All look to the balcony. FRANK continues singing, as the CASKET exits, followed by the MOURNERS.

EXT. CHURCH - SAME

OUTSIDE THE CHURCH - Several news trucks position themselves for a glimpse of the coffin. On camera is DICK BARRY.

DICK

Former high school teammates of highly touted pro-football prospect Charlie Anderson, bring out his casket. It's a sad day here in Western New York. A young man, cut down in the prime of his life. It is believed by this reporter that Charlie Anderson would have been a standout in the NFL. Preliminary autopsy reports indicate the 22 year-old may have had an enlarged heart, leading to the heart attack which ultimately took his life. This is Dick Barry of WKBW channel 7 reporting to you live from Our Lady of Victory Basilica here in Lackawanna, NY.

The casket is placed into the back of the hearse. FRANK joins his family. The long motorcade then exits.

EXT. HOME - NIGHT

Cars are parked and double parked in the street, on the front lawn and in the MAGGIO driveway. Dozens of people filter in and out of the home through the front door.

INT. BASEMENT - NIGHT

POTS are boiling, PANS frying on a four burner stove. FRANK removes several meatballs from the oven, while simultaneously stirring the several items cooking on the stove top. FITZ enters, grabs a pan full of spaghetti, exits up the stairs.

FITZ

Great job with the food Coach.

FITZ exits. Coming down the stairs, groceries in hand, is BOBBY. He moves to a side table, begins unloading several of the bags. He takes two dozen eggs and a large package of meat, then brings them to his dad at the stove.

BOBBY

What do you want me to do Pop?

FRANK

Mix a half-dozen eggs with a cup of flour -- and one pound of pork with four pounds of red meat.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY begins mixing, as FRANK continues cooking.

BOBBY

Thanks for doing all this. I'm sure it means a lot to Mrs. Anderson.

FRANK

I like what you said in church. If there's one thing I've learned, it's that life's not fair, and this just proves it.

FRANK tastes the sauce, then adds several spices.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I ever tell you how Brian Piccolo died? (pause) The man had cancer at 26 -- left a wife and three kids.

BOBBY

Why does God do that to people Pop?

FRANK

I don't think this kind of stuff is his call. Look what His boy went through.

FRANK continues cooking. FITZ and RICKY return.

RICKY

Any more raviolis coach?

FRANK places several dozen on a tray, hands them RICKY. FITZ grabs two bottles of wine.

FITZ

Okay if I take this?

FRANK

Don't drink any on the way up.

The two BOYS smile, then exit. FRANK continues with his son.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Charlie and Brian Piccolo were cut down in the prime of their lives. Only Piccolo was there Bobby -- got a taste of heaven right there at Soldier Field. Charlie never got a chance to enjoy that feeling. And that's the real tragedy here. But that ain't gonna happen to you son. You're gonna' get your opportunity.

FRANK removes a large container of Eggplant Parmesan from the oven. DENISE enters, retrieves the Eggplant.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DENISE
Everything's great dad.

She exits. FRANK looks to the stove, hesitates a moment, then shuts off the food cooking. He then turns to BOBBY.

FRANK
Charlie say anything to you?

BOBBY
About what?

FRANK
About you getting a shot down in Miami!

BOBBY
No -- why would that come up?

FRANK
Forget it.

FRANK turns on the stove, resumes cooking. BOBBY approaches, turns off the burner.

BOBBY
Pop? (off look) I don't think I have what it takes to play in the NFL.

FRANK
Don't say that! Don't you ever say that!!

BOBBY
Look at my 40 time --

CATHERINE enters.

CATHERINE
Everything okay?

BOBBY
Fine.

CATHERINE
Why don't you two go upstairs and visit with Mrs. Anderson -- I'll cover for you here.

FRANK
(to Bobby) We'll talk about this later Kiddo.

FRANK exits. BOBBY remains behind with his mother.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CATHERINE

What was that all about?

BOBBY

Nothing.

CATHERINE attends to the items cooking on the stove.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Dozens of CHARLIE'S former teammates, Mrs. Anderson and FRANK'S family crowd the medium sized living room. FRANK checks, make sure everybody has enough to eat. He then moves to the head of the table. The room grows silent.

FRANK

Thank you all for coming and showing your support for Mrs. Anderson. I'm certain Charlie is looking down on us this evening with a warm smile on his face.

FRANK raises a glass of wine, the others follow. BOBBY and CATHERINE enter with additional food.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You all know the story of the late Brian Piccolo. Jack Warden summed it up in the film Brian's Song when he said, "When his friends think of Pic, they don't think of how he died, but of how he lived." Charles Anderson was a lot like Brian Piccolo. Both men strove for greatness and achieved it -- Brian with the Chicago Bears, and Charlie with a Division IA powerhouse. "If you'll not settle for anything less than your best, you will be amazed at what you can accomplish in your lives." Charlie Anderson gave life his best, a 110% effort, 110% of the time. (Looks up to ceiling) Salute.

The entire group drinks. FRANK turns to BOBBY.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(quietly) It's your turn now son. The ball's in your hands.

MRS. ANDERSON removes a note from her purse, approaches FRANK. BOBBY stands adjacent to him.

MRS. ANDERSON

I want to thank you and your family for everything Mr. Maggio.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MRS. ANDERSON (CONT'D)

(hands FRANK note) Charlie had this on his dresser the day he -- (Gathers herself). I don't know if he called or not, but I'm sure he intended to. (looks to Bobby) Charlie looked up to you Bobby - - talked about you all the time.

MRS. ANDERSON hugs BOBBY, then exits. BOBBY glances toward the note, glares at his father, then storms off.

INT. KITCHEN - LATER THAT NIGHT

DENISE and CATHERINE finish cleaning the kitchen.

DENISE

Ma, you think it was right -- Dad talking that way about Charlie tonight?

CATHERINE

What way?

DENISE

Saying how great he was playing DI -- comparing him to Brian Piccolo in front of Bobby and everyone else at the table.

CATHERINE

Tonight was a night for Charlie's Mom. And I'm very proud of how my husband honored that boy's memory.

DENISE

What about honoring his own son? (pause) Charlie wasn't the great hero everyone thinks he was Mom.

CATHERINE

What are you saying?

DENISE

I'm saying a congenital heart defect is not how he died.

CATHERINE

How would you know that?

DENISE

My friend performed the autopsy. An enlarged heart has been ruled out.

CATHERINE

Why are you even looking into this?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

Because I'm sick and tired of my brother living in the shadow of the great Charlie Anderson.

CATHERINE shuts off the sink, looks to her daughter.

CATHERINE

How did he die Denise?

DENISE

We should hear something any day now.

FRANK enters. DENISE and CATHERINE return to the dishes.

EXT. MICKEY RAT'S BEACH CLUB - NIGHT

A long line of college PATRONS wait to get into the beach front night club.

INT. MICKEY RAT'S - SAME

BOBBY, RICKY, LINDA and a few of her friends sit at the bar. FITZ serves them from behind the bar. LINDA moves closer to BOBBY. Seconds later, she gives him a kiss, then a long hug.

INT. STUDY - NIGHT

A chalkboard fills the corner of the room. On it, dozens of 3X5 index cards with professional football team names on them, along with phone numbers and persons to contact. Several of the cards have been crossed out.

A HAND SLIDES IN - Crossing off the card for the Miami Dolphins. Stepping back, FRANK stares at the chalkboard nearly full of crossouts. FRANK catches his reflection through a trophy case window.

FRANK

"It's not whether you get knocked down, it's whether you get back up." You can't give up now Cheech, your boy --

In steps an inebriated BOBBY.

BOBBY

You shouldn't talk to yourself like that Pop. People might think you're crazy.

FRANK

What do I care what people think?

Wine bottle in hand, BOBBY gingerly moves toward his dad.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)

You're drunk.

BOBBY

You're damn right I am.

FRANK

Go to bed Bobby.

BOBBY

(slurred speech, drinks) I don't want to go to bed. I want to talk to my Pop about playing DI ball.

FRANK approaches his son.

FRANK

I'll let this slide, just this one time. I figure you're letting off steam about losing Charlie.

BOBBY

You got that right, (mimics) Kiddo.

BOBBY grabs a football off the desk.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

I came here to thank you for going above and beyond for my friend Charlie.

FRANK

Go to bed. We got practice in the morning. And from now on, (takes bottle) I'll be running your program schedule.

BOBBY

Yes sir, Cheech, sir! (Salutes, then) You run the program schedule -- but I wouldn't leave your day job, cause' I ain't gonna' be there.

FRANK

What did you say?

BOBBY gathers his courage, steps toward his dad.

BOBBY

You asked Charlie to call down to Miami for me didn't you? Asked a guy trying to make it himself to help out your SON!

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK

That's right! And He was more than happy to do it -- said He'd help you out anyway He could.

BOBBY approaches the corkboard.

BOBBY

Help me out Pop, or you?

FRANK

What's that supposed to mean?

BOBBY

It means what it means --

FRANK

Don't play games with me Bobby.

BOBBY struggles through his fear.

BOBBY

Why? You've been playing games with me my whole life. Only now the game's over. I'm quitting football Pop. Finito.

FRANK

Finito, my ass. It's just the wine talking is all.

BOBBY

(nods) It ain't the wine Cheech --

BOBBY begins removing the 3x5 cards from the corkboard.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

Look at the god damn board for Christ's sake. Miami's not calling -- no one's calling. And you want to know why? Because, I DON'T HAVE WHAT IT TAKES!! Only guess what, I'm perfectly okay with that. (takes bottle off desk, drinks)

FRANK

Well, I'm not.

CATHERINE joins them as well.

CATHERINE

What's going on in here?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

Pop thinks I should go down to Miami to live out his dream.

FRANK (CONT'D)

The hell with Miami. I'll call around the league, get you a tryout with another team that's all. There's twenty-eight of them. You'll play somewhere.

BOBBY

Pop, it's over.

FRANK jumps from his chair.

FRANK

Nothing's over till I say it is, you hear me!?! If we have to play a year up in Canada, we'll do it. You're not quitting. I won't allow it!! "A quitter never wins and a winner never quits. Once you learn to quit it becomes a habit." The great Italian/American --

BOBBY

Yeah, yeah, yeah -- your goombade, Vincent The Great Italian/American pizza makin', concrete mixin' legend guy --

CATHERINE

Bobby. (a stern look)

FRANK struggles to catch his breath.

FRANK

I don't need your help.

FRANK approaches BOBBY, removes the football from his son's hand. DENISE enters, stands at the doorway.

FRANK (CONT'D)

All I ever asked from you was to give a hundred percent and do your best. Nothing more, nothing less.

BOBBY

I tried Pop. I tried.

FRANK

Well not hard enough! Now Charlie, there's a man who gave it all he had.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

FRANK (CONT'D)

Dramatically increased his speed and strength -- head and shoulders he was above everybody else. And why? Because he worked at it -- left everything he had out on the field. He had the courage of a lion, not the fear of a god damn scare crow like you seem to have.

BOBBY seethes, wants to comment, refrains. With tears in his eyes, the youngster turns to exit.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Where do you think you're going?

FRANK grabs his son by the shoulders, spins him violently.
BOBBY grabs his father by the shirt, cocks his arm.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Go ahead, hit me!! (pause) No guts?

CATHERINE steps between them.

CATHERINE

That's enough from the both of you! I said, that's enough!!

BOBBY

The hell with football! And the hell with you too Pop.

BOBBY turns, hurries to the exit.

FRANK

You're nothing but a quitter. A quitter, just like everybody else in this neighborhood.

BOBBY

I never quit anything in my life!!

BOBBY exits. FRANK chases after him.

FRANK

You walk out that door, don't bother coming back. YOU HEAR ME!!! (To wife and Denise) That ungrateful son-of-a-bitch, do you believe this shit?

CATHERINE and DENISE exit. FRANK begins cleaning up.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

BOBBY hurries to his car, gets in, starts the engine.
CATHERINE rushes toward him. He rolls down the window.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE

Bobby, please don't leave.

BOBBY

I ain't no quitter Ma!

CATHERINE

Your father didn't mean that.

BOBBY

He doesn't care about me. He never did.
Don't you see that?

CATHERINE

Your father loves you very much. He just
doesn't know how to show it.

BOBBY

Step back from the car Mom. Ma, please?

CATHERINE steps back. BOBBY barrels out of the driveway, as
FRANK steps onto the porch ranting out a slue of quotes.

FRANK

"Winning is not a sometime thing; it's an
all-the-time thing!! You don't win once
in a while, you don't do things right
once in a while, you do them right all
the time. Winning is a habit, so is
losing..." (screams) You quit now you're
nothing but a loser. Charlie wouldn't
have quit. Not in a million years!!

FRANK grabs his right arm, heads back into the house. On his
way in, DENISE confronts him on the porch.

DENISE

You know what Pop? Your big hero was no
saint.

FRANK

What do you know from nothin'?

FRANK enters the house, slams the door behind him.

EXT. STREETS - NIGHT

BOBBY drives through the city streets. After a near
collision with a CEMENT truck, he pulls to the side of the
road, turns off the engine, begins crying.

INT. LIVING ROOM - EARLY MORNING

BOBBY stands, blanket and pillow in hand. RICKY lays on the couch. FITZ enters with the remains of a pizza in hand.

FITZ

Just like old times huh Bobby? (off nod)
Hey Bobby, you're welcome to stay as long
as you want right, Rick?

RICKY

I think he knows that.

FITZ

Hey Bobby, I know it's none of our
business --

RICKY

Time to give it a rest Fitz.

The phone rings. FITZ picks it up.

BOBBY

That's okay, if I can't talk to you guys
right?

FITZ

(into phone) Hello. Hi Denise -- yeah
he's here. You want to talk to him? Oh,
okay. (phone clicks) Your mom wanted to
make sure you were here.

RICKY

You know, I was just telling Fitz the
other day -- coach was pushing you way
too hard.

FITZ

Him busting on you all the time to be
more like Charlie. That ain't right. We
all know how He got his speed.

RICKY sips from a beer, FITZ devours a slice of pizza.

RICKY

Charlie was good people.

FITZ

I'm not saying he wasn't. But while he's
juicing up benching 350 and running sub
4.6's, Bobby's old man's busting on him
and his work ethic. That ain't right.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

You guys knew about the steroids?

FITZ

Hell Bobby, Linda offered to sell the stuff to practically the whole team. I'm surprised Danesco didn't find out about it -- with him teaching gym at the school and everything.

RICKY

I hear that. (exits to kitchen)

RICKY grabs another beer from the fridge, returns.

RICKY (CONT'D)

I'll say this. If your old man knew about the juice Charlie was pumping, ten-to-one says he starts treating you differently.

FITZ

Your dad's a great guy. But if you want him off your ass you need to tell him the truth.

RICKY downs another beer, FITZ a slice. BOBBY munches on a stale bag of pretzels.

INT. MAGGIO KITCHEN - SAME

FRANK and CATHERINE are at the breakfast table. DENISE stands at the counter dressed in her nursing uniform. All eyes are on her. Finally -

CATHERINE

How is he?

DENISE

He's fine. (pause) Pop, don't you think you're over reacting here?

FRANK

What are you Dear Abby now?

DENISE

No, but I did take several psychology courses in college -- and if my memory serves me correctly, you do have what they call a type A personality.

FRANK

What's a type A personality?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

Obsessive/compulsive, determined and high strung. But we love you anyway.

She kisses her dad. He nervously accepts.

FRANK

What's that for?

DENISE

I figured you were gonna' need it today. See you at the hospital Mom.

She kisses her mother, then exits. CATHERINE approaches FRANK.

CATHERINE

You'd better have this whole thing straightened out by today.

She moves to exits.

FRANK

Don't you people understand? (pause) If that boy quits now, it'll affect him for the rest of his life. He'll always be wondering, what if? The worst thing for an athlete is not knowing how far he could have gone. I won't have that happen to my boy.

CATHERINE

Maybe your son's gone as far as he can Frank?

She exits. FRANK reflects a moment on his wife's comment, then quickly dismisses it.

FRANK

Season opens in three weeks and now I have to deal with this bullshit.

FRANK grabs his briefcase, exits.

INT. OFFICE - DAY

JOHN CONRAD and RON SARGENT flip through their daily assignments.

SARGENT

What do you got?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CONRAD

Early Christmas present -- Mangano's got
a big cement job going down on Chippewa.

CONRAD continues searching through his assignments. After
several moments, he looks over to ALLISON.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Allison?

ALLISON

Yes John?

CONRAD

Where's the Mangano inspection for today?

ALLISON

It's not my turn to watch it.

CONRAD becomes frantic, searches around his entire desk, and
then the others. Finally, he looks to the in basket at
FRANK'S desk. The basket is full to the top.

CONRAD

There must be over a dozen in here?

CONRAD flips through the files, finally stopping at the
MANGANO folder.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

What the hell's this doing in here?

SARGENT

Just take it.

CONRAD

I can't -- they're all logged in.

CONRAD grabs the log sheet off FRANK'S desk. FRANK enters.
CONRAD returns the log, then heads toward his desk.

FRANK APPROACHES ALLISON - Hands her a small bag.

FRANK

Eggplant Parmesan.

ALLISON

Homemade?

FRANK

(nods) Let me know what you think.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

ALLISON

Thank you. (whispers) Watch yourself --
the walls have ears.

FRANK signs in, moves to his desk. Removing the day's inspections, he observes they number nearly ten. A WORKER approaches, REVEAL LENNY SCILINO (45).

LENNY

Cheech. How's the job?

FRANK

Good Lenny, thanks.

LENNY

(looks to folders) I got two inspections
the whole day. You want me to take a few
of those off your hands?

FRANK glances toward CONRAD and SARGENT.

FRANK

I got'em -- but thanks.

LENNY

Your boy get a tryout yet?

FRANK

Not yet.

LENNY

The Canadian league's not a bad place
Frank.

LENNY exits. FRANK grabs the files, slides them into his briefcase, then moves to exit. CONRAD approaches.

CONRAD

Frank, you got a second?

FRANK stops.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

Look, maybe we got off on the wrong foot
here. If that's the case, then I'm
sorry. I'd like to make it up to you.

FRANK

And why would you want to do that?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

CONRAD

We're all a team here. And on a team everyone has to work together. You're a coach, you know that right?

FRANK

And what position do you want to play?

CONRAD

Running back. I figured I'd help you out -- take a few of those commercial inspections off your hands -- let you finish the rest of the day before the game clock expires.

FRANK

I appreciate your concern, but I think I got it covered. I'm kind of used to working the two minute drill.

FRANK crosses to exit.

CONRAD

A hundred bucks says you don't finish all your inspections by 4:30.

FRANK

Make it two hundred and you got yourself a bet.

CONRAD

Done.

FRANK then exits.

CONRAD (CONT'D)

That midget's gonna' fall flat on his face.

INT. FITZ AND RICKY'S LIVING ROOM - DAY

BOBBY looks through the WANT AD'S. He circles an inquiry in the automotive section. In from the other room steps FITZ. He's dressed in his bartending clothes.

FITZ

Stop by later it's ladies night. We'll do a couple of shots, chase after some ugly women -- you know, the usual.

BOBBY

I think I'll take it easy tonight Fitz.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FITZ glances at the paper.

FITZ
Anything interesting?

BOBBY
There's not much happening around here is there?

FITZ
Why do you think we're the number one drinking city in America? Later.

He exits. BOBBY goes back to the paper.

EXT. CONSTRUCTION SITE - DAY

FRANK pulls up to a large construction site. He looks to his watch, it reads: 3:45PM. FRANK grabs the folder marked MANGANO GENERAL CONTRACTORS and exits his car.

AT THE GATE - FRANK shows his badge to the SECURITY GUARD, then makes his way through the site, stopping at the back of a large CEMENT TRUCK. FRANK approaches, then grabs a small sample of cement pouring down the steel channel on the truck. He moves it around between his thumb and forefinger, then motions to the DRIVER to stop the pour. After viewing FRANK'S badge, the DRIVER complies.

SUDDENLY, A FIGURE - Exits a temporary TRAILER in the background. REVEAL: MICHAEL MANGANO, 60. Livid, MANGANO makes a B-line toward FRANK.

MANGANO
What the hell's going on here?

FRANK flashes his badge.

FRANK
Frank Maggio, city building inspector.

MANGANO
Take the day off Mr. Maggio. John Conrad does all our inspections -- has for years. (to Driver) Start the pour.

The DRIVER restarts the pour. The MAN stops as FRANK writes down the truck's number and license plate.

MANGANO (CONT'D)
Take five everybody.

MANGANO approaches FRANK.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MANGANO (CONT'D)

What'd you say your name was?

FRANK

Frank Maggio.

MANGANO

Pisano. (off nod) Where you from Frank?

FRANK

Napoli.

MANGANO

Ah, Parlo Italiano?

FRANK

Si.

MANGANO

(In Italian)

Good. That's good. You help maintain the tradition here. (pause) Francesco, why did you stop the pour?

FRANK

PSI on the cement is supposed to be 3500. This pour's 2800, 3000 tops.

MANGANO

Delivery slip says otherwise.

FRANK

Show it to me and I'm on my way.

MANGANO

It's inside.

MANGANO and FRANK walk toward the trailer.

MANGANO (CONT'D)

You been with the city long Frank?

FRANK

A few months.

INT. CONSTRUCTION TRAILER - SAME

Decorated with the full amenities, MANGANO moves to the wet bar in back of his desk.

MANGANO

Something to drink?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

No thank you.

FRANK looks to the signed photos of numerous professional football PLAYERS and COACHES on the wall. A plaque of VINCE LOMBARDI'S speech on WINNING decorates its own space.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You a big football fan Mr. Mangano?

MANGANO

Not really.

FRANK

You know any of these guys?

FRANK is enthralled with the wall of fame.

MANGANO

I know'em all. Done work for nearly everybody up there, including our pisano Lombardi. He made us proud huh Frank?

FRANK nods as MANGANO searches through his desk drawers.

MANGANO (CONT'D)

That slip's around here somewhere.

He continues searching. FRANK continues staring.

MANGANO (CONT'D)

You want any of those guys to sign a picture for you?

FRANK

(pause) One for my boy would be nice.

MANGANO

How old is he?

FRANK

Twenty-two. (pause) He's trying out for the NFL this year.

MANGANO

Oh yeah? Well, good for him. What team?

FRANK

I'm still working on that.

MANGANO

He doesn't have an agent? (Off nod)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

MANGANO takes out several photos of DAN MARINO, JOE MONTANA and TERRY BRADSHAW -- places them on the desk.

MANGANO (CONT'D)

Take whatever you want Frank.

FRANK catches himself, stops.

FRANK

I need to see the slip Mr. Mangano. As soon as I do, your men go right back to work.

MANGANO stops his search, looks up.

MANGANO

I don't have it Frank. (Pause) For Christ's sake, nobody's checked the mixture on my cement in years. And now you come in here and bust my balls.

FRANK

I'm just doing my job sir.

MANGANO removes his wallet, takes out a stack of 100 bills.

MANGANO

Will three-thousand help you do your job somewhere else?

FRANK shakes his head no.

MANGANO (CONT'D)

That's a thousand more than I usually give.

FRANK

I'm sorry, but I'll have to shut the project down until you pass a slump test.

MANGANO

Frank, the psi's three-thousand okay? Three god damn thousand. No foundation or wall of mine has ever crumpled in the thirty-years I been in business. Take the money and look the other way. All your fellow inspectors at the city have been doing it for years.

FRANK

Not all Mr. Mangano.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK moves to exit, glances one more time at the wall, then leaves. MANGANO sees this, rushes to the door.

MANGANO

Frank? (pause) Does a free agent tryout for your boy down in Miami interest you?

FRANK stops dead in his tracks, turns.

FRANK

You can do that?

MANGANO moves back into the trailer. FRANK follows.

INT. AUTO GARAGE - MORNING

Typical BAY garage. The walls are decorated with pictures of women, mostly in birthday suits. On the phone, REVEAL: MARIO CAPPACHIO (50's). MARIO is dressed in a white T-shirt and polyester pants. In his mouth, a half spent cigar.

MARIO

(into phone) Look lady, I don't care how much you spent, the guarantee doesn't cover you not putting oil into the engine. That's what the red light's for.

He pushes down another light on his phone.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Mario's? Yeah Mrs. Roberts? Your car will be ready this afternoon -- four o'clock. I can't get to it any sooner. How much more? (pause) I'll get to it sooner -- call me in two hours.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Pretty busy huh?

MARIO looks up, notices BOBBY standing at the door.

MARIO

You ain't kiddin'. The whole world's got car problems today --

MARIO catches himself, re-lights his cigar.

MARIO (CONT'D)

-- alright, enough about my problems. What are you selling and how much?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY

I called yesterday about the ad in the paper. You still looking for a mechanic?

MARIO sizes up BOBBY.

MARIO

What kind of experience you got?

BOBBY points to his car parked in the driveway.

BOBBY

Rebuilt that engine and tranny'.

MARIO

Good for you kid.

MARIO begins to walk away.

BOBBY

Give me a week.

MARIO

A week to do what?

BOBBY

Give me a bay for a week. If you don't like my work, I walk, no charge.

MARIO stares at BOBBY a long moment.

MARIO

You got balls kid. But that don't put money in my pocket. Check with me again in a few months.

BOBBY

That don't work for me.

BOBBY turns to exit, MARIO responds.

MARIO

Hey kid? You look familiar. Where do I know you from?

BOBBY

I don't know -- neighborhood maybe?

MARIO

No, someplace else.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

Oh, one time my uncle brought me to see
one of your car's race at the Glen.

MARIO

Who's your uncle?

BOBBY

Pat Maggio.

MARIO

You're Pasquale's nephew? (off nod) I
came over on the boat with him and his
brother from the old country.

BOBBY

That's my dad.

MARIO (CONT'D)

Great bowler your old man. I seen him
clean up at Recchio's many times.

BOBBY

He was definitely great under pressure.

MARIO

Okay kid, you start tomorrow. But if you
ain't good, you're outta' here in a week,
family or no family, you got that?

BOBBY smiles, moves toward the exit, turns.

BOBBY

Hey Mario?

BOBBY gives him the same thumbs up sign the two gave each
other years before at the race track. MARIO smiles, as BOBBY
exits. He then answers another call.

MARIO

Mario's -- what can I do for ya? You did
what? (Looks up toward sky) Your
punishing me today Lord, I just know it.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The QUARTERBACK tosses a pitch out to, REVEAL: Senior running
back BRIAN ROSS, 18. The 6'2" back avoids the oncoming
DEFENDERS by stepping out of bounds. FRANK sprints up.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

What the hell kind of run was that? Two-hundred and twenty pounds and you run out of bounds!! First team offense down at the goal line -- let's go!!

DANESCO and the defensive unit look on.

COACH DANESCO

The rest of you guys, let's take it in.

They exit.

FRANK AND THE OFFENSIVE UNIT - Meet down at the ten yard line. FRANK approaches ROSS.

FRANK

Give me your helmet and shoulder pads.

FRANK puts on ROSS'S helmet and shoulder pads.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Alright, listen up. Thirty-six sweep right, on two. Half-line -- the rest of you guys play defense. Everybody here goes full speed understand? Anybody holds up on tackling me runs the rest of the afternoon. You all got that? Good.

ON THE FIELD - The QUARTERBACK takes the snap, pitches the ball to FRANK, who sprints around the right side. He picks up a block and turns the corner. With a DEFENSIVE BACK fast approaching, FRANK lowers his head and runs right through him. He is finally knocked out of bounds by the outside LINEBACKER. FRANK quickly jumps to his feet.

FRANK (CONT'D)

(to Ross) You run like that in practice, the same thing happens in the game. Everybody take a lap.

The PLAYERS begin running.

PLAYER I

What's wrong with coach today?

PLAYER II

I think the man need's to get laid.

DEFENSIVE BACK

He's just trying to make us better.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

PLAYER II

Well, it ain't working for you Conrad.
He just knocked you on your ass.

Several PLAYERS begin laughing. BILLY CONRAD, (17), grabs
PLAYER II, knocks him to the ground.

BILLY CONRAD

And I knocked you on yours.

The PLAYERS continue their lap. FRANK removes his helmet.
Noticeably out of breath, he takes a knee.

INT. CCU UNIT HOSPITAL - DAY

Dressed in her nurse's uniform, DENISE slides a needle into a
PATIENTS arm, then positions a bottle of saline on the stand.
A NURSE at the front desk motions to her.

NURSE

Medical Examiner downstairs says he needs
to see you right away.

DENISE exits the CCU unit, enters the elevator.

INT. HOSPITAL BASMENT - SAME

DENISE exits the elevator, makes her way down the short
hallway, entering through a door that reads: DR. CARLO
PROFETTO MEDICAL EXAMINER.

INT. MEDICAL EXAMINERS OFFICE - SAME

Looking through the lens of a microscope, REVEAL: DR. CARLO
PROFETTO. CARLO is a handsome man in his early 30's.

DR. PROFETTO

Be with you in a second Denise. The
kid's report's on the desk.

DENISE grabs CHARLIE'S chart and begins reading.

DENISE

Anabolic Steroids -- twice the lethal
doze found in his system?

DR. PROFETTO

(joins her) Yeah, but that's not what
killed him.

DR. PROFETTO kisses DENISE on the cheek.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. PROFETTO (CONT'D)

How are you beautiful?

DENISE

(looks to chart) Carlo, what's a twenty-two year old doing taking steroids?

DR. PROFETTO

You don't know? (Off nod) It increases muscle mass and speed, and occasionally gives one a sense of euphoria and sexual stimulation.

DENISE glares at him.

DR. PROFETTO (CONT'D)

Well, maybe not the last one.

DENISE

What was the cause of death?

DR. PROFETTO

MI. Full ventricular blockage.

DENISE

At his age?

DR. PROFETTO

That amount of synthetic testosterone injected over a sustained period of time, increased the LDL in his body a hundred fold. That's like filling your arteries full of pure fat. I also found dozens of injection marks on his buttocks. I'm assuming that's how he contracted hepatitis C.

DENISE

Why would he take a risk like that?

DR. PROFETTO

There's a lot of money in professional sports these days. And with steroids being around since the early 50's, he probably thought it was okay. (pause) May want to get your brother in here for a blood test -- just to be safe.

DENISE

Thanks.

She turns to exit.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

DR. PROFETTO
Denise? Am I wearing the wrong cologne
or something?

DENISE
No. I'm sure your wife enjoys it very
much.

DR. PROFETTO
Point made. But check with your brother
just the same.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

FITZ and BOBBY are watching "HILL STREET BLUES" on the
television.

FITZ
Hey Bobby, maybe you should go into
acting. (Looks to TV) See that guy --

BOBBY
Ed Marinaro from the Vikings and Cornell.
He was also 6'3" and 235.

A knock at the door.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
You expecting anybody?

FITZ approaches the door.

FITZ
Who's there?

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
Denise Maggio.

FITZ
Just a second.

FITZ makes a strong effort to clean up the place.

FITZ (CONT'D)
Bobby, help me --

BOBBY begins helping him.

BOBBY
Who is it?

FITZ
Your sister.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY rolls his eyes, flips the clothes back onto the floor.
FITZ continues to clean, as BOBBY answers the door.

BOBBY

Hi Nesi, c'mon in. (kisses sister)

DENISE enters. FITZ freezes in place.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

He thinks you should be Miss America or something.

DENISE

Hi Fitz. (To Bobby) I need to talk to you.

BOBBY

I ain't going back if that's what you came here for.

DENISE

That's not why I'm here.

A somber DENISE sits on the couch.

BOBBY

What's the matter?

DENISE

Danesco called the house. Apparently, Dad put on the pads and ran over a defensive back today.

FITZ

I'd love to have seen that.

BOBBY

Is he okay?

DENISE

I think so, yeah. But that's only part of the reason for me being here.

DENISE looks to her brother, glances toward FITZ.

BOBBY

Nes, what's the matter? Denise?

DENISE

I just saw the final autopsy report on Charlie.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

And?

DENISE

He died of a massive heart attack. It was caused by severe blockage of the arteries going to his heart.

FITZ

But that was something he was born with right?

DENISE

No.

BOBBY

What caused it then? (pause) Denise, what caused it?

DENISE

Abuse of anabolic steroids.

FITZ jumps from his chair, walks toward the kitchen.

FITZ

I told him to knock that shit off --

DENISE

You knew about it Fitz?

FITZ returns.

FITZ

A lot of us did.

DENISE

You too Bobby? (Off nod) Why didn't you tell dad?

BOBBY

Tell him what?

DENISE

That the person he was always telling you to emulate, was actually taking illegal drugs to enhance his performance.

BOBBY

I ain't no snitch.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

DENISE

Snitch hell, Charlie's dead. (pause) You want to tell dad this time, or do you want me to? Or do you want to wait for it to hit the papers?

BOBBY

(pause) I'll tell him.

DENISE

Would you come home soon? Dad's driving me and Mom nuts.

DENISE moves toward the door, turns.

DENISE (CONT'D)

Either one of you ever inject that junk into your bodies?

Both MEN shake their heads no.

BOBBY

No, why?

DENISE

Charlie also had Hepatitis C. Apparently he got it from a dirty needle.

She exits. BOBBY and FITZ look to each other in shock.

INT. MAGGIO STUDY DEN - NIGHT

Several video cassettes lay scattered about the room. On the TV screen, a little league football game.

AT HIS DESK - An inebriated FRANK. Beside him, an empty decanter. FRANK rises, approaches the corkboard, removes and begins ripping up the remaining 3x5 cards.

FRANK SWAGGERS TO A - Walnut cabinet, unlocks it, then removes an old scrapbook from the bottom of the drawer. He props himself against the wall, flips through the pages.

FRANK

Remember this one Pop? Fourteen years old and they put me in the fourth grade. Wasn't my fault I couldn't speak English. Hey, here's one of you and me.

CATHERINE stands at the doorway. FRANK continues through his scrapbook, oblivious to her appearance.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK (CONT'D)

You know, you never played catch with me Pop -- never once. You always told me I was too small, and that I was wasting my time playing sports. Get a trade you used to say. People like us, that's all we got. Maybe you were right.

ECU OF A BLACK & WHITE - Photo of FRANK as a youngster with kids half his age. Another PHOTO of him and his dad by the train tracks. FRANK'S attention then shifts to a number of photos depicting him on his high school football team.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Frank Maggio, the shortest and skinniest football player in Seneca High history. You guys respected me after I hit that game winning field goal, didn't ya'. The midget immigrant from the old country showed them -- I showed them all.

FRANK passes out by the cabinet. CATHERINE approaches, slides a blanket around him. FRANK lets out a growl.

INT. CITY HALL OFFICE - MORNING

FRANK raises his head off the desk, glances at his in basket, retrieves several folders, then begins to exit.

ALLISON (O.S.)

Frank, call on line two.

FRANK returns to his desk, picks up line two.

FRANK

(into phone) Frank Maggio.

MALE VOICE (O.S.)

Frank -- Mike Mangano.

FRANK

What can I do for you Mr. Mangano?

MICHAEL MANGANO (O.S.)

Listen, Frank -- about yesterday, you got balls pisanos. Nobody stands up to me like that. Anyway, I just called to let you know I increased the psi on the Chippewa job to 3500. You can come down and check it anytime.

FRANK

Thank you.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

MICHAEL MANGANO (O.S.)

Oh, and Frank -- your boy's got a free agent tryout down in Miami. The head scout down there's a good friend of mine -
- He's expecting your call. Good luck.

FRANK hangs up the phone, unsure of what to do next.

EXT. FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

The PLAYERS are finishing their sprints. BOBBY exits his car, observes the practice by the fence. FRANK addresses his PLAYERS.

FRANK

One more guys -- let's give it all you have and we're done for the day.

The PLAYERS look to each other confused.

PLAYER I

Coach is giving us a break?

PLAYER II

I heard it too -- something must be wrong with him.

PLAYER III

Maybe he got a little last night.

FRANK blows the whistle and the three groups finish their sprints. FRANK joins the final group and finishes the sprint in the top three.

FRANK

Not bad for an old man huh Kiddo?

PLAYER III

Way to go Coach.

COACH DANESCO

Okay gentlemen, film in 30 minutes.

The PLAYERS exit. FRANK stays back with his two kickers.

COACH DANESCO (CONT'D)

See you inside Coach.

FRANK nods. He then takes out several copies of kicking instructions, hands the copies to his two KICKERS.

BOBBY MOVES TOWARD - The field, as FRANK continues instructing his two PLAYERS.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

You boys are kicking well. Keep it up.

The BOYS exit. FRANK gathers his things, as BOBBY approaches.

BOBBY

Still got the old legs huh Pop?

BOBBY walks onto the field.

FRANK

Your old man's got plenty left, don't you worry about that.

The two men square off.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What are you doing here? I thought you gave up on football.

BOBBY

I have.

FRANK

That's too bad -- got a tryout for you week after next in Miami.

BOBBY

Charlie?

FRANK

No, friend of mine. It's too bad though.

Without warning, FRANK fires the football he is holding at BOBBY'S head. BOBBY reacts quickly, snagging the ball just inches from his face.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Nice catch. Well c'mon, throw it back.

BOBBY

No.

FRANK

Why not?

BOBBY

I'm tired of fighting with you Pop. I'm not doing it anymore.

FRANK

Fighting what? Just throw me the friggen' ball.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

BOBBY

Is this the only way you can communicate?

BOBBY raises the ball, looks to his father, sets the ball on the ground, then moves to exit.

FRANK

Where you going? C'mon, throw it back.

BOBBY keeps walking. FRANK picks up the ball, delivers a strike that hits BOBBY in the back. BOBBY turns, grabs the ball and prepares to fire it back.

UNCLE PAT PULLS UP - At the gate, watches from his car.

FRANK (CONT'D)

What's the matter, no guts? Your friend Charlie had guts, gave it all he had, not like you. C'mon, throw the ball back. Throw the ball back you damn quitter!!

BOBBY loses control, fires a bullet right at his father. The ball goes through FRANK'S hands, hitting him in the stomach. FRANK falls to the ground grasping for air. BOBBY stands there, not quite sure what to do. FRANK rises.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Felt good didn't it? Little payback for all those years I got on your ass. C'mon, let's see what else you got.

FRANK tosses the ball back to BOBBY, approaches him.

BOBBY

Pop, Charlie --

FRANK

Charlie what? He's not here anymore. It's just you and me now. You're not afraid of a little competition are you?

FRANK hits BOBBY with his open fists on the boy's shoulders.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Let's go a little one-on-one. Just like the old days -- c'mon.

BOBBY

Don't do that.

FRANK continues striking him on the shoulders.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (3)

FRANK

I'll bet you'd like to knock my head off right now wouldn't you? Well, here's your chance son.

BOBBY

I don't want to hurt you Pop.

FRANK

Hurt me? Hell, that'll be the day.

BOBBY

Stop hitting me!!

A relentless FRANK continues on, BOBBY taking the bait.

FRANK

C'mon, you get by me, we never talk football again. I stop you, you go down to Miami.

BOBBY

I'm through trying to prove myself to you Pop. All my life, no matter what I've done, it's never been enough. (pause) I'm sorry if growing up for you in this country was hard, but it was hard for me too -- especially with someone like you as a father.

FRANK

Well great, here's your chance to get rid of me forever.

BOBBY SETS THE BALL - On the ground, begins to exit. FRANK takes a B-Line toward him, tackles BOBBY from behind, knocking him hard to the ground. BOBBY jumps up.

BOBBY

Alright you lousy son-of-a-bitch, let's go!!

FRANK lines up at the five yard line, BOBBY the fifteen.

FRANK

Five yards to pay dirt Bobby. A simple five yards.

BOBBY GATHERS HIMSELF - Then quickly accelerates toward his father. BOBBY reaches full speed at the eight yard line. The two men prepare themselves for the collision, BOBBY lowering his shoulder, FRANK pounding his chest.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (4)

BOBBY COLLIDES WITH HIS FATHER - At full speed, knocking HIM two yards back on his butt. BOBBY continues his assault, running over FRANK on his way to the endzone. BOBBY returns to his father sprawled out on the ground.

BOBBY
Touchdown Pop. Game over.

BOBBY TOSSES THE BALL - By his father's head, exits. FRANK stands, wipes himself off. BOBBY heads toward the parking lot, FRANK the opposite direction toward the locker room.

UNCLE PAT MEETS - BOBBY at the gate.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
Did you see that Uncle Pat? Your brother's nuts.

UNCLE PAT
C'mon, we have a little talk.

BOBBY gets into UNCLE PAT'S car. The vehicle exits the lot.

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - NIGHT

DANESCO enters. FRANK is watching kicking footage on the TV.

COACH DANESCO
See you tomorrow Coach.

FRANK
Goodnight.

DANESCO begins to exit, turns.

COACH DANESCO
Frank? Take this for what it's worth.
Your boy gave it all he had out there,
for us and in college. Maybe it's time
to let it go.

COACH DANESCO exits. The phone rings. After several rings, FRANK picks it up.

FRANK
(into phone) Coach's office? (pause)
Don't tell me you heard about it already?

FRANK grabs his left arm, stretches it.

DENISE (O.S.)
Are you okay Dad?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

What do you mean am I okay? Of course I'm okay. What do you want Nesi?

DENISE (O.S.)

There's something I need to talk to you about.

FRANK

There's no need -- your brother won fair and square -- his football career's over.

DENISE (O.S.)

It's about Charlie, Dad.

FRANK

You still bitchin' at me about that?

DENISE (O.S.)

The final autopsy report came in today.

FRANK

The boy's gone -- does it really matter now?

DENISE (O.S.)

Yes it does. (pause) Charlie died from steroid abuse Dad.

FRANK

What? (pause) I don't believe it.

DENISE (O.S.)

Believe it. How do you think he got to be so big and fast?

FRANK

From hard work -- Steroids can't do that.

DENISE (O.S.)

He gained twenty-five pounds, increased his bench by a hundred, and knocked two tenths off his forty, BECAUSE HE TOOK STEROIDS DAD! (pause) I believe you owe your son an apology.

FRANK hears the click, hangs up the phone. He takes a deep breath and moves to exit. FRANK then shuts the lights, closes the door and exits -- passing the night JANITOR on his way up the stairs. Half-way up the stairs, FRANK grabs his chest, then tumbles backwards down several steps. The JANITOR approaches. FRANK lies there motionless.

INT. MERCY HOSPITAL - NIGHT

The two DOORS to the EMERGENCY entrance swing open with great force. FRANK is quickly wheeled down the long hallway on a gurney. His shirt has been ripped off. His color is somewhat blue. EMT WORKERS run alongside the gurney, working frantically to save his life.

UP AHEAD - Two more swinging doors. They read: EMERGENCY ROOM. Two ORDERLIES swing open the door for the team.

ONE OF THE TEAM MEMBERS - Is horrified when she looks down and sees her father.

DENISE

Oh my God!

Head resident DR. SETH GREENBERG, 30 approaches.

DR. GREENBERG

Denise, what do we got?

DENISE

That's my father.

DR. GREENBERG addresses the ORDERLIES.

DR. GREENBERG

Get somebody else on here, stat!

An ORDERLY escorts DENISE down the hallway, as FRANK is brought into the ER.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SAME

FRANK is transferred to a table. DR. GREENBERG checks his vitals. Simultaneously, FRANK is hooked up to an EKG monitor. A SALINE PUSH and OXYGEN continue to flow.

INT. WAITING AREA - SAME

A terrified DENISE is joined by her mother.

CATHERINE

How is He? What did the doctor say?

DENISE

They just took him in.

CATHERINE

It is his heart?

DENISE offers a confirming look.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SAME

The TEAM continues working on FRANK.

DR. GREENBERG

Looks like we got an MI here people.
Give me fifty CC's of ringers lactate,
stat. There's a clot in there somewhere
-- let's hope it doesn't block another
main artery.

INT. WAITING AREA - SAME

A FIGURE can be seen sprinting down the hallway. As he gets closer, we see it is BOBBY, still covered in grease. He approaches his sister.

BOBBY

Where is he, Nes? Where is he?

DENISE'S eyes shift toward the emergency room.

INT. EMERGENCY ROOM - SAME

The HEART monitor goes flat sounding an alarm. The TEAM reacts.

BUSTING THROUGH THE DOORS - BOBBY'S eyes immediately fixate on the flat line of the heart monitor. CPR is in progress, as DR. GREENBERG'S attention shifts to BOBBY.

DR. GREENBERG

Somebody get him out of here. Get him
out of here -- now!!

Two ORDERLIES reach for BOBBY.

BOBBY

Get away from me. Get the hell away from
me! That's my Pop --

Cardiologist, DR. FATU (50's), enters the room.

DR. FATU

We'll take it from here son.

BOBBY

Don't let him die Doc, please?

BOBBY exits. DR. FATU takes control.

DR. FATU

How long's he been in code?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DR. GREENBERG
A little over a minute.

DR. FATU
Shock him.

DR. FATU is handed the paddles. FRANK'S chest is prepared,
as the charger light on the machine turns green.

DR. FATU (CONT'D)
Clear.

Everyone steps back. DR. FATU administers the shock.
FRANK'S whole body convulses. A second attempt also fails.

DR. FATU (CONT'D)
Get me an Epi.

A NURSE hands him a long needle filled with Epinephrine. DR.
FATU injects the needle directly into FRANK'S heart.

NURSE
We got a pulse.

The HEART monitor is now active.

NURSE (CONT'D)
BP increasing steadily. 120 over 70.
Pulse, 65.

DR. FATU
Let's get him to CCU -- and order an
angiogram, stat.

INT. WAITING AREA - DAY

DR. FATU approaches the family.

DR. FATU
Hello.

CATHERINE
How is He?

DR. FATU
He's critical but stable.

DENISE
What happened to him?

DR. FATU
He had an MI. We were lucky to get him
back.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE

When can we see him?

DR. FATU

We're running some tests on him now.
That should take a couple of hours. You
can see him after that.

BOBBY

He's gonna' be okay, right Doc?

DR. FATU

He's stable, that's a good sign.

Off BOBBY'S reaction.

INT. CCU ROOM - NIGHT

Lying in the corner bed, hooked up to several monitors and IV
tubes is FRANK. DR. FATU enters, a set of x-rays in hand.

DR. FATU

How you feeling Mr. Maggio?

FRANK

Like a truck ran over my chest. What
happened?

DR. FATU

You had what we call a Myocardial
Infarction -- it's a temporary blockage
of the coronary artery leading to your
heart.

FRANK

Am I gonna' make it?

DR. FATU repositions himself closer to FRANK.

DR. FATU

The next twenty-four to forty-eight hours
are critical. If we can get you through
that --

FRANK

Then I'll be okay?

DR. FATU hesitates.

DR. FATU

(Pause) We ran some tests on your heart
to assess the damage.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

FRANK

And?

DR. FATU

And I'm afraid it was pretty extensive.

FRANK

Bottom line it for me, Doc.

DR. FATU

(struggles) I'd give you a 50-50 chance
of getting through this.

FRANK looks to the doctor, smiles.

FRANK

(optimistic pause) I'll take it. My
family outside?

DR. FATU

I'll send them in.

The doctor makes his way to the door.

FRANK

Hey Doc? This stays between us, okay?
Off nod) Thank you.

EXT. CCU ROOM - SAME

An exhausted CATHERINE waits impatiently with her two
children. DR. FATU approaches.

CATHERINE

Can we see him now?

DR. FATU

Just for a few minutes. But not
everybody at once.

BOBBY looks to DENISE and Her mother.

BOBBY

You guys go.

DENISE and CATHERINE enter the room.

INT. CCU ROOM - SAME

FRANK is sitting up in bed. His spirits seem good.
CATHERINE approaches. DENISE remains a few steps behind,
tears streaming.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

DENISE

I'm sorry I hung up on you Dad.

FRANK

Hey, forget it. Your old man deserved it anyway -- now stop crying.

CATHERINE

How you feeling Honey?

FRANK

The Doc said I should be fine.

CATHERINE

You had us all scared there for a while.

FRANK

You know me, always full of surprises.

DENISE checks her father's chart.

FRANK (CONT'D)

How's it look?

DENISE nods her approval, kisses him on the cheek.

DENISE

I love you.

With tears streaming down her face, she exits.

FRANK

That kid's so emotional. (pause)
You talk to the doctor?

CATHERINE

He said we'll know more in the next few days.

FRANK

I'll be out of here by then.

CATHERINE hugs her husband, begins crying.

FRANK (CONT'D)

You too now?

CATHERINE rises.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Bobby out there? (Off nod) Nesi tell you about that final report on Charlie?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

CATHERINE

Let's now worry about that now. You just get your rest and I'll see you in the morning, okay?

FRANK

(off nod) Send Bobby in.

She kisses him, moves to exit, stops. Silence fills the room.

OUTSIDE IN THE HALLWAY -

DENISE approaches her brother.

BOBBY

How is he?

DENISE

You know Pop -- man of steel.

Off BOBBY'S look of concern.

INT. CCU ROOM - SAME

CATHERINE and FRANK struggle through a continuing silence.

FRANK

(finally) That's a first. Neither one of us with anything to say.

CATHERINE

How you feeling -- really?

FRANK

What's that old saying, only the good die young? I suspect I'll be around for a long time then. (Pause) You know you were right.

CATHERINE

Right about what?

FRANK

Everything. (pause) Me getting on our son all the time to be more like Charlie. I guess I was just too blind to see it.

CATHERINE

God's given you a second chance Frank. I'm sure this time you'll take full advantage of it.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

CATHERINE kisses FRANK, then makes her way to the exit.

FRANK
Catherine?

She turns. FRANK struggles. Finally --

FRANK (CONT'D)
I'm sorry.

CATHERINE
Nothing to be sorry for. Your heart's
always been in the right place.

FRANK'S eyes begin to tear. Fighting back tears of her own,
CATHERINE approaches her husband, kisses him on the lips.

CATHERINE (CONT'D)
I love you.

FRANK smiles. CATHERINE then exits.

OUTSIDE IN THE HALLWAY -

CATHERINE approaches BOBBY.

INT. CCU ROOM - SAME

BOBBY enters, stops just inside the door. He looks to his
Dad a long moment.

BOBBY
How you feeling Pop?

FRANK
Compared to your running me over today,
this is a piece of cake.

BOBBY
I'm really sorry about that. This whole
thing's my fault --

FRANK
Hey, what happened on the field had
nothing to do with this.

A NURSE enters, checks the monitors, looks to FRANK.

NURSE
You need your rest Mr. Maggio.

FRANK
We'll just be a minute okay?

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

The NURSE exits. BOBBY moves to his father's bed.

BOBBY

You rest Pop. I'll be right outside the door if there's anything you need.

FRANK

You take care of your mom and sister.

BOBBY touches his Dad on the shoulder, turns to exit.

FRANK (CONT'D)

Son?

BOBBY turns.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I, uh, uh, I --

FRANK struggle to continue. BOBBY remains still.

BOBBY

We'll talk in the morning.

FRANK

No.

FRANK motions BOBBY to come closer.

FRANK (CONT'D)

I'm sorry for being so tough on you all these years. Especially that whole thing with Charlie. I didn't know.

BOBBY

It's okay Pop.

FRANK

No, it's not okay. Here you are working your butt off, the fair way, the honest way, and I'm being a jerk the whole time. (pause) I'm proud of you Bobby. And I know you're going to be fine -- with or without football.

BOBBY

Just like you Pop.

FRANK

No. You'll be better than me.

BOBBY moves in closer.

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED: (2)

FRANK (CONT'D)

I spent most of my life wondering what if -- working for some damn steel plant that didn't care if I lived or died. I always wanted more for you than that. I guess I just didn't want you to end up like me. (pause) A nobody.

BOBBY

What are you talking about?

BOBBY sits on the bed.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

You're not a nobody. You worked two, sometimes three jobs to support us. You hung in there, took all that abuse about your size -- and growing up here not speaking the language. (off look) Uncle Pat told me all about it. (pause) Hell Pop, when you lost a great job after twenty-seven years, what did you do? You went to college and got a degree at 47. And then helped even more people. You always gave one-hundred and ten-percent to the things you thought were right.

A moment passes. FRANK fights to hold back the emotion.

FRANK

Yeah, but I forgot to enjoy all that I had.

BOBBY

You can enjoy it now.

The two men look to each other. FRANK reaches for his son. The two hug for the first time in their lives.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

You're a hero Pop. My hero. And I love you very much.

FRANK tries to respond, can't. BOBBY looks to him, gives that knowing smile, then moves to exit.

BOBBY (CONT'D)

See you in the morning.

BOBBY exits. FRANK focuses on the closing door.

FRANK

I love you too son.

INT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - DAY

A LEGEND READS: ORANGE BOWL MIAMI

Inside the stadium are dozens of ROOKIE football players. Going through the various drills, the majority of them are both large and quick. Dressed in shorts and a Miami Dolphins T-shirt, BOBBY prepares for the start of the forty yard dash.

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.)

I only had a couple of weeks to get ready for the tryout -- but to tell you the truth, it wouldn't have mattered. (Bobby takes off) I ran the forty that day in 4.7 flat, the fastest time of my life. Unfortunately, nearly the entire team including several lineman beat me. That's okay, I knew I didn't belong there anyway.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

MARIO'S on the phone as BOBBY exits from under a car.

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.)

Besides, it was fun working with Mario, especially that first year. And when He retired shortly thereafter, I bought the business with my Uncle Pat. We're working on our eighth location now.

A large sign reads: MAGGIO AUTO.

INT. CCU UNIT HOSPITAL - DAY

DENISE answers the phone at the front desk. Approaching her, a uniformed POLICE OFFICER.

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.)

My sister ended up marrying a Buffalo Police Officer. She still works at the hospital and has three kids. My mom has since retired from there, and spends most of her time enjoying her grandchildren.

SEVERAL YOUNG KIDS - Play in a very large backyard, complete with a two car garage.

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.) (CONT'D)

And my Pop -- well, some things just never change. And you know what, maybe that's a good thing.

(MORE)

(CONTINUED)

CONTINUED:

BOBBY (V.O.) (O.S.) (CONT'D)

After winning a battle over Prostate cancer in 1997 -- Mom still thinks it came from the plant -- Pop continues to do what he's always done, help kids.

EXT. CAZENOVIA PARK - DAY

A LEGEND READS: BUFFALO, NY September 2005

Sixty-Seven year-old FRANK MAGGIO makes his way toward a large group of little league football PLAYERS. Passing by several TEENAGERS; drinking, smoking and hanging out in back of the abandoned building, FRANK decides to stop.

THE LEADER OF THE GROUP - A nasty looking individual, stands to confront FRANK. Suddenly, the BOY recognizes the local COACH, puts out his cigarette, and motions to his GANG to exit. FRANK continues toward the kids.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - NIGHT

The night is warm, the field fast. The TIMON TIGERS are preparing for their season opener. A modest CROWD of a few hundred have gathered in the bleachers. All rise, facing the American Flag in the corner of the stadium. Standing in the booth, words in hand, is FRANK. He belts out a wonderful version of the "Star Spangled Banner," receiving a standing ovation from the audience.

EXT. FOOTBALL STADIUM - LATER THAT NIGHT

With seconds remaining, the scoreboard shows TIMON down by two points. With the CROWD on its feet, the ball is snapped, the HOLDER places it on the tee and the TIMON KICKER nails a 35 yard field goal to win the game. The place erupts.

THE KICKER RETURNS TO - The bench, approaches Coach Maggio and gives him a big hug. Assistant Coach, BOBBY MAGGIO looks on with pride.

OVER BLACK

Coaching little league and high school football for the past thirty-five years, FRANK MAGGIO has touched the lives of over 5,000 kids. To this day, they write him letters, visit him at practice, and stop him daily on the street. They do this just to say thank you. Thank you for caring. If Vince Lombardi were alive today, you can be certain he would be proud to have 5'4," 150 pound, Frank Maggio on his team.

THE END