JODY

By

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FADE IN:

ON JODY THORENSEN

Tall and boyishly handsome, Jody lowers himself into a chair at a press conference. In his mid-20s, he is moving stiffly, like a man who has been through a war. Ice on his shoulder and still in his sweat-soaked grays. A logo behind him reads: Super Bowl XLVIII. Jody addresses the media.

JODY
Questions?

Many voices but a single one rings loud and clear.

REPORTER
Are you gay?

Jody gazes out at the expectant faces of those present and the wall of camera lenses... surrogate eyes for the tens of millions watching him at this moment.

Unscrews a cap from a water bottle, takes a long, slow sip.

JODY
What was the question again?

FADE OUT:

SUPERIMPOSE: 16 HOURS EARLIER

A driving, synthesized cacophony, recognizable by even the most casual of sports fans as the theme to *SportsCenter*--

Dah-Dah-Dah... DAH-DAH-DAH!

FADE BACK IN:

ESPN anchor LINDSAY CZARNIAK, pixieish and smoking-hot, sits at the studio desk. The graphic over her shoulder is of a singular and iconic image: *The Vince Lombardi trophy.*

LINDSAY CZARNIAK
It's here. Super Bowl Sunday. Eagles, Raiders. Birds versus the Silver and Black attack. I'm Lindsay Czarniak and I'll be keeping you up-to-the-minute on all the day's stories as we make our way toward kickoff of Super Bowl Forty-Eight.
(then; swiveling into a new angle)
(MORE)

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LINDSAY CZARNIAK (CONT'D)
But we begin with breaking news from the host city....

The image of the Super Bowl trophy WIPES to a shot of a yacht stamped with the words “LOVE BOAT SCANDAL” as we cut to:

SUZY KOLBER

who is framed nicely in a one-shot next to a palm tree.

SUZY KOLBER
I’m in South Beach, standing in front of the exclusive Intercontinental Hotel, team headquarters for the Philadelphia Eagles. So far the organization has been tight-lipped about a story that threatens to cast an embarrassing shadow over the league’s showcase event.

A crowd of curious ONLOOKERS gathers nearby.

SUZY KOLBER (CONT’D)
According to sources, Deadspin.com has obtained video footage of Eagles players engaged in lewd conduct with exotic dancers aboard a party boat. The sports gossip site has yet to release any tape of the incident, which allegedly took place last year.

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - SUITE - DAY - SAME TIME

From here, there’s nowhere to go but the helipad. Literally. This isn’t the Presidential suite, but it’s pretty damn close. It’s a decadent 1,200 square foot space with a view of Biscayne Bay that’s to die for. The Art Deco decor is a tad garish, but who gives a shit. The suite screams one thing: *You've arrived, you lucky bastard.*

A pair of expensive floral arrangements stand atop a *Noguchi* coffee table. There’s a massive fruit basket with a handwritten card tucked next to an overripe mango. The card reads: *“Kick some Raider ass! Get the Ring!”*

IN THE MASTER BATHROOM

Jody is dressed in a sleek navy blue suit. *Hart Schaffner Marx*. Classic, understated... President Obama’s preferred brand. He moves through the bathroom past a--

BEAUTIFUL WOMAN

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who is seated in front of a vanity mirror, applying makeup.

Meet MINA THORENSEN, 20s, a modern-day Jackie Kennedy. Applying the finishing touches to her eyeliner. Still, her makeup cannot cover up a natural, almost girlish beauty.

SMASH!

The mirror breaks. Mina's reflection spiders into a fractured version of her perfect self.

MINA
Luke!

She whirls to face a sheepish-looking LUKE THORENSEN, 6. He wears a #7 Eagles jersey with "LITTLE THOR" on the back.

MINA (CONT'D)
Luke! What did I tell you?!

LUKE
I'm sorry.

MINA
What did I say to you earlier?!

LUKE
No football inside.

MINA
Why did you throw the ball?
(off Luke's silence)
Answer me!

Luke is on the verge of tears.

JODY
Mina, you don't have to yell. He didn't mean to do it.

Mina wheels on Jody. If looks could kill...

INT. FORD FOCUS - DAY - DRIVING

DAVID BATTLE, 30s, rugged good looks, is at the wheel of a rental car. Rolls down a window and flashes his ID badge.

BATTLE
David Battle, ESPN.

The Security Guard waves him through into the parking lot of--

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SUN LIFE STADIUM

Home of the Dolphins and today's host of Super Bowl XLVIII.

EXT. STADIUM PARKING LOT - MOMENTS LATER

Battle is a passenger on a golf cart, whizzing across the asphalt, still a long way from the stadium but getting closer. HARRIET BELL, 20s, a production assistant, drives.

Battle reaches for a Starbucks in the cup holder.

BATTLE
It's cold.

HARRIET
You're late.

INT. STADIUM - TV PRODUCTION OFFICES - DAY

ABIGAIL SWIFT, 30s, sweeps through a hallway. A sublimely lethal mix of Wharton and Victoria's Secret, Abby is the executive producer of today's Super Bowl telecast.

ABBY
(into phone)
I don't care what Arianna Huffington told you, she's not on the list.

Click. Sees David Battle pouring himself a cup of coffee.

BATTLE
Morning, Abby. What's going on?

ABBY
What's going on? Well, let's see... Deadspin has a tape from last year. On it there's supposedly some strippers, booze, drugs and -- oh, I almost forgot -- Philadelphia Eagles.

BATTLE
Abby--

ABBY
And if I remember correctly, your resume mentions that you played for Philadelphia last season. David... what the fuck is going on? What do you know about this?

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Battle shrugs.

BATTLE
I wasn't on the boat.

Abby's assistant, NOAH CROSS, 20s, earnest, interrupts.

NOAH
Commissioner Goodell returning.

He holds out a cell. Abby looks at Battle.

ABBY
We're not done yet.
(takes the phone)
Roger...

INT. STADIUM BATHROOM - DAY

Battle, bent over at the sink, splashes water on his face. Toweling off, he looks at his reflection in the mirror.

He's worried.

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - ELEVATOR LOBBY - DAY

A well-dressed ELDERLY COUPLE waits for the elevator as Jody, Mina and Luke approach. Mina is now wearing dark sunglasses.

Waiting for the elevator. All eyes on the single glowing "down" button, which Luke presses again.

ELDERLY MAN
The disadvantage of staying on the 34th floor.

LUKE
There's only 33 floors. There's no 13th. Thirteen is bad luck.

The elderly man smiles.

ELDERLY WOMAN
(to Jody)
I hate to be a bother, but... Our grandson Phillip is a big fan.

JODY
Thank you.

ELDERLY WOMAN
He would love an autograph, if it's not too much trouble.

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JODY
Not at all. Do you have a pen?

Jody smiles. She fumbles through her purse, finds a pen.

ELDERLY WOMAN
Now if I can just find a scrap of paper.

ELDERLY MAN
Here.

He pulls out his Super Bowl tickets. Jody signs.

JODY
Tell Phillip I say hello.

Jody looks up -- and helplessly watches as the elevator doors close with Mina and Luke inside. They left without him.

INT. ELEVATOR - DAY - MOVING

Mina removes her sunglasses. Her eyes are red. She sighs.

DING!

The doors open -- but nobody is there. Confused, she looks over at Luke, and then at the buttons. They're all aglow.

It's going to be a very long day.

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - MAIN LOBBY - DAY

Luke skips off the elevator. Mina trails. A large inflatable Eagles helmet sits in the main lobby.

Mina's cell phone BUZZES.

MINA
(into phone)
Hi, Karol.

INT. PHILADELPHIA LIQUOR STORE - DAY - INTERCUT

KAROL NOWICKI, 20's, holds open the cooler door and grabs a case of Miller Lite cans. Dressed to kill in the tightest, most revealing Eagles jersey you've ever seen.

KAROL
(into phone; concerned)
Hey, I was just thinking about you... You doing okay?

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Don't let Mina's *Chanel* suit fool you; she's a lot more like Karol, her best friend, than you think.

MINA
Oh God... It's just you know... I'm... I'm okay, I'm hanging in.

KAROL
Come home. You need to come home.

No answer.

KAROL (CONT'D)
Mina, talk to me. What are you gonna do?

Mina looks at her son.

MINA
I'm taking Luke to the Super Bowl.

INT. EAGLES TEAM BUS - THE OFFENSE - DAY

Jody climbs aboard the bus, looks down the aisle, and into the faces of his TEAMMATES and COACHES.

Jody takes a seat in the first row. Opens his PLAYBOOK to diagrams of offensive formations and terminology... it's all Egyptian hieroglyphics to the layman.

Jody puts the book aside and slips on pair of headphones. Presses play on his iPod.

Jody closes his eyes and allows AC/DC to take him back...

INT. FRATERNITY PARTY - PENN ST. - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

"*You Shook Me All Night Long*" rattles a packed Halloween frat party.

As we pan across the party, we see an endless parade of sexy coeds in slutty costumes, plus plenty of good-looking guys chugging Natty Light and oozing testosterone.

Welcome to <u>the</u> football frat on campus.

JODY
Coming through... Excuse me... Heads up... Don't make Hulk mad!

The crowd scatters in mock horror to make room for a college-aged Jody, though we might recognize him first as--

THE INCREDIBLE HULK

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In costume--

Jody is wearing torn jeans and sporting some seriously thick, bushy eyebrows, green hair and body paint, while carrying a--

BOOZY, NEARLY COMATOSE FRATERNITY BROTHER

Jody spins away from the party and climbs the stairs with MATTHEW, his drunk buddy, casually draped over his shoulder.

A BIG JOCK making out with a girl in the stairwell comes up for air long enough to fist-bump Jody and say:

BIG JOCK
Sup Shrek.

Jody, grinning, reaches the --

INT. SECOND FLOOR OF THE FRATERNITY - CONTINUOUS

Jody carries Matthew down the hall, past open doors with guys inside smoking pot.

He reaches the last room in the hallway, kicks opens the door, and enters...

INT. DORM ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jody dumps Matthew in bed, turns to go -- stops.

Matthew is flailing about, totally wasted and trying in vain to pull his shirt over his head.

This is not going to end well.

Jody smiles, watching, as Matthew finally gives up with his shirt over his head. Passed out...

Jody walks over and pulls Matthew's shirt off. As he does, Matthew's hand inadvertently bumps against Jody's crotch.

Jody freezes. <u>There is a moment</u>.

Jody gives him a long look, and then softly:

JODY
Matthew. Matt, are you okay?

No answer. Matthew is out cold.

Jody continues to watch Matthew. We might notice that the music from the party downstairs sounds like a thumping heart.

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Jody reaches out and gently brushes some green paint away from Matthew's face.

JODY (CONT'D)
Matt?

Still no answer.

Jody leans over Matthew, quietly, and starts untying his shoes. He pulls off one shoe... and then another--

Jody looks up--

Matthew kisses him. Stunned, Jody goes with it for a moment, and he pulls away.

JODY (CONT'D)
Dude, what the fuck?

MATTHEW
It's okay.

Jody backs away in a panic, bumping into a chair.

Exits into the--

INT. SECOND FLOOR OF THE FRATERNITY - CONTINUOUS

A sense of anger wells up inside Jody as we cut to:

JODY FURIOUSLY DOING PULL-UPS

On a sagging ceiling pipe inside--

INT. FRATERNITY HOUSE - CONTINUOUS

Jody and another FOOTBALL PLAYER-TYPE are having a high-rep pull up contest in the middle of the party.

Like moths to a flame, girls gather around Jody.

As he pulls himself up again someone catches his eye--

ACROSS THE ROOM

It's the future Mrs. Thorensen, now known as MINA KAKOWSKI.

The prettiest girl in the room. Younger than when we last saw her, she's less refined but a hell of a lot happier.

She's standing next to Karol.

ON JODY AND THE FOOTBALL PLAYER

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Jody's opponent is starting to strain. But Jody is in the zone. He will not lose. Not now, not ever.

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

Mina and Jody go at it on his king-size bed. She's on top.

Getting wild.

And as she climaxes--

A HUGE ROAR goes up from some unseen crowd as we cut to:

EXT. BEAVER STADIUM - DAY

Jody Thorensen, star quarterback of the Nittany Lions, is flushed from the pocket.

Spinning out of the arms of a huge defensive end.

IN SLOW MOTION

Stiff-arming another.

And searching for an open receiver in the end zone when--

He lowers his head and bulldozes his way across the goal line...

TOUCHDOWN!

The crowd EXPLODES.

Jody tosses the ball to the ref, looks around -- pandemonium. And smiles. This is who he is and where he belongs.

INT. BOWELS OF THE STADIUM - DAY

Post-game. Jody, showered, is wearing a Penn State hoodie.

He glad-hands several boosters on his way to the exit.

Opens the door and--

EXT. STADIUM - CONTINUOUS

Jody gets swallowed up by a huge crowd of fans who have congregated near the door where the players exit.

JODY'S POV

He sees just about everyone you could imagine: from amped up college students to children seeking autographs and their starry-eyed parents.

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And the girls. There are a lot of girls.

JODY
There you are!

He hugs a STUNNING BLONDE. As they embrace, his eyes move to a different girl -- Mina -- who stands alone.

JODY (CONT'D)
Mina, is that you?

If Mina could disappear, she would. Instead she has little choice but to give a small nod and wait for him to continue.

JODY (CONT'D)
Mina, there's someone I want to introduce to you. This is Sarah.

The blonde.

JODY (CONT'D)
My cousin.

EXT. BEAVER STADIUM PARKING LOT - DAY

Walking with Jody and Mina through a throng of TAILGATERS.

JODY
When the game ends, the party doesn't.

MINA
Apparently not.

He poses for a cell phone pic with a FAN.

JODY
So where have you been hiding?

MINA
I haven't.

JODY
But I've been leaving you tickets.

DRUNKEN FAN WITH BLUE HAIR
(interrupting loudly)
WE ARE--

JODY
(on cue)
Penn State.

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DRUNKEN FAN WITH BLUE HAIR
JODY THORENSEN, YOU ARE A FUCKING BAD ASS! I LOVE YOU MAN!

JODY
Thank you. Take care of yourself.

Like a seasoned pro, Jody shakes the DRUNKEN FAN'S hand, who wanders off, supremely satisfied.

Mina takes in the scene and can't digest it.

MINA
Is that... Normal?

JODY
I guess.

Jody signs an autograph, moves on...

JODY (CONT'D)
Did you have fun at the game?

MINA
Yeah-- no, I didn't go to the game.

JODY
(stops)
You didn't?

MINA
Jody, I need to tell you something. Remember the night of the Halloween Party...

JODY
Of course. How could I forget?

MINA
I'm pregnant.

Jody looks at her, robbed of words, as we dissolve to:

INT. EAGLES TEAM BUS - THE OFFENSE - **PRESENT DAY**

Back with Jody, the bus inches away from the curb. He pulls off his headphones and turns to the person next to him.

JODY
Hey Coach.

Philadelphia Eagles head coach RICK KEMPTON, 40s, cerebral, sits down next to him. Imagine Jon Gruden with a moustache.

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Kempton opens his playbook.

KEMPTON
Let’s run through the first 15.

INT. STADIUM - DRESSING ROOM - DAY

David Battle wears a crisp white Oxford and red tie. He sits in a barber’s chair with Kleenex tucked into his collar.

STACY, a makeup artist, is applying foundation as Harriet steamrolls into the room. Hands him a press release.

BATTLE
(reading)
Deadspin’s releasing the tape?
When?

HARRIET
Doesn’t say.

BATTLE
Smart. They’re gonna milk it.

HARRIET
The bus is almost here. We need to get down there-- you’re not going to wear that tie, are you?

BATTLE
My mother gave me this tie.

STACY
It’s hot.

HARRIET
Yeah, especially the coffee stain.

Battle looks down.

BATTLE
Shit.

STACY
I’m on it.

She strokes Battle’s shoulder and floats out of the room in search of a new tie. Harriet rolls her eyes.

BATTLE
You hate her.

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HARRIET
Not as much as I hate Deadspin... I mean, please. The tape's gonna be grainy footage of body shots, big breasts, and boys being boys.
(smiling)
And I can't wait to see it.

Off Battle lost in thought...

INT. EAGLES TEAM BUS - THE OFFENSE - DAY

Moving through the streets of Miami.

Quiet, professional. Feels like a library. Most guys wear headphones and hold glowing cell phones in their meaty hands.

Jody is going over plays with Kempton. Thumbing through the thick binder that is the playbook. X's and O's.

KEMPTON
Strong flood, Omaha quick-fly Y.

From the back of the bus:

JACKSON (O.S.)
I knew it...

JULIUS JACKSON, 20s, star running back, reads his iPhone.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
I knew it was gonna get out. I told y'all not to take them hos on a booze cruise.

Muted laughter.

JACKSON (CONT'D)
You think I'm playing? Biggest game of our lives and we got to deal with some weak ass bullshit like this.

PLAYER #1
Chill.

JACKSON
Nah, man. Fuck that. There were captains acting like rookies on that boat. They gotta know better.

PLAYER #2
Fuck you!

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JODY (O.S.)
Hey! Knock it off.

Jody is halfway down the aisle. The captain.

JODY (CONT'D)
We got a game to play. Get your head right and get focused.

He looks around the bus, acknowledging Jackson.

JODY (CONT'D)
And you know what? Jax is right. It was stupid. Know what's even stupider? Letting something like this get in the way of beating the Raiders.

Jody turns and heads back to his seat. Settles in next to Kempton, who is pleased with Jody's display of leadership.

JODY (CONT'D)
Where were we?

KEMPTON
Red zone. They like to roll the safeties up.

JODY
Yeah.

KEMPTON
If they go cover 2 and give you-- hold on, lemme draw it up...

Kempton starts to draw up a formation--

BAM!

A beer bottle SLAMS against the windshield, leaving a crack.

WHIP-WHOOP

Jody looks up as the windshield wipers -- WHIP-WHOOP -- do their thing and wipe the beer and broken glass away.

BUS DRIVER
Raider fans. Animals.

Jody peers out the tinted window and sees a--

"WELCOME TO HELL" sign draped across an RV belonging to a group of tailgating OAKLAND RAIDERS FANS, who are wearing eye black, chains, helmets and spiked shoulder pads.

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EXT. SUN LIFE STADIUM - DAY

The TEAM BUSES receive a heavy police escort as they roll down a makeshift, high-security road leading to the stadium.

INT. STADIUM - TUNNEL - DAY

Battle squats down, pulls up a piece of red tape, moves it over 12 inches. Stands back up, wearing a new tie.

BATTLE
(to the cameraman)
Are we cool? What if-- is this okay? You sure? I can move it...

CAMERAMAN
We're good. They're here.

Battle grabs a microphone as the buses roll into the secure, underground parking area. Come to a stop...

PSSSSSSHHHH!

The bus door opens. First off is BOB FITZGIBBONS, the Eagles bleary-eyed media director. It's been a long night.

BATTLE
Fitz, over here.

FITZGIBBONS
David, good to see you.

BATTLE
There he is.

Jody steps off the bus, bag in hand.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Jody, Jody...

Jody glances at Battle, locks eyes for a brief moment-- then sweeps past wordlessly, headed to the locker room.

FITZGIBBONS
He's not doing the interview.

BATTLE
Why? It's a 60-second piece...

FITZGIBBONS
Sorry.

He leaves.

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Battle stands there for a moment--

More Eagles herd past Battle, and he's spotted.

Now it's a parade of nods, hand-shakes and small-talk as ex-teammates greet him and disappear into the locker room.

And just like that, the door shuts for the final time. Everything and everyone Battle cares about has disappeared through that door.

Off Battle, alone, staring at the closed door...

DISSOLVE TO:

A door opening and taking us inside:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Post-practice. Carpeted floors and lockers. We hold on the name "Battle" -- scribbled in sharpie above a locker.

Seated on a bench, he's removing tape from his wrists. Longer hair, but it's the same David Battle, only younger.

Across the room REPORTERS crowd around a locker.

PETE (O.S.)
What do you think?

PETE is a rumpled beat writer in shorts and a stained polo.

BATTLE
Little rusty but we'll get there.

PETE
I'm talking about the quarterback. Are you a believer?

Battle eyes the digital recorder in Pete's hand.

BATTLE
After two practices?

PETE
Looks pretty good to me. I didn't see you dropping any balls. What's he like in the huddle?

BATTLE
What do you want me to say? It's training camp, Pete. I've been here four years, we've had four quarterbacks.

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PETE
You're not sold on the Golden Boy?

Across the room, we now notice that Jody Thorensen is the center of attention.

BATTLE
No. Not yet.

INT. TRAINING CAMP - CAFETERIA - DAY

Battle's plate is piled high with carbs. As he shovels bacon and eggs into his mouth--

A tray lands across from him. Jody sits down with a newspaper.

JODY
Hey man, I read the article.

BATTLE
Yeah...

JODY
I get it. I understand. Stuff like this happens all the time. Reporters love to twist words and guys are always getting misquoted.

BATTLE
I wasn't misquoted.

Jody pauses.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Look, we're-- what? A couple of days into camp? The preseason hasn't even started and somebody asks me if you're the real deal? What am I supposed to say?

JODY
All I'm saying is, I'd rather not see it in the paper. I'd rather hear it from you.

BATTLE
Now you're hearing it.

JODY
Okay, alright. I get it. I'm the rookie, you're the veteran. I'll defer to you because you seem to know what's best.

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Jody gets up and starts to walk away from the table.

JODY (CONT'D)
You're a regular team leader.

As Jody exits, we notice that Battle eats at the end of a long table in a crowded cafeteria, alone.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Exhausted players gather around Kempton.

KEMPTON
Men, helluva first week of practice. We looked fast out there today. I like our pad level. We're not there yet but we're getting better. Listen, get some water in you. If you're injured or hurt, let the trainers know. We need to stay healthy. I'll see you at training table.

The players disperse and head for the locker room.

Tracking with Battle. He walks a few feet behind--

OWEN HIMMELBERG

Himmelberg, 30s, is the Eagles' starting center. An Ivy League product who resembles a redwood stump with a beard.

Himmelberg is looking over at Jody, smiling deviously, and laughing with the rest of the offensive line.

BATTLE
Yo Jody.

Battle catches up with Jody.

JODY
I know, my bad. Sorry I overthrew you on the last one.

BATTLE
Yeah, I was open.
(off Jody's look)
I'm just messing with you. Hold up.

JODY
Something wrong?

With Himmelberg safely out of earshot--

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BATTLE
Skip the shower.

Jody looks at Battle, thoroughly confused, as we cut to:

INT. GANG SHOWER - DAY

Himmelberg and a cadre of other oversized guys are in the shower, soaping up, waiting and watching the entrance.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Battle, getting undressed, looks over at Jody, who is slipping on shower shoes. Battle shakes his head.

INT. GANG SHOWER - DAY

We're back with Himmelberg and the guys in the shower.

Suddenly--

An arm appears in the doorway, waving a white towel.

It belongs to MARCUS KNOX, a middle linebacker with a lethal combination of speed and power.

He tiptoes into the shower and joins the pack, when--

Jody enters a few seconds later, wearing nothing but a helmet.

For a split second, an eerie silence pervades. Then -- all hell breaks loose.

THUD! THUD! THUD!

The guys unleash a hailstorm of mini-soaps...

Grimacing and flinching, Jody stands there and takes the pelting like a man. Laughter rings out. Welcome to the NFL.

INT. CAFETERIA - NIGHT

Post-dinner. It's time for ice cream and the evening's "entertainment" as EVAN OEHLER, a thick-necked tight end, addresses the team:

OEHLER
Right, so first week with everybody in camp. You know... There's some new faces, some old ones... But all in all, we've got a great nucleus.

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HIMMELBERG
Why you gotta start with the big words, Oehler?

OEHLER
Whatever. So, tradition is that on the first Friday night of camp, we have our rookie talent show. So, without further ado...
(reading off a 3x5 card)
First head on the chopping block... Darius Little, defensive line, LSU.

A couple of veteran players stand and WHOOP upon hearing the name of their alma mater.

An assistant hits the PLAY button on a boombox and Beyonce's "Single Ladies" BLARES.

300-pound Darius Little does the rumpshaker dance. As the cafeteria erupts with laughter... CUT TO:

OEHLER (CONT'D)
(off a 3x5 card)
Nate Azinger, safety, Michigan.

NATE AZINGER, a ripped, mohawked strong safety, gets up from his seat. He starts to BEAT-BOX, *Doug E. Fresh*-style. Then come the lyrics to Eminem's, "Lose Yourself." Off players, open-jawed and in amazement... CUT TO:

OEHLER (CONT'D)
Jody Thorensen, quarterback, Penn State.

PLAYER (O.S.)
You better be good, first rounder!

Jody starts for the front of the room.

OEHLER
Use the chair, rookie!

Jody stands on his chair, clears his throat... and breaks into song, Ben E. King's, "Lean On Me." It's utterly cringe-worthy and, at the same time, moving and heartfelt.

As the obligatory BOOS rain down on his performance--

BATTLE

Sits back and admires Jody's gumption.

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EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Guys get into Bentleys, Range Rovers and Escalades.

HIMMELBERG
We're going to the Roadhouse, boys.
I hear Swayze's workin' the door.

OEHLER
Battle, you in?

Before Battle can respond--

HIMMELBERG
Battle's not coming.

OEHLER
Thorensen?

JODY
Yeah... I'm in.
(turns to Battle)
C'mon, man. One beer.

Battle shakes his head.

JODY (CONT'D)
Weak sauce.

BATTLE
Fine. But you're buying, rook.

As they pile into Himmelberg's Suburban, we dissolve to:

INT. STADIUM - MEN'S BATHROOM - **PRESENT DAY**

Back with Battle on Super Bowl Sunday, he is taking a piss in a massive but otherwise empty bathroom.

ABBY (O.S.)
We need to talk.

Startled, Battle turns his head to see Abby.

BATTLE
What? I'm taking a piss.

ABBY
I can see that.

BATTLE
Jesus-- can you give me a minute?

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ABBY
I'll wait.

Battle zips up, turns to face her.

BATTLE
I'm gonna go out on a limb and say that this is inappropriate workplace behavior.

ABBY
Kind of like lying to your boss?

BATTLE
Abby, what the fuck is this?

ABBY
David, I know you were on the boat.

He moves to the sink and washes his hands.

ABBY (CONT'D)
I'm waiting.

BATTLE
Yeah. I was on the boat.

ABBY
And?

BATTLE
That's it. Last time I checked, when I was on that boat, I was a Philadelphia Eagle.

ABBY
Dear God. If you're about to give me the locker room code of silence speech, save it -- because, trust me, it is nothing I haven't heard.

BATTLE
Leave the gossip to Deadspin, Abby.

ABBY
Don't make this about Deadspin. This is about doing your job, which is to cover *this* story, for *this* game, on *this* network.
(beat)
I'm going to ask you again, David. What happened on that boat?

He dries his hands and tosses a paper towel in the trash.

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BATTLE
(heading for the door)
It’s none of your business.

ABBY
Fuck!

For an instant, Abby’s poise and power melt away into a temper tantrum, though she quickly pulls herself together.

Calling to him as he exits:

ABBY (CONT’D)
David, I don’t know who you’re covering for, or what you did that night, but the whole world is about to find out.

EXT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL POOL - DAY

Pushing through a festive crowd with a SERVER holding a tray of champagne flutes.

It feels like a wedding, with passed hors d'oeuvres and a fresh seafood buffet. But it’s actually a private tent party for families of the Philadelphia Eagles organization.

Many guests are dressed in Eagles jerseys, including 15 members of the Himmelberg clan, who have found the cheese.

We move past JEFF LURIE, the well-dressed owner of the Eagles who is holding court with Cowboys owner JERRY JONES and other silver-haired big wigs.

Whoa!

The tray dips as the server averts a pack of rambunctious young boys in green and black, led by Luke Thorensen.

The server stops near Mina, who is chatting with TANYA, JASMINE and RENE. “The Real Housewives of the Philadelphia Eagles.”

TANYA
(taking some champagne)
...he told me they were going deep sea fishing so I better see some bait and tackle on that tape.

JASMINE
Oh, you’re gonna see some bait, honey. <u>Jail bait</u>.

Mina forces a smile as Luke interrupts.

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LUKE
Look, Mom!

Luke grins -- his face is painted green for the game.

The wives laugh.

MINA
Very cute.

LUKE
What's a sex tape?

Silence. Everyone looks at Mina.

MINA
Who said that to you?

He shrugs and dashes away with his friends.

RENE
I don't know about y'all, but I'm worried.

JASMINE
Nothing a good divorce lawyer can't fix.

Scattered laughter.

MINA
(sharp)
This isn't funny? This is real.

JASMINE
I don't need a tape to know that my husband's a dog. They all are. And I feel sorry for anyone who pretends they're not. Those are the women who are living a lie.

MINA
Excuse me.

Mina leaves the group. As soon as she's out of earshot--

JASMINE
Bitch.

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - SUITE - DAY

Mina slips out of her *Chanel* suit and shimmies into a pair of comfortable jeans. The metamorphosis continues as she pulls her hair into a ponytail and a grabs an Eagles baseball cap.

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INT. STADIUM - LUXURY BOX LEVEL - DAY

A WAITER wheels a fully-stocked bar down the hall and into--

INT. STADIUM - LUXURY BOX - CONTINUOUS

The waiter pushes the bar into the suite. Abby and three senior ESPN EXECUTIVES are mid-conversation.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE #1
Worst case scenario: he's banging a chick from behind and doing a line off another one's ass.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE #2
I say we can him.

ABBY
Whoa, whoa, whoa--

LEGAL COUNSEL
She's right. You can't terminate David Battle's contract without cause.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE #2
She asked him a direct question and he lied. He said he wasn't on the boat. If that's not cause, I don't know what is.

LEGAL COUNSEL
Look, the safe play: we suspend him without pay and sort out the details later.

Network Executive #1 stands, ready to leave.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE #1
Anything else?

ABBY
I don't want to suspend him.

The room stops.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE #1
What do you mean?

NETWORK EXECUTIVE #2
He's part of the story, Abby.

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ABBY
Before the day's over, he could be the story. All I'm saying is I'd like to keep him around. I have a funny feeling that we'll be thanking ourselves later.

All eyes turn to Network Executive #1.

NETWORK EXECUTIVE #1
Your call, your career.

Abby nods, confident. They all stand up.

ABBY
Enjoy the game, gentlemen.

INT. STADIUM - EAGLES LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Philly players are in varying states of undress.

Jody is seated in his locker. Next to him sits WALTER MOONEY, 20s, a brash, muscled wide receiver.

Mooney reads the Sunday sports section. The headline reads: CAN PHILLY COMPLETE THEIR CINDERELLA SEASON?

MOONEY
Paula Abdul is picking the Raiders.
(reaching for his phone)
I'm gonna blow her midget-ass up on Twitter.

Jody looks over at Mooney. His shiny winged helmet is on the shelf and behind him hangs his green jersey. Number 82.

As Jody's eyes hone in on the jersey...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EAGLES LOCKER ROOM - **FLASHBACK**

Back in Jody's rookie year...

Mooney models #82, only the name on the back reads "Battle."

MOONEY
How much?

Battle watches him.

BATTLE
(playfully)
Talk to my agent.

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Jody steps up.

JODY
It’s gonna cost you.

MOONEY
Ah, shit. You’re gonna let a rookie negotiate on your behalf? Like taking candy from a baby. Let’s do this.

JODY
Let’s see... uh, you wore it at Iowa, right?

BATTLE
All four years.

MOONEY
Alright, shit. I get it. Your college number. It’s special.

JODY
And high school.

MOONEY
Damn.

JODY
Pop Warner too.

Jody nods slyly at Battle -- “you’re welcome” -- as Mooney pulls out a thick wad of hundreds.

EXT. PRACTICE FIELD - DAY

Jody stands with Kempton.

KEMPTON
Y Trips Right, Blue Eagle Go.
(off Jody)
Let’s go, Thorensen. I want it crisp and I want to see tempo!

Jody hustles the few yards across the field and joins...

THE HUDDLE

The first unit. Battle, Mooney, Himmelberg, Jackson, etc.

JODY
Okay. Let’s go Y Trips--

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JACKSON
Speak up.

JODY
(louder)
Y Trips Right, Blue Eagle Go. On sound.

BATTLE
On two. I'm in motion.

JODY
Right... On two.

KEMPTON
What the hell is the problem?! Break that God-damn huddle, Thorensen!

JODY
READY!
(then; players in unison)
BREAK!

The offense trots up to the line of scrimmage. The defense awaits. Jody squats under center... lifts his foot to put Battle, the slot receiver, in motion...

As Battle runs across the formation, the ball is snapped. Jody drops back and collides with Battle.

KEMPTON
What the fuck is that?! You gotta be kidding me!

Battle and Jody pick themselves up off the ground.

Next play...

The offensive huddle breaks, comes to the line. Jody, under center... the ball is snapped --

He drops back... trips and falls.

KEMPTON (CONT'D)
Thorensen! What the fuck is that?! It's a five-step drop! When we drafted you they said you'd played this position before! Do you know what a five-step drop looks like?!

JODY
Yeah...

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KEMPTON
Bullshit! Because that ain't it!

Jody is getting ripped apart in front of the entire team, not to mention fans and media.

KEMPTON (CONT'D)
Jesus Christ! You're the Heisman trophy winner and you can't execute a simple five-step drop?! Get the hell out of my huddle! Riley!

Jody, thoroughly embarrassed, watches RILEY, the backup QB, take the field.

CUT TO:

SIDELINE

Battle approaches Jody.

BATTLE
You having fun yet?

JODY
Fucking guy hates me.

BATTLE
He's a bastard, but he's the best. You're gonna have to show him you're a leader. Do that and he'll love you forever.

JODY
What if I just want him to stop screaming at me?

BATTLE
Yeah... You're right. Baby steps.

JODY
Kempton didn't want to draft me.
(then)
Don't pretend like you don't know.

Battle pauses.

BATTLE
Your wife a good cook?

JODY
Did you just invite yourself over?

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BATTLE
Yeah. I think I did.

INT. APARTMENT - NIGHT

Jody and Mina's temporary digs. Furnished, clean, and that's about it. There's a half-eaten dish of turkey tettrazzini and a little salad left.

Jody, Battle and Mina around the table. Luke, age 2, is sound asleep in his mother's lap.

BATTLE
Cute kid.

MINA
Wait until he wakes up.

Jody takes a sip of his beer.

BATTLE
You guys planning on buying a house?

Mina laughs.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
What?

JODY
It's kind of complicated.

MINA
By the fact you're never around.

JODY
Mina, you have good taste. I trust you.

MINA
We're not going to buy a house that you've never seen.

Jody looks at Battle.

JODY
Another beer?

BATTLE
Yeah. Sure.

MINA
I'm good. Thanks for asking.

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Jody shrugs her off.

BATTLE
Damn good meal, Mina. I really appreciate it. Home-cooked.

MINA
You're full of shit, David. But thank you.

Jody pops the tops off two beers, hands one off to Battle.

MINA (CONT'D)
You have practice in the morning.

JODY
Don't remind me. Today was brutal. I'll be lucky if Kempton doesn't cut my ass.

MINA
(joking)
Guess we should wait on the house.

BATTLE
Pretty sure you guys can go ahead and put down some roots. But me...

JODY
You caught 70 passes last year.

BATTLE
It's a business, Jody. There's a word for guys like me: expendable.

Awkward silence. Mina gets up with Luke.

MINA
I'm going to go put him down.

JODY
Here, let me.

MINA
It's fine, I got him.

Jody reaches out to his son.

JODY
Luke...
(as Darth Vader)
I AM YOUR FATHER!

Mina rolls her eyes. It's a joke she's clearly heard before.

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Off Battle, cracking up...

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT - LATER

Soapy water. Jody scrubs a dish, places it on the rack. Battle clears the table.

BATTLE
So... Is it everything you dreamed it would be? The N-F-L.

JODY
Yeah... I guess so. What? Don't tell me you don't wake up and pinch yourself sometimes.

BATTLE
It was always about just getting on the field for me.
(then)
Started in high school... First it was baseball, then basketball... I figured out I didn't have the arm for one, the height for the other.

JODY
So you settled? I'd say you've done pretty well for yourself if that's the case.

Battle places a handful of dirty silverware in the sink.

BATTLE
I never wanted to play football.

JODY
You're shitting me. Why not?

BATTLE
Hated the coach.
(then)
My father.

JODY
That's tough.

BATTLE
He didn't like me much either. I guess it would've looked pretty bad if he cut his own son.
(then)
Said I had no skill whatsoever. Told me the only thing I had was heart.

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JODY
Sometimes's that's enough.
(then)
He must be proud.

BATTLE
He died.

JODY
Sorry.

BATTLE
(re: dishes)
Let me finish up.

Battle grabs a soiled plate, moves close to Jody, whose hands are wet with soapy water. They stand shoulder to shoulder. Battle dips his hands into the water.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Come on, gimme the sponge.

Battle reaches for the sponge in Jody's hand. There's a gentle caress. They try to ignore the moment, but it's real.

INT. LINCOLN FINANCIAL FIELD - LOCKER ROOM - DAY

Time to go to war. PLAYERS pull on their helmets, snap up. Taped HANDS slam against shoulder pads as the intensity in the room reaches a frenzy--

The locker room's double doors OPEN into the tunnel. Off PLAYERS running toward daylight and a monstrous ROAR from the crowd, we cut to...

INT. CAVANAUGH'S RITTENHOUSE - NIGHT

An upscale sports bar in Philly. The place is slammed. Hot girls everywhere. Drunk guys in Eagles jerseys.

Jody, Battle and a couple other players are drinking beer in the VIP section. They're watching the--

TELEVISION

ANNOUNCER
You have to be asking yourself if taking Jody Thorensen in the first round was the right decision. The guy never looked comfortable tonight. Rookie mistakes? Maybe. I'm just not sure he's cut out to play quarterback at this level.

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Jody, a few beers in, glares at the TV.

ANNOUNCER (CONT'D)
That'll do it for us here at Lincoln Financial Field. Once again, our final: Bengals 31, Eagles 10. Goodnight, everyone.

BATTLE
Fuck him. We did some good things.

JODY
You did.

BATTLE
Yeah, well... You will.

PLASTERED DUDE (O.S.)
Hey, Thorensen!

Jody turns, finds PLASTERED DUDE, twenties, wearing an old school Eagles jersey, "Jaworski" on the back. Here we go...

PLASTERED DUDE (CONT'D)
You suck! What the fuck was that? You call yourself a quarterback?!

Jody slams his beer, gets up.

BATTLE
Let it go, bro.

Jody shoots Battle a look.

JODY
Don't worry... I'm good.

PLASTERED DUDE
I'm talking to you, you fucking rag arm. I can't believe we burned a first round pick on you!

JODY
Come here and say that.

Plastered Dude hurls a full beer at Jody. Most of it misses.

PLASTERED DUDE
Fuck you, scrub! Fucking faggot.

And Jody loses it, goes for the guy.

BATTLE
Jody! Take it easy.

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Battle jumps up and collars Jody, holding on for dear life...

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. CAVANAUGH'S RITTENHOUSE - ALLEY - NIGHT

A door flies OPEN and Battle hauls Jody out into a dark alley. It's raining.

BATTLE
Calm the fuck down!

JODY
Let go of me!

Battle acquiesces.

BATTLE
Are you calm?

JODY
You heard what he said!

BATTLE
So what?! You're gonna get worse.

JODY
I don't have to take that shit!

BATTLE
Yes. You do.

They're both drenched. Jody throws up his hands, relents. Maybe it's the rain. Maybe it's the truth.

JODY
I just--

BATTLE
You can't let it get to you. None of it.

Jody grins.

JODY
I was going to whoop his ass.

BATTLE
Sure you were.

JODY
Thanks. For keeping me off TMZ.

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Battle holds Jody's look. Then, without warning, Battle leans in and KISSES Jody on the mouth.

Jody pushes Battle away, drives him across the alley and SLAMS him into a wall. They stare at each other through the rain, hands clutching soaked clothing.

Jody turns and starts toward the light at the mouth of the alley, leaving Battle behind.

INT. EAGLES TRAINING FACILITY - WEIGHT ROOM - NIGHT

A cloud of chalk dust. Jody SLAPS his hands together and falls back on the bench press, lifts the bar off the rack.

One. Two. Three. Four. Five...

Jody strains with each rep, but intensity and strength prevail--

Six. Seven. Eight...

A loud CLANG rings out as he re-racks the bar.

BATTLE (O.S.)
Jody.

Jody sits up, searches the darkness.

Battle stands in the doorway.

INT. THORENSEN APARTMENT - BATHROOM - NIGHT

The shower is running. Steam rises. Jody steps in, closes his eyes and allows the water to hit him full in the face. He smooths his hair under the stream... POP FLASH:

A Ford Bronco is parked inside an empty underground garage.

IN THE BACKSEAT

Jody and Battle are all over each other. A wet T-shirt is stripped off. Hands tear at the buttons on jeans. It's rough, passionate, as we... SMASH TO:

SHOWER

We're back with Jody, eyes open now. He soaps a washcloth, runs it across his torso, down his legs... POP FLASH:

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BRONCO

Bare skin. Arms entwined. They kiss. Everything is a blur. Then, suddenly, Jody turns Battle around in the seat, rips his pants down. They start to have sex, clumsily at first. And then, as they near climax... SMASH TO:

SHOWER

Back with Jody, clearly lost in the memory. He wrings out the washcloth, presses his hands against the tiled wall and lets the water wash over his back.

Then, a pair of HANDS caress Jody's torso--

It's Mina.

Her naked breasts press against his back. She gently kisses his neck. Jody turns, pulls Mina close. They kiss.

MINA
Where were you?

Jody doesn't answer. He spins her around forcefully. Mina's face is pressed against the tile, water pouring over her as Jody takes her from behind. Off this heated moment...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - DAY - **PRESENT DAY**

Back at the Super Bowl... a spiraling football streaks through the air until-- WHAP!

A pair of gloved hands snatch the ball from the sky. Mooney tucks the ball away and then casually flips it to Jody.

Pre-game warm ups. Still early enough to wear a baseball cap and t-shirt.

ON THE SIDELINE

Battle stands with Harriet. They watch as players from both teams run around and get loose.

HARRIET
Thorensen's got a cannon.

BATTLE
He looks pretty good.

HARRIET
Can I ask you a question?

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BATTLE
Raiders by seven.

HARRIET
That wasn't my question.

Battle looks at her. Harriet screws up her courage.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
I, uh... I mean, no matter what happened on the boat, I think you're doing the right thing. They were your teammates, your friends.

Battle looks away from Harriet, his eyes wandering back over to Jody, who continues to warm up on the field.

High above...

EXT. LUXURY BOX - SAME TIME

Like a Greek goddess atop Mount Olympus, Abby leans against the rail, staring down at Battle and Harriet on the field.

Noah enters, harried, holding a cell.

NOAH
It's urgent.

INT. STADIUM - CONCESSIONS STAND - DAY

Mina and Luke wait in a long line. Luke fidgets.

LUKE
They have food in the box.

MINA
We're not sitting in the box.

LUKE
But I want to sit in the box with my friends.

MINA
We've been through this, Luke.

LUKE
Where are our seats?

A pot-bellied Raiders FAN turns around.

POT-BELLIED RAIDER FAN
Thirty yard line. They're pretty good, kid.
(MORE)

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POT-BELLIED RAIDER FAN (CONT'D)
(then; to Mina)
Thanks again, lady. Buy you a beer?

INT. STADIUM - LUXURY BOX - DAY

Jasmine and Tanya sip chardonnay in one of the luxury boxes reserved for the players' families.

TANYA
(applying lip gloss)
I passed him in the hallway.

JASMINE
Matthew McConaughey was not checking you out.

TANYA
All I'm saying is, you never know who's gonna walk through that door.

Just then the door to the luxury box opens--

It's the pot-bellied Raider fan with his buddy.

POT-BELLIED RAIDER FAN
Ladies...

INT. LUXURY BOX LEVEL - LATER

Abby strides down the corridor, a woman on a mission.

ABBY
(into a cell phone)
Tirico? Hell no! It's Suzy's story. She was on it from the start, let her break it. Berman?! I don't give a fuck what Berman says. Besides, trust me -- it's better coming from a woman.

EXT. STADIUM - PARKING LOT - DAY

A familiar sexy brunette, Suzy Kolber, holds the microphone in her hand and tries not to catch the heels of her *Jimmy Choos* in the tangle of wires snaking across the asphalt.

SUZY KOLBER
Standards and practices said what? Gay or homosexual? Can we say gay-- Fuck!

Suzy's cameraman, PETE, peers out from behind the lens.

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PETE
Suzy, I'm pretty sure you can't say fuck on TV.

SUZY KOLBER
Well the fucking earpiece won't stop buzzing. I swear to God... If it happens when we're live...

She takes a deep breath and flashes a smile, as we pan over to find a row of TV CAMERAS and REPORTERS... some rehearsing, some live on-air. Fuck is right. This story is beyond big. It's global.

BRITISH REPORTER
The yet to be released video footage shows Jody Thorensen engaged in sexual contact...

GERMAN REPORTER
An explosive gay sex scandal is turning the American sports world upside down...

SPANISH REPORTER
With only 60 minutes until kickoff, the game has become an afterthought...

JAPANESE REPORTER
No word yet on the identity of the other player caught on tape...

INT. PHILADELPHIA SUPER BOWL PARTY - DAY

Karol pushes through a crowded living room. People are glued to the television, watching Suzy Kolber break the news.

KAROL
(into her cell phone)
Mina... ohmigod, did you hear?

CUT TO:

MINA

with her cell phone pressed tight to her ear.

MINA
What? Karol? I can't hear you.

KAROL
Where you are you? Are you alone?

MINA
No. Not really.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

She sits next to Luke somewhere near the 30 yard line, surrounded by thousands of fans in the sold-out stadium.

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POLICE OFFICER (PRELAP)
Hey. Hey, you!

INT. STADIUM - TUNNEL - DAY

Eagles owner Jeff Lurie pushes past a Police Officer on his way to the Eagles locker room.

POLICE OFFICER
The locker room is off limits.

JEFF LURIE
I own the team.

A second Police Officer stops him near the door to the locker room. Fitzgibbons steps out, crosses to Lurie.

FITZGIBBONS
Mr. Lurie--

JEFF LURIE
What the fuck is going on, Bob?!
Did you know about this?

FITZGIBBONS
Me? No. I've talked to legal and
we're working on a statement--

JEFF LURIE
A statement? Where's Jody?

FITZGIBBONS
On the field.

JEFF LURIE
This is crazy. We're a family
organization. First I hear about
guys on a party boat with strippers
and drugs-- and now this?

He yanks the door open to the locker room, just as--

JODY (O.S.)
Mr. Lurie?

Jody's headed back to the locker room after warming up.

JODY (CONT'D)
What's going on?

JEFF LURIE
You tell me... Is it true what
they're saying?

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JODY
(confused)
What?

JEFF LURIE
This tape. You and another guy?

Lurie's words take Jody's breath away. He is stunned, his world suddenly off axis.

Lurie's cell phone RINGS.

He turns it off and looks at Jody, who is still reeling...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. HOTEL BATHROOM - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Jody, with a towel around his waist, turns at the sound of a cell phone RINGING in the other room.

BATTLE (O.S.)
Hello? Yeah, hey Mina.

Jody quickly crosses into the--

HOTEL BEDROOM

Battle lies half-naked on the bed.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
(into the phone)
What are you and Luke up to?

Jody gestures-- what the fuck? Battle waves him off, casually picking at some room service french fries.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Cool. Well, we just walked off the 18th green. Yeah, sure. I'll have him call you back. Bye.

He hangs up, tosses the cell phone on the bed.

JODY
What was that?

BATTLE
Nothing.

Battle reaches out to Jody, who steps away.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Hey, what's wrong?

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JODY
What's wrong? Don't fuck around.

BATTLE
She doesn't know anything.

JODY
She knows I'm with you! One call to the golf course and I'm done.

BATTLE
She won't call the golf course.

JODY
And you know that how exactly? This is my family.

Battle softens.

BATTLE
Hey, you're right. It was stupid.

Jody drops into a chair, still rattled. Runs his hands through his hair.

JODY
Toss me my phone.

Battle grabs the cell, slides out of bed. Moves to Jody.

BATTLE
I'm sorry.

He kisses Jody on the mouth, then slowly down his chest. Loosens the towel -- and goes down on him, dropping out of frame.

Jody closes his eyes and leans his back in his chair...

EXT. LAMBEAU FIELD - DAY

Eagles versus Packers. It's ten below on the frozen tundra. Jody is under center, his breath visible as he audibles.

JODY
Red 42... Red 42...
(locking eyes with Battle)
Set go!

The ball snaps, Jody drops back, pump fakes once, twice -- throws.

Spiraling...

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Battle catches it and gets WALLOPED. Hangs on. TOUCHDOWN!

CUT TO:

EAGLES SIDELINE

Jody watches a team trainer evaluate Battle for a concussion.

Himmelberg crosses in front of Jody.

HIMMELBERG
Great pass, bro.

JODY
Better catch.

HIMMELBERG
Yeah, you see that hit? Damn...
Battle's indestructible.

Off Jody, concerned, as he watches the trainer wave smelling salts in Battle's face.

EXT. INDEPENDENCE HALL - DAY

Jody, Battle, Jackson and Mooney wear their Eagles uniforms and powdered wigs and Colonial tri-cornered hats.

Posing next the Liberty Bell.

MATCH CUT TO:

The glossy, finished cover of ESPN THE MAGAZINE. The four guys pose underneath the words: "CITY OF BROTHERLY LOVE"

INT. EAGLES FACILITY - MEETING ROOM - DAY

The magazine lands in Knox's lap. He snickers at the cover.

The entire team is assembled for a PowerPoint presentation. The slide reads: "Sexual Harassment in the Workplace."

The SPEAKER is a female HR-type in her 50s.

SPEAKER
This league-mandated program is designed to help facilitate a safe workplace environment that does not tolerate discrimination of any kind.

As she continues, players zone her out. They are checking email, texting, flipping through magazines.

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In the back of the room, Knox is glued to the cover shot of ESPN THE MAGAZINE. Still chuckling.

KNOX
Real cute, Thorensen. You and your brothers.

Jody snags the magazine from Knox.

JODY
It's cool. Let's find your photo...
(flipping through it)
Oh... oh yeah, I forgot. You're not in here. They only wanted the playmakers.

Jackson laughs at Knox.

JACKSON
Naw, man. You didn't hear? Knox made US Weekly's 50 ugliest people.

Real laughter from Jody and some others nearby.

KNOX
At least I ain't no wig wearing faggot.

The word faggot rings loud and clear, stopping the speaker.

SPEAKER
Who said that?

Jackson has already rocketed to his feet, standing over Knox.

JACKSON
Say it again, bitch.

Knox rises.

KNOX
Faggot. Now what?

BOOM!

Jackson tackles Knox and mayhem erupts.

Chairs overturn as teammates rush to get between the two.

Through the mass of tangled bodies, Jody manages to pull Jackson away as Battle and two others hold Knox back.

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As the scuffle subsides, Jody's eyes land on Battle. His forehead is cut. He's bleeding, a casualty of war.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. EAGLES LOCKER ROOM - **PRESENT DAY**

Jody pushes open the door, steps inside.

His teammates are watching him -- no, staring. Their faces are hard to read. Disgust? Pity? Contempt? Or just plain confusion?

Jody crosses the room.

He moves past a teammate, naked except for a jock strap. Jody's eyes drop to the floor.

It's a short distance to his locker but a very long walk. He's not moving in slow-motion but it feels like it.

Arriving at his locker, Jody gives a small nod to Himmelberg, who is seated next to him, taping his knuckles.

Himmelberg hesitates a moment, and then looks away.

Jody sits down in his chair and takes a very big breath.

No words have been spoken, yet everything has changed.

EXT. SIDELINE - DAY

Microphone in hand, David Battle stands in front of a camera. Trying to maintain his composure, he rehearses a very straight, very canned sideline report.

BATTLE
(talking over the crowd)
We're moments away from player introductions and the two teams taking the field. The atmosphere is electric and the stage is set for what promises to be an exciting football game. Back to you guys.

He lowers his mic, takes a deep breath.

HARRIET
Didn't you leave something out?

BATTLE
What?

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HARRIET
Jody Thorensen. He's gay?

BATTLE
(sharp)
Here's a headline. How about you do your job and I do mine?

Battle hands his mic to Harriet and heads toward the--

STADIUM TUNNEL

A flurry of activity as stadium security, PAs, grips, gaffers, and the pyrotechnic crew make final preparations.

A 50-YEAR-OLD GRIP stands in front a large ripped piece of cardboard taped to a production cart. The cardboard is divided into 20 squares with numbers.

Battle approaches.

50-YEAR-OLD GRIP
Battle? You want in? 20 bucks a square. We're picking Thorensen's mystery man.

Battle looks over.

50-YEAR-OLD GRIP (CONT'D)
We got all the suspects. These are all the Eagles on the party boat.
(waving a Sharpie)
All you gotta do is pick a...

He stops mid-sentence, as if the wind was knocked out of him.

Uneasy silence. Battle is on the board-- and taken.

Jesus Christ...

INT. STADIUM BATHROOM - DAY

A stall door blows open. It's Battle, puking his brains out.

He unwinds some toilet paper, wipes his mouth.

Turns and--

SMASHES the stall door with his fist.

INT. STADIUM - PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Abby sweeps into the room, sits down across from Harriet. Abby looks at her for a moment as Harriet squirms.

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HARRIET
You wanted to see me?

ABBY
How's it going down there today?

HARRIET
Good-- I mean, great. Yeah. It's the Super Bowl, right?

She laughs nervously.

ABBY
Do you like working with David?

HARRIET
Yeah. I mean, yes. I do.
(then)
Did I do something wrong?

ABBY
No, no. You've done a great job here all season and I see a very bright future for you here at ESPN.

HARRIET
Oh, wow-- thank you.

ABBY
You know, I started here as a PA.

HARRIET
I didn't know that.

ABBY
I need you to do something for me.

HARRIET
Um, sure. What?

Abby leans forward in her chair.

ABBY
Keep a close eye on David today. Can you do that for me?

Off Harriet, looking horribly uncomfortable--

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Sensory overload as fireworks explode and fans go nuts for...

THE PHILADELPHIA EAGLES

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With Jody leading, the team bursts through artificial fog.

CUT TO:

THE OAKLAND RAIDERS

Looking menacing as they too emerge through the smoky haze.

EXT. STADIUM - DAY

We're tucked somewhere in the shadow of the stadium, where there are enough wires and cables to power a small city, courtesy of a massive mobile generator.

The metal steps into the main ESPN production truck rattle under Abby's heels as she clink-clanks her way up the stairs and into the--

INT. MAIN PRODUCTION TRUCK - CONTINUOUS

Welcome to the air-conditioned nerve center of the Super Bowl broadcast. Over 100 TV screens. Director BRANDON ZEE, 50s, sits at the helm as Abby moves into the truck.

ZEE
(wearing a headset)
Go camera 2. Yeah, yeah. The Raider fan with the spikes. Beautiful.

ABBY
I told you to find Mina Thorensen.

Zee waves her off.

ZEE
Now go 3, ready 8.

ABBY
Zee, did you hear me?

ZEE
Yeah, yeah. Find Mina.

ABBY
Now.

ZEE
Get me graphics 2X, good. And... go graphics.

ABBY
Where is she?

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Zee swivels around in his chair to face Abby.

ZEE
Not in the luxury box.

ABBY
She has to be here somewhere.

ZEE
Okay.

ABBY
Are you even looking?

ZEE
Kinda busy, Abby.

ABBY
You're not hearing me, Zee. She's part of the story.

ZEE
A very small part. This is the Super Bowl, not where's Waldo.
(turning his back on her)
Ready camera 7. Go 7.

Abby turns and exits in a huff. The door slamming behind her.

ZEE (CONT'D)
Hey, camera 12. Find me Mina Thorensen, will ya?

EXT. FIELD - DAY

Panning down the sidelines, past the Oakland Raiders and Philadelphia Eagles who are staring at

LADY GAGA

who makes her way to midfield, dressed in an outrageous skintight red, white and blue outfit.

As she begins to sing our National Anthem, we cut to:

THE RAIDERS

Intensity on their faces, some eyes wide, others eyes closed. Some with hands over hearts.

THE EAGLES

Coach Kempton stands straight, looking as focused as ever.

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Jackson rocks back and forth, hyped.

Knox, eyes closed, head tilted to the heavens.

Mooney cradles his helmet under his arm, as a lone tear slides down his cheek.

Himmelberg sings quietly to himself.

Finally we land on Jody, inscrutable and steely-eyed.

IN THE STANDS

Mina and Luke stand along with everyone else in the stadium. Hats off, hands over hearts.

Suddenly--

MAN (O.S.)
JODY THORENSEN TAKES IT UP THE ASS!

The words slice into Mina like a knife.

She notices Luke turning. Mina instinctively grabs him.

MINA
We're going.

Mina starts hurrying down the aisle, clutching Luke's hand. Bumping into other fans as they go.

They reach the end of the aisle and head up the stairs.

Climbing past rows and rows of spectators.

As the National Anthem reaches a crescendo...

Mina slows, looking uncomfortable.

People are staring her. Do they recognize her? Yes. A man points, another whispers.

Mina pulls Luke closer. Still climbing.

It's as if every single eye in the stadium is on her.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. NEW YORK - FIFTH AVENUE LINGERIE STORE - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Mina blushes as she walks out of a changing room, dressed in a skimpy bra and panties. Feeling exposed...

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JASMINE (O.S.)
You sexy little bitch.

Oohs and aahs from Jasmine, Rene and Tanya, who are seated in overstuffed chairs. They are somewhere between mani/pedis and a five-figure sushi lunch in SOHO.

TANYA
Jody is going to looooove that.
You have to buy it.

MINA
I don't know...

RENE
Honey, if you don't wear it for
him, somebody else will.

Jasmine and Tanya cackle at the comment as--

Mina forces a smile, not wanting to reveal that the comment has struck a nerve.

EXT. THORENSEN HOME - DAY

A tony Main Line neighborhood. An automated gate opens up to a stone driveway with a magnificent Tudor home at the end. An Audi Q7 pulls up. Mina exits the driver side. Karol gets out on the passenger side.

KAROL
Oh. My. God.

MINA
It's not too... Big?

Mina helps Karol with her luggage, as we enter...

THE FOYER

Fresh flowers. One of Mina and Jody's wedding photos is prominent. And that's about it.

KAROL
You've got great taste. And you've
got the money, M. Go out and buy
yourself... a couch.

INT. THORENSEN HOME - MASTER BEDROOM - DAY

Mina leads Karol on a tour of the house. They're upstairs in the master suite.

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KAROL
For the record, your bedroom closet is bigger than my apartment.

MINA
It’s a lot of space for sleeping.

Karol playfully bounces up and down on the king.

KAROL
Come on, it’s good, right?

Mina’s expression betrays her.

KAROL (CONT’D)
Wait. You’re not having sex?

MINA
(reluctant)
No. We haven’t. Not for awhile.

KAROL
Do you think he’s seeing someone?

MINA
(too quickly)
No.

KAROL
Mina...

MINA
It’s just... He’s busy.

KAROL
He’s your husband.

MINA
He’s fighting to become the starter. He’s pretty beat up.

KAROL
Too beat up for sex? He’s a man.

JODY (O.S.)
Mina? You home?

Mina and Karol exchange a look and exit the bedroom. We stay with them as they head downstairs and into...

THE KITCHEN

Jody and Battle are here. They’re back from a workout.

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JODY (CONT'D)
(to Karol)
Hey you. Welcome.

Jody crosses to Karol. They hug.

KAROL
You look good.

Jody gives Mina a friendly peck on the cheek. Just a peck.

BATTLE
(to Karol)
I'm David.

KAROL
I know.

They share a look. A shared sense of attraction, maybe?

MINA
Anyone hungry?

INT. MORIMOTO - DAY

An ultra-hip sushi restaurant. Neon abounds in this modern space. Jody, Mina, Battle and Karol are seated in a booth. They're mid-meal.

MINA
Can we not talk about football, please?

BATTLE
Good idea. How long have you known each other?

MINA
Karol and me?

Mina shoots Karol a look.

KAROL
Do you want to tell the story, or do I get to?

MINA
Summer camp. 5th grade...

Battle shoots a look at Jody, then back to Karol. She senses something. As Mina tells her story...

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INT. MORIMOTO - LADIES RESTROOM - DAY

Mina leans in close to the mirror, touches up her lip gloss. Karol exits a stall, joins her.

KAROL
I dropped half of it in my lap. I never was good with chopsticks.
(then)
Please tell me I didn't look like a total bumpkin.

MINA
I think David likes you.

KAROL
What?

MINA
He's checking you out.

KAROL
No way.

MINA
Please. I know what I saw.

Karol turns, faces Mina. She's serious now.

KAROL
Really? I would have... nothing.

MINA
What?

KAROL
I don't know. I just met him, but... Doesn't he seem like he could be gay?

MINA
David Battle is <u>not</u> gay.

KAROL
How do you know?

MINA
I know.

KAROL
You're sure.

MINA
Totally.

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KAROL
So you've seen him with women?

Mina goes silent.

KAROL (CONT'D)
Look, who cares? He's definitely hot, all I'm saying is that I don't see what you do.

Karol takes a close look in the mirror. Off Mina, rocked...

INT. THORENSEN HOME - KITCHEN - DAY

Mina makes a salad. Luke sits at the kitchen table, busy with construction paper and colored pencils.

MINA
How about spaghetti for dinner?

LUKE
I want mac and cheese.

MINA
Honey, you can't eat mac and cheese for breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

LUKE
Why?

MINA
Because I'm your mom and I say you need to have some variety.

LUKE
What's variety?

MINA
Something new. Something green.

LUKE
Green mac and cheese please.

Mina smiles.

MINA
What are you working on over there?

LUKE
A picture.

MINA
Can I see it?

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LUKE
Yeah.

Mina wipes her hands on a dish towel, crosses to the table.

Her face falls.

LUKE'S DRAWING

Jody and David in uniform. They stand close, holding hands. They're smiling; unabashedly happy.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Do you like it?

Mina, eyes watering, is unable to respond. Off Mina...

INT. STADIUM RESTAURANT - **PRESENT DAY**

Mina stands at the bar with Luke. They're inside a nearly empty in-stadium sports bar.

BARTENDER
What're you having?

LUKE
We're gonna miss the kickoff!

MINA
No, we're not, Luke.
(to the bartender)
I'll have--

BARTENDER
Be right back with you.

He turns to help another customer. Mina lost her chance.

A BUSBOY steps in front of her, wiping the bar clean. There is a glint of recognition in his eyes.

She averts her gaze, looks down.

VOICE
M'am?

Mina looks up nervously. The bartender is back.

BARTENDER
Ready?

MINA
I'll have a, um... Luke, do you want a lemonade?

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She looks. Luke is gone.

INT. STADIUM CONCOURSE - DAY

Mina rushes out of the sports bar, nearly hysterical.

MINA
Luke... Luke!

STADIUM SECURITY GUARD
(approaching Mina)
Is there a problem?

MINA
My son! I lost my son! Luke!

Mina spots him. He's at the railing, staring at the field. She rushes over and hugs him tight.

MINA (CONT'D)
Don't you ever run away from me.

LUKE
Mom, look!

He points up at the sky. We hear a WHOOSHING as we cut to:

EXT. SKY - DAY

Five F-15s streak across a sky so blue our eyes almost ache. They bank hard, in tight formation, and, awaaaayyy we go....

EXT. FIELD - DAY

VROOOM!!!

The fly-over sends the crowd into a goosebumping frenzy.

CUT TO:

EAGLES SIDELINE

As Jody, Knox, and Jackson head toward midfield for the coin toss, we swivel to--

WOLF BARBOUR

The Raiders All-Pro free safety is hand-in-hand with two giant-sized teammates. Reaching the logo at the same time as Jody.

And now we are INSIDE JODY'S HELMET, seeing what he sees:

Wolf Barbour -- grinning at him.

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REFEREE
Gentlemen, shake hands.

Handshakes between the captains. Wolf leans in to Jody.

WOLF
How's the wife?

Jody looks away. Off Jackson, Jody's teammate, smirking...

INT. STADIUM - CORRIDOR - DAY

Mina and Luke trail Fitzgibbons. He's moving briskly.

MINA
I appreciate you taking the time to do this for us. It's just... I didn't know who else to call.

FITZGIBBONS
Mina, please. I'm happy to help.

They stop at a door.

FITZGIBBONS (CONT'D)
I'm pretty sure nobody will bother you here.

He pushes open the door to reveal--

A luxury box filled with JAPANESE EXECUTIVES and their FAMILIES. Luke makes a beeline for the seating area.

CUT TO:

A football tumbling end over end...

EXT. FIELD - DAY

POP! POP! POP! Thousands of flashbulbs go off--

The Eagles RETURN MAN catches the ball and sprints up field.

BOOM!

It's a HUGE EXPLOSION of helmets, pads, muscle, and sweat.

CUT TO:

Jody and the Eagles offense take the field.

IN THE HUDDLE

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Ten men. Their eyes bugged, on the edge, ready to explode. Jody steps in...

JODY
Alright, this is it! Let's kick some ass. Right here, right now! Here we go-- strong right slot 23 zebra on sound.

CUT TO:

THE RAIDERS DEFENSIVE LINE

We are tight on four men big enough to eat hay and shit in the street. They lower themselves into three-point stances.

All around them, the defense is chattering.

RAIDERS #1
Yeah, baby. Bring that shit!

RAIDERS #2
I-backs! Watch the run!

RAIDERS #3
Check two, check two! Banjo, banjo-- watch the slot!

RAIDERS #4
You want some of this, Thorensen?! You like this, you want me?

JODY (CONT'D)
Go!

CRACK!

It's a human train wreck as helmets and pads smash together.

Jody drops back to pass...

LINE OF SCRIMMAGE

It's not a game of elbows and shoulders. It's a game of leverage, strong hands and quick feet. Men pulling, grabbing, spinning.

Jody is looking downfield... scanning...

WHAP!

A jarring shot to Jody's chest, lifts him off his feet, falling backwards...

Jody heaves the ball--

300 pounds of Raider muscle drive him into the turf, hard.

BOOM!

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The camera tilts to the sky and the crowd noise cuts out.

Dead silence.

Suddenly--

A rush of air fills Jody's lungs.

Staying with Jody, on his back, as the crowd noise returns, ROARS.

He rolls out from underneath the defender, lifts his head.

And through a sea of cleats and padded legs, watches--

JACKSON

high-stepping 90 yards away, crossing the goal line.

TOUCHDOWN EAGLES!

CUT TO:

SCOREBOARD

Eagles 7, Raiders 0 -- 1st quarter

CUT TO:

EAGLES SIDELINE

Jody takes a seat on a long steel bench, downs some Gatorade and pulls on a baseball cap.

Coach Kempton slaps Jody's shoulder pad.

KEMPTON
Helluva play. You good?

Jody nods as Kempton hurries back to the edge of the field.

Panning down the bench, past Himmeleberg and the rest of the offensive line, to--

JACKSON

He's smiling and sucking on an oxygen mask.

JODY

Alone. He can't help but notice everyone congratulating Jackson.

CUT TO:

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A QUICK HIGH-ENERGY MONTAGE

Eagles safety Azinger rockets through the air and BLASTS a Raider receiver.

CUT TO:

A Raider running back leaps, ball out-stretched, into the end zone. Touchdown, Raiders.

CUT TO:

SCOREBOARD

Eagles 7, Raiders 7 -- 1st quarter

CUT TO:

Jody fires the football down field. Mooney is open but Jody misses him. Jody swears, claps his hand in frustration.

CUT TO:

Under center, Jody takes the snap but fumbles. He's blown back during a mad scramble for ball. Himmelberg recovers.

CUT TO:

KEMPTON

Arms-crossed and angry on the sideline.

CUT TO:

RAPID FIRE -- A hand-off to Jackson up the gut for 15 yards, first down.. another incomplete pass... and another...

IN THE HUDDLE

JODY
I-right doubles 99 zoom on two!

Shotgun formation, drenched in sweat, barking audibles:

JODY (CONT'D)
Lucy... Lucy!

Himmelberg hikes the ball. Jody drops back... throws... it's a perfect spiral over the middle and through Mooney's hands.

Incomplete. Here comes the punt team.

CUT TO:

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Jody stalks off the field and screams:

JODY (CONT'D)
Catch the fuckin' ball!

CUT TO:

A football sails through the air and into the arms of a Raider receiver. The referee signals touchdown!

CUT TO:

SCOREBOARD

Eagles 7, Raiders 14 -- 2nd quarter

CUT TO:

DAVID BATTLE

Reading some notes in preparation for a sideline report.

BATTLE
Hey, Harriet, can we do this right here? How's the angle?
(looking up)
Are you guys getting the field?

Harriet, standing next to a cameraman, gives Battle a thumbs up. Battle reaches up and adjusts his earpiece.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Zee? You there?

Zee's VOICE crackles over Battle's earpiece.

ZEE (V.O.)
I'm here. Throwing to you in 10. Here's broadcast...

AL MICHAELS (V.O.)
Looks like they're gonna give Jackson three on the play...

ZEE (V.O.)
In 10, 9, 8... Shit...

AL MICHAELS
That'll bring up 2nd and 7...

BATTLE
Zee? I didn't get that.

ZEE (V.O.)
Deadspin put the tape up... And in 3, 2, 1... Ready, go camera 6.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.)
Let's go down to the sideline for an update from David Battle...

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Battle looks stunned as the camera's red light blinks on--

He's LIVE.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.)
David?

Battle, still shaken, stares into camera but his mind is elsewhere. He cannot recover. Nothing but dead air until--

AL MICHAELS
We're having some technical difficulties down on the sideline... Eagles come out in a three receiver set...

Harriet, deeply concerned, moves to Battle.

HARRIET
David? Are you okay? David?

He does not respond. As the crowd ROARS in the background--

Harriet freezes in fear.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
DAVID!

Oehler catches the ball out of bounds and--

CRASHES into Battle, who slams his head on the turf.

Off Battle, dazed, staring up at the sky.

MATCH CUT TO:

EXT. ATLANTIC OCEAN - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

David Battle, bobbing in the swell, looks up at the sky.

HIMMELBERG (O.S.)
Man overboard!

SPLASH!

A tire-sized life ring lands and kicks water into Battle's face.

BATTLE
Very funny. Fat ass.

Battle looks over at--

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A massive 100-foot yacht complete with deep sea fishing equipment off its stern. Himmelberg swigs off a bottle of Jose Cuervo, passes it over to--

Jody

Shirtless, wearing swimming trunks.

HIMMELBERG
You wish you had this body, Battle.

Jody takes the Cuervo, slams it.

BATTLE
Take it easy, Jody.

JODY
Who are you? My wife?

Battle winces as players gathered at the rail laugh.

INT. PARTY BOAT - LATER

A white-coated chef is preparing sushi. Battle, shirtless, rummages through a drawer and finds a bottle of sunblock.

Jody enters and grabs an armful of beers from the fully-stocked galley.

JODY
Hey, we're about to get started.
You wanna buy in?

BATTLE
Nah. I'm a shitty poker player.

JODY
Suit yourself.

BATTLE
(waving the sunblock)
Could you get my back?

JODY
(holding beers)
Bro, look at me.

BATTLE
Jody... come on.

Jody looks at Battle with disbelief.

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JODY
(quietly)
What the fuck is wrong with you?

Jody leaves, shaking his head. Battle watches him go.

Battle turns and meets the gaze of the chef. A long uncomfortable beat passes between them.

EXT - PARTY BOAT - DECK - LATER

Hip-Hop BLARES from the speakers and the booze is still flowing freely, when--

A boat horn TRUMPETS the arrival of Knox, at the wheel of a sleek, fire-engine red

CIGARETTE BOAT

Overrun with hot GIRLS ready to party. Exotic-dancer types.

As the players hoot and holler...

CUT TO:

Dancing, grinding, stripping. The party is in full blast.

Battle, feeling out of place, watches everyone on board go wild, Jody included. He's dancing with three topless babes.

GIRL (O.S.)
Wanna dance?

A stunning brunette smiles at Battle.

BATTLE
(to himself)
Fuck it.

He reaches for a bottle of Jack Daniels, as we cut to:

Battle, airborne, reaches out and makes a spectacular one-handed catch.

SPLASH!

With the sun setting on the horizon, everyone CHEERS as Battle comes up for air, holding the ball.

JODY
Catch this!

He runs toward the edge...

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KABOOM!

He cannonballs right on top of Battle. The rest of the party follows Jody's lead and takes the plunge.

A flotilla of players and topless girls giggling and splashing as--

Battle playfully swims away from Jody, who follows.

They reach the cigarette boat, anchored thirty feet away.

Battle reaches the stern.

JODY (CONT'D)
Check it out. Classic.

He points to the boat's name: *Cause for Divorce*.

BATTLE
Come on, let's check it out.

Battle starts to climb up the ladder when--

Jody grabs him, stops him, pulls him close. His chest is pressed against Battle's back.

Jody kisses Battle's neck, reaches around and yanks his trunks down.

With Battle gripping the ladder tight, his head pressed against the boat, we...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - SIDELINE - **PRESENT DAY**

Battle is seated on the back of a golf cart. He's holding a blood-stained towel to his nose.

Smattered applause as the cart rolls behind the sideline, taking the long route to the tunnel.

The crowd gasps and boos rain down.

On the cart, Battle turns to BOBBY, an Eagles trainer.

BATTLE
(confused)
What's going on?

BOBBY
They just saw it.

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Battle closes his eyes.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
I wouldn't wanna look either.

As the replay of Oehler catching the ball and slamming into Battle plays on the jumbotron, we cut to:

INT. STADIUM - PRODUCTION OFFICE - DAY

Abby stares at a laptop. She's on Deadspin's homepage.

ON SCREEN

Shaky handheld footage of Battle, airborne, making the one-handed catch and SPLASHING into the ocean.

(It's the same scene from Battle's last flashback.)

JODY
Catch this!

KABOOM! He cannonballs right on top of Battle. The rest of the party follows Jody's lead and takes the plunge.

ABBY

places the cursor on the arrow and fast-forwards through the tape. We see quick glimpses of people swimming and partying.

CLOSE ON ABBY

Intently watching the footage move by at lightning speed.

We're tight on Abby's face when suddenly she sees something.

The cursor moves to the arrow and she clicks "play."

Her face is impossible to read.

A long, slow moment passes. Then--

Abby reaches for her phone. Dialing...

ABBY
Get me David Battle.

INT. STADIUM TRAINING ROOM - NIGHT

Battle sits on a table, legs dangling, somewhere deep in the bowels of the stadium.

The trainer removes bloody gauze from his nose.

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BOBBY
You took a pretty big pop.

BATTLE
Vision's fine, no tingling in my arms or legs, and Barack Obama is president. It's a bloody nose.

BOBBY
We both know it's not the nose I'm worried about.

Battle notices a laptop in the corner of the room.

BATTLE
I'm fine.

BOBBY
You don't seem fine. You have a history, David.

BATTLE
I'm done here.

He slides off the table and pushes past the trainer.

INT. STADIUM TRAINING ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

The door flies open as Harriet races into the room.

HARRIET
Where is he?

BOBBY
Battle? He said something about changing his shirt.

HARRIET
I just came from wardrobe.

BOBBY
Maybe he's back on the field?

HARRIET
He's not on the field.
(growing impatient)
What else did he say?

BOBBY
Nothing. Just said he was... done?

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EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT

Battle stands in the open air, looking more like a dazed car accident victim than a sideline reporter.

He's not doing anything, just standing there, about 20 feet from an exit. With the game still in progress, the only people around are vendors. With faint cheers in the background, occasionally rising into a roar:

FEMALE VOICE (O.S.)
David?

It's Harriet.

HARRIET
What are you doing out here?

BATTLE
I... don't know.

VENDOR (O.S.)
Here you go.

Battle accepts a freshly-whipped stick of cotton candy from the vendor. He pulls off a piece. Takes a bite.

HARRIET
Are you okay?

BATTLE
No.

His candor silences her. She doesn't know how to respond.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
They're looking for me, right?

HARRIET
Who? Abby is... yeah.

BATTLE
Want some?

HARRIET
Uh, no thanks.

Battle abruptly tosses the cotton candy in the trash-- then stops. Peers into the can, curious...

INSIDE

The cotton candy rests atop a discarded Eagles jersey. Number 7, with the name Thorensen on the back.

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Damn... someone threw out Jody's jersey.

BATTLE
Have you seen the tape?

HARRIET
No. Not yet.

A long, uncomfortable moment passes.

HARRIET (CONT'D)
You know, Abby doesn't know I found you. So I could just.. do you need a minute?

EXT. FIELD - FINAL MOMENTS OF THE FIRST HALF

The Eagles offense breaks the huddle, comes to the line of scrimmage. With Jody under center:

JODY
Blue 33, blue 33.

The defense shifts. Jody audibles, changing the play:

JODY (CONT'D)
Brown Richmond! 96 double!
(turning back to Jackson)
Left flare, left flare.
(returning to center)
Brown Richmond 96 double! Hut-hut!

Jody fakes a handoff to Jackson, and drops back.

Looks downfield. Has Mooney open and throws--

INTERCEPTION!

Wolf Barbour is coming the other way as--

Philly's offense turns to defense. He darts up the middle and breaks wide to the sideline. With one man to beat.

JODY

Heads him off, finding the angle, closing on him--

BAM!

A vicious hit BLINDSIDES Jody and knocks him out of bounds and into the Oakland Raiders sideline.

ON THE FIELD

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Wolf Barbour races untouched into the end zone.

JODY'S POV

He's on the ground, looking up, surrounded by Raiders, who are whooping and hollering, celebrating and jawing at Jody.

Through the bedlam, Jody sees--

A GREEN JERSEY

It's Jackson, standing on the field. They lock eyes, and, instead of helping his quarterback up--

Jackson turns his back on Jody and walks away.

INT. EAGLES LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Halftime. Helmets are tossed as players spill in, pissed.

Jody forges into the room and starts slapping shoulder pads.

JODY
Come on. Get your heads up. We're still in this game.

Jody crosses to Mooney, who's staring down at the floor.

JODY (CONT'D)
I'm gonna get you the ball, just keep doing your thing. Keep working hard.

He moves to Himmelberg and the rest of the O-Line.

JODY (CONT'D)
You guys are blocking your asses off. Thirty more minutes...

Jody spots Jackson at his locker. He's got his back to everyone, peeling off his shoulder pads.

JODY (CONT'D)
Helluva touchdown, Jax.

Jody claps him on the back. Jackson wheels around, livid.

JACKSON
'Fuck off me.

Jody backs off, momentarily stung.

JODY
What's your problem?

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Jackson shakes his head, disgusted. Jody holds his ground. Loudly, for everyone to hear:

JODY (CONT'D)
I said what's your problem?

Jody waits for a response, but gets none.

JODY (CONT'D)
Okay, alright... Who wants to say it?

He has the locker room's undivided attention.

JODY (CONT'D)
DOES ANYONE WANT TO SAY IT?

Jody paces.

JODY (CONT'D)
I know somebody wants to say it. So just say it. Let's get it out right now. Let's do it right now.

HIMMELBERG
Jody... come on, man.

JODY
No. Someone's gotta say it. Someone's gotta call me gay. Someone call me a fuckin' homo.

Jody looks around the room, trembling.

JODY (CONT'D)
Who's got the fuckin' guts to call me a faggot?!

Jody's laid himself bare. His soul is now open, raw.

JODY (CONT'D)
This is who I am. I've been hiding my whole life... Lying to everyone, to myself... Hating myself. Wishing... praying I was going to wake up one day and be normal. Be something other than this. Something you can't stand.

The room is paralyzed. No one moves. No one utters a word.

JODY (CONT'D)
You might think I'm different. Maybe I am.
(MORE)

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JODY (CONT'D)
But there's one fuckin' thing that bonds every single one of us. We share a common goal. To be the best. To win a world championship.
(then)
When we come out of this locker room, we come out together. We come out as a team. If we do that, everything else will take care of itself.

Jody's words hang in the air. Off Jody, standing tall...

INT. STADIUM - TRAINING ROOM - A FEW MINUTES LATER

Jody's on a table, leg extended, watching as Bobby, the trainer who helped Battle, deftly re-tapes his ankles.

Jody notices a blood-stained towel.

JODY
Jesus. Somebody get shot?

Bobby maneuvers tape around Jody's ankle.

BOBBY
Nosebleed.

JODY
Nosebleed?

Bobby RIPS a last piece of tape and smooths it over Jody's ankle.

BOBBY
You didn't see it? Battle got cracked. Between you and me, he seemed pretty out of it.

Off Jody, lost in thought...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. PARTY BOAT - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

Back on the party boat... it's still wild as hell.

Jody helps a dazed and drunken Battle off the makeshift dance floor on the deck. They stumble toward--

STAIRS

Battle's a sack of potatoes as Jody steers him down the steps, past--

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KNOX

Who's got his hands all over two TOPLESS women. They squeeze by Jody and Battle.

KNOX
Gentlemen.

Knox slaps the ass of the girl in front of him and continues up the steps. He's followed by the chef, who steps aside and makes himself skinny as Jody and Battle bumble past. Jody steals a glance back over his shoulder.

CHEF
(smiling)
Need a hand?

Jody doesn't respond. He keeps lugging Battle downstairs.

INT. PARTY BOAT - CABIN - NIGHT

Jody dumps Battle onto the bed and heads into the--

BATHROOM

He grabs a bottled water, some aspirin, and sees--

BATTLE

In the reflection of the mirror. He's back on his feet and swaying in the doorway, drunk and flirtatious, as we cut to:

SHAKY, HAND-HELD CAMERA FOOTAGE

An amateur-quality video focuses on a shirtless Jody, who puts up a hand to shield his face. The audio is rough.

JODY
What are you doing? Is that on?

MALE VOICE (O.S.)
No.

Our POV tilts, as the unseen man holding the camera carefully puts it aside, with Jody still centered in the FRAME.

The unseen MAN steps into the frame, naked. <u>It's the chef.</u>

He moves to Jody, embraces him, kisses his chest... Jody throws his head back in pleasure.

SMASH! A laptop SLAMS shut.

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And we now realize that the grainy amateur video that we just saw is actually the infamous Deadspin sex tape...

INT. STADIUM - OFFICE - HALFTIME - **PRESENT DAY**

Abby flinches. Battle walks away from the laptop he just slammed shut.

ABBY
David...

BATTLE
What?

ABBY
I just... I was wondering--

BATTLE
What? What do you want?

Battle, his eyes filled with tears, stares defiantly at Abby.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
You want a name? Is that it?

She looks away. Battle shakes his head and throws open the door. Over his shoulder, as he exits:

BATTLE (CONT'D)
I don't know his name. He was...
He was just some guy.

FADE OUT.

Pitch black.

We're with Battle, trudging slowly and aimlessly into a dark void. It takes our eyes a moment to adjust. We're inside:

INT. STADIUM - TUNNEL - NIGHT

Battle presses into the dark, the field somewhere in front of him. It's eerie, dream-like... the stadium lights are out.

In front of him, a ROAR rises up. Under cover of darkness, something is happening on the field --

Behind him, more noise. Closing in on him, fast.

VOICES. Shrieks and shouts. Footsteps bearing down on him like a stampede.

Battle hurries toward the field and emerges from the tunnel just as--

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WHOOSH.

He's swallowed up by 200 screaming TEENAGERS who are rushing an elaborate stage at midfield as an ELECTRIC GUITAR growls.

Strobe lights split the darkened stadium and VAN HALEN rips into --

Ain't Talking Bout Love

The music washes over Battle as we cut to:

INT. LOCKER ROOM - HALFTIME

Moments before the 2nd half, Kempton addresses the team:

KEMPTON
Forget about the first half. What you've done doesn't matter. It's about how you finish. That's what will define you. What you do from now until the final whistle is what you'll have to live with for the rest of your lives.
(raises his arm)
Bring it in, men.

The team closes in around Kempton.

KEMPTON (CONT'D)
Together on three. 1-2-3...

TEAM
Together!

The camera sweeps over the room, and finally lands on Jody, in the back, disconnected and estranged from his teammates.

CUT TO:

DAVID BATTLE

On the sideline, mid-report.

BATTLE
...which means that Jody Thorensen will not start the second half for Philadelphia. Back to you guys.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.)
Before we let you go David, one final question... Any sense of why he was benched? David?

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BATTLE
Jody Thorensen is a homosexual.

There is a pause. Battle stares straight into the camera.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Can't we just say what everyone is thinking? Let's talk about this.

ZEE (PRELAP)
Jesus Christ. Ready camera 7...

INT. PRODUCTION TRUCK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Zee and Abby are watching Battle on a monitor. Everyone is.

ZEE
And... go cam--

ABBY
Wait.

ZEE
For what? He's losing it.

ABBY
He's telling the truth.

ZEE
Yeah. He's losing it.

ABBY
Stay with him.

Zee shrugs. They continue to watch, mesmerized.

CUT TO:

DAVID BATTLE

BATTLE
I played in this league and I can tell you there's a reason no one's ever come out of the closet. There's no place for it.

AL MICHAELS (V.O.)
So you're saying--

BATTLE
Jody Thorensen's been benched because he's gay.
(MORE)

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BATTLE (CONT'D)
The moment his teammates found out was the moment he lost them... And maybe even this football game.

INT. PHILADELPHIA SUPER BOWL PARTY - SAME TIME

Karol and everyone else are slack-jawed.

BATTLE
(on TV)
Jody Thorensen lied. He lied to his teammates. And you know what? He lied to me. What he did is unforgiveable, immoral, and disgusting.

INT. PRODUCTION TRUCK - NIGHT - CONTINUOUS

Abby and Zee watch helplessly as Battle melts down.

BATTLE (V.O.)
It's sad to say, but homosexuality has no place in the National Football League.

ABBY
I've seen enough.

Zee nods, resigned.

ZEE
Ready camera 12... And go 12.

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

A Raiders running back takes the handoff and sweeps out wide, running hard to get around the end of the line--

With the first down marker in sight... WHAM. Knox blasts him in the chest, short of the first down.

Fired up, Knox thumps his chest and celebrates with the rest of the defense as the punt team takes the field.

NEAR THE SIDELINE

KNOX
Yeah, baby! Better run that shit the other way!

Knox parades off the field, starts to work his way down the sideline, hyped, and firing up his teammates.

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KNOX (CONT'D)
Let's go now! New half. Lotta time left. It's about us now. Time to take care of our business.

As he reaches the far end of the Eagles sideline he sees--

JODY

Wearing a baseball cap, his helmet nowhere to be found.

Knox stops short of Jody and turns his back on him, reversing direction. It's clear Jody's been ostracized.

EXT. SIDELINE - NIGHT - LATER

Harriet holds her cell phone to her ear. Battle's close by.

HARRIET
(into phone)
Yeah... I'll tell him. Okay.

She hangs up, turns to Battle.

BATTLE
Abby?

Harriet nods.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
I'm on my way.

HARRIET
David...

BATTLE
Everything's going to be fine.

From his spot on the sideline, Battle starts off the field for what could be the last time. He draws nearer and nearer to the shadowy mouth of the tunnel. Then--

Battle stops... it's that inexplicable feeling when you know you're being watched.

He turns.

It's Jody.

Their eyes meet. Fifteen yards apart, but it might as well be miles. Staring at each other...

Until a ROAR from the crowd distracts Jody. He looks to the field for a moment.

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Jody turns back. Battle is gone.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. COWBOYS STADIUM - FIELD - DAY - **FLASHBACK**

Jody enters the huddle, big ass shit-eating grins all around.

JODY
Nice win, boys. Three more plays and we're on the charter home.
(to Jackson)
Nothing fancy, Jax. Take care of the ball and stay in bounds.

BATTLE
Hey. I'm one away.

The huddle looks to Battle. Jody shakes his head.

JODY
No. It's not worth it.

BATTLE
Jody... One catch. Just one for the franchise record.

A long, slow beat. Then--

JODY
Alright... fuck it.
(calls the play)
Trips right, 80 slash on sound.

JUMP CUT TO:

The ball is SNAPPED--

Jody drops back, looks down-field...

Battle fakes left, cuts across the middle.

Track with the football in a tight spiral, arcing...

Battle goes up, makes the catch and... CRUNCH!

He's flattened by a crushing blow. On his back, motionless.

Moments later...

Eagles and Cowboys players kneel and pray.

A hushed crowd watches EMTs strap him into a gurney.

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BATTLE

He's immobilized but conscious, with real fear in his eyes.

INT. HOSPITAL - CORRIDOR - NIGHT

Jody wanders down a sterile corridor. A couple of nurses recognize him and whisper as he passes.

INT. HOSPITAL - PATIENT ROOM - NIGHT

Jody finds Battle propped up in bed.

JODY
How are you feeling?

BATTLE
Better.

Battle takes Jody's hand.

JODY
What did the doctor say?

BATTLE
What do you think? He's a Cowboys fan.

Jody squeezes Battle's hand. This isn't easy.

JODY
When I saw the hit... I saw you on the ground... Not moving. I'm sorry.

BATTLE
Stop.

JODY
The ball sailed on me--

BATTLE
Stop. I wanted it.

JODY
You can't keep taking those hits...

BATTLE
I don't have a choice.

JODY
How many more? How many concussions is it going to take?

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BATTLE
It's my life!

JODY
It's <u>our</u> life.

BATTLE
Our life? You have a wife... A child... What do I have?

JODY
You have me.

BATTLE
You don't get it, do you?

JODY
David...

BATTLE
It's everything, Jody. Without the game, I've got nothing. Nobody.
(desperately)
I lose football, I lose you.

JODY
That's not true.

Battle HURLS a hospital tray across the room.

BATTLE
Go. Go! Get the fuck out of here!

A nurse hurries into the room.

NURSE
Is everything okay?

David starts to speak, but is at a loss for words.

JODY
Goodbye, David.

And as Jody exits into the corridor, we...

LINESMAN (PRELAP)
Hey! Hey! Back up!

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. FIELD - SIDELINE - **PRESENT DAY**

The voice belongs to a zebra-striped LINESMAN.

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LINESMAN
Back up! Gimme some room!

Jody suddenly snaps to attention and realizes he's standing too close to the field as we cut to:

EAGLES BENCH

Jody's replacement at quarterback, Riley, studies--

AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS of the Raiders defensive alignments.

Frustrated, Riley flips through one... then another... A single photo slips from the stack and falls to the ground.

Jody picks up the photo... he can't help but notice something. A vulnerability in the defensive formation?

JODY
(to Riley; re: photo)
Hey. Check out how the safety is cheating...

Jody's voice trails off as Riley retakes the field with the offense.

Jody grabs a seat on the empty bench. He picks up the stack of discarded photographs, dissecting each one as we cut to...

INT. STADIUM - PRODUCTION OFFICE - NIGHT

Battle sits across from Abby. The energy of the game is a distant memory, and so is their game of cat and mouse.

ABBY
...I wish there was something I could do.

BATTLE
Abby, you gave me a shot. I won't forget it.

ABBY
Can I ask you a question?

Battle stares at her, poker-faced.

BATTLE
Anything.

ABBY
Do you love him?

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Her question sucks the air from his lungs. Off Battle...

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - BALLROOM - **FLASHBACK**

SUPERIMPOSE: 24 HOURS EARLIER

Battle removes the small microphone clipped to his shirt. Jody does the same. They've just concluded a TV interview.

BATTLE
Thanks for sitting down with me.

JODY
No worries. It's good practice for when I retire and take your job.
(then; over his shoulder)
Hey Swift, did you get my resume?

Abby stands off to the side as the production crew breaks down the set.

ABBY
Yeah. FYI, Penn State has 2 n's.

The room cracks up. Battle shakes hands with Jody.

BATTLE
Good luck tomorrow.

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - HALLWAY - LATER

We're with Battle as he pushes open a door and steps into--

A HOTEL BALLROOM

Only it's been converted into a meeting room. He sees Jody watching tape, a large ice pack on his shoulder.

Jody glances over at Battle.

JODY
(re: game tape)
I think the key to beating these guys is not letting them take away the middle.

BATTLE
What's with the ice?

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JODY
You know what? It's crazy. I've been watching tape for two weeks and all of a sudden it seems so simple. We gotta go right at 'em.

BATTLE
(annoyed)
Jody...

Battle moves in front of the screen, blocking Jody's view.

JODY
What are you doing?

BATTLE
Are you hurt?

JODY
It's nothing. Move.

Battle doesn't budge.

JODY (CONT'D)
I got dinged. I'm fine.

BATTLE
You didn't tell me.

Jody doesn't answer.

BATTLE (CONT'D)
Why?

JODY
Because it's not a big deal.

BATTLE
Did you get an MRI?

JODY
So now you're a reporter?

BATTLE
Fuck you.

Jody glares at Battle, but decides not to take the bait.

JODY
Look, I gotta watch tape.

BATTLE
You're right. I get it. Why would you tell me? Who am I?

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JODY
Don't do this...

BATTLE
It's not a big deal because I'm not a big deal. That's why you didn't tell me.

JODY
That's bullshit and you know it.

BATTLE
You've got football. You've got a family. I'm just... I'm just some guy you fuck around with when you feel like it.

Jody stands and starts to move to the door, muttering:

JODY
Biggest game of my life...

BATTLE
You don't wanna hear it but you know I'm right.

JODY
What do you want me to say? That I'm scared? That I'm terrified?

BATTLE
No, Jody. That's not what I want you to say.

Jody hurls a chair out of his path and exits. Off Battle...

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. STADIUM - NIGHT - **PRESENT DAY**

Battle pushes open a chain-link gate that reads: NO RE-ENTRY.

He moves into the shadows of the parking lot, a maze of cars in front of him, leaving the brightly lit stadium behind.

Not looking back...

EXT. STADIUM - SIDELINE - NIGHT

Jody pulls a headset over his baseball hat, adjusts the microphone to his lips and glances up at the press box level.

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JODY
(into headset)
Coach Cotton?

COACHES BOX

The Eagles' Offensive Coordinator, PERCY COTTON, a youthful Texan, is here with a few assistants. Playing God. An adjustment here, a tweak there... they see all, and possess the power to twist fate and turn ordinary men into heroes.

COTTON
Thorensen?

We INTERCUT with Jody down on the sideline.

JODY
They're kicking our asses.

COTTON
Tell me something I don't know.
(impatient)
What's up?

JODY
We're letting them sit in their base defense.

COTTON
Look, I know. I gotta hop off.

JODY
I'm thinking we go Wildcat.

Dead air.

JODY (CONT'D)
Coach? What do you think?

COTTON
I think you're in the Wildcat.

JODY
(challenging)
You want a ring?

COTTON
I gotta go, bud.

Jody, desperate, looks down the sideline to--

KEMPTON

In a flash, Jody's on the move.

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JODY
I've got an idea.

KEMPTON
Not now.

JODY
Coach, I was looking at their secondary, the way they're--

KEMPTON
I said not now!

JODY
I'm just trying to help the team.

KEMPTON
Little late for that.

This discussion is over. Off Jody, shut down...

INT. STADIUM - LUXURY BOX - NIGHT

Mina helps herself to a small plate of food. A SHRIEK rings out. Mina turns and sees--

A Japanese GIRL screaming at Luke. They're in a tug-of-war over a Raiders FOAM FINGER. Mina rushes over as...

LUKE

Rips it away and throws it over the rail.

MINA
Luke!

The girl bursts into tears as her MOTHER moves to comfort her. Mina grabs Luke and pulls him up from his seat.

MINA (CONT'D)
(to the girl's mother)
I am so sorry.

CUT TO:

THE HALLWAY

Mina scolds Luke.

MINA (CONT'D)
Answer me! Why would you do something like that?

He stares at her defiantly.

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LUKE
I didn't do anything.

MINA
That's all you have to say?
(off Luke)
Luke, I've tried to make this a good day for you, I really have--

LUKE
She was cheering for the Raiders.

MINA
So what? She's allowed to do that.

LUKE
You don't care.

MINA
She can cheer for whoever she wants.

LUKE
She was cheering against dad!

Luke continues, his voice shaking.

LUKE (CONT'D)
Everyone is.

Mina softens.

MINA
Luke, honey... That's not true. Everyone is not against your father.

LUKE
You are.

Simple, honest. His words take her breath away.

MINA
Don't you believe that for one minute.

LUKE
Why are you leaving dad?

Mina falls to her knees and wraps her arms around him.

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LUKE (CONT'D)
That's what you said... You told Aunt Karol. I heard you on the phone.

MINA
Luke, I love your dad. It's just... things are going to be different.

LUKE
Does David love dad?

A beat.

MINA
I think he does...

Mina chokes on the words. She starts to break.

MINA (CONT'D)
Yes.

CUT TO:

SCOREBOARD

4th Quarter - 2:21 remaining. Raiders: 21 Eagles: 7

CUT TO:

INT. PRODUCTION TRUCK - NIGHT

The door flies open and Abby rushes inside.

ABBY
Where is she?

Zee, still in the captain's chair, spins to face her.

ZEE
Camera 12.

Abby looks at the monitor marked #12 and sees---

MINA

She's seated in the front of the luxury box.

ABBY
That's Mina Thorensen?

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ZEE
Yeah, the ballcap threw me off too. So we'll go tight coming out of the break?

ABBY
No.

ZEE
No?

Zee looks at her, surprised.

ABBY
Not yet.

EXT. STADIUM - SIDELINE - NIGHT

Jody paces, helplessly watching as his dreams for a Super Bowl victory fade away right in front of him.

CLOSE ON Jody's EYES, powerless...

MATCH CUT TO:

A DIFFERENT PAIR OF EYES

Intense and bulging from their sockets. They belong to--

KNOX

Crouching down, muscles tensing, ready to explode.

In rapid real-time, the Raiders QB drops back to pass, fires... the ball zips through the air...

Knox reacts, INTERCEPTS... sprints... TOUCHDOWN!

The Eagles sideline comes alive. It ain't over yet.

Knox sweeps off the field, still clutching the ball. Helmet slaps and high-fives as he works his way down the sideline.

He looks up and finds himself face-to-face with--

JODY

Both men look at each other. Jody extends his hand, waits...

It's an emotional moment and nobody, including Jody, knows what's next.

It's as if the entire sideline is holding its collective breath, until--

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Knox grabs the front of Jody's jersey, yanks him close.

KNOX
We can win.

Knox shoves Jody aside and moves to the next teammate.

CUT TO:

The extra point sails over the crossbar...

Scoreboard - Raiders 21: Eagles: 14

CUT TO:

The Eagles kickoff cover unit lines up for an ON-SIDE KICK.

CUT TO:

A cleat STRIKES down on the ball. It SQUIBS forward unpredictably. It's a perfect on-side kick.

A mad scramble... the Eagles come up with it.

CUT TO:

COACHES BOX

Cotton looks down from his perch.

KEMPTON (V.O.)
With Riley?

COTTON
(into headset)
No.

There is a pause.

KEMPTON (V.O.)
Let's run it. Helluva call, Cotton.

COTTON
Wasn't my idea, Coach.

Kempton shoots a look up at the press box.

CUT TO:

AN OVERHEAD SHOT OF SUN LIFE STADIUM

A roar rises up from the crowd as a solitary figure trots out onto the field.

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INT. STADIUM LUXURY BOX - SAME TIME

Mina, at the railing, places a hand on Luke's shoulder.

MINA
Look.

Luke's eyes light up.

DOWN BELOW

Jody retakes the field.

INT. PHILADELPHIA SUPER BOWL PARTY - SAME TIME

Whooping and cheering. Guys high-five, girls too. Karol and the rest of the party are watching Jody join the huddle.

ON THE TV

Suddenly--

It's a split-screen. Jody on one side, Mina on the other.

INT. ESPN LUXURY BOX - SAME TIME

ESPN execs shake their heads in amazement at the plasma TV in their box. The gay star quarterback and his beautiful wife. You couldn't ask for a better television moment.

Off Abby, allowing herself a small smile...

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Jody leans into the huddle. All eyes on him.

JODY
Gentlemen...
(as if he never left)
We're going Wildcat. Cat right, 32 Y Indiana. On two! Ready! Break!

CUT TO:

THE RAIDERS DEFENSE.

Confusion. They're yelling, pointing... trying to account for Philly's Wildcat formation.

Jody splits out wide.

Jackson, normally the running back, stands in the shotgun.

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JACKSON
Houston! Houston...

JODY'S POV

He's lined up at wide receiver across from Wolf Barbour.

WOLF
(shakes his head)
Desperate times... I can already taste the champagne.

JACKSON
(as the ball is hiked)
Go-Go!

Jody fires off the ball and smashes into Barbour's chest--

BLOCKING HIM

Jody does the dirty work, creating a lane for Jackson.

Jackson sweeps around the outside picking up a big chunk of yardage before he steps out to stop the clock.

As the whistle BLOWS--

Jody, on his way to the sideline, bumps Wolf Barbour.

JODY
The wife says hello.

CUT TO:

SCOREBOARD

4th Quarter - 1:58 remaining.

REFEREE
Two minute warning.

CUT TO:

SIDELINE

Jody, helmet in hand, douses his head with water. Jackson and the rest of the offense water down nearby.

KEMPTON
Listen! We have no more time outs. None. Be smart. Manage the game.

Jody nods. Kempton checks the large, laminated play sheet.

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KEMPTON (CONT'D)
Let's go... Cat. Doubles. Bronco protection. 22, Z Over, wide.

Jody and Jackson head for the huddle.

JACKSON
They're gonna try to take your head off.

Jody nods. He knows.

CUT TO:

JODY

Lined up in the slot, Battle's old position. Jody drives forward as the ball is snapped.

HIS POV

The Oakland defense sags back... nothing but green grass around Jody as he cuts hard toward the sideline.

Jody turns his head, anticipating Jackson's pass.

BEHIND HIM

A Raider defender, just a blur, closes with ferocious speed.

The ball is spiraling perfectly at Jody. Hands up...

BAM!

The Raider and the ball arrive simultaneously. It's a jarring hit but--

Jody somehow hangs on, managing to stay on his feet. Sprinting up the sideline. A Raider awaits.

Jody jukes left. The Raider bites as Jody cuts the other way. Open field, moving away from the sideline.

KEMPTON
Get out of bounds!

A shoestring tackle brings Jody down. It's Wolf Barbour.

Kempton spikes his headset.

KEMPTON (CONT'D)
GODDAMMIT, THORENSEN!

ON THE FIELD

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Barbour holds Jody down, slow to let him up. Eating clock.

JODY
(desperate)
Get off me!

WOLF
I thought you liked this.

Jody scrambles to his feet. Sprints to the line of scrimmage. The offense is waiting.

He gets under center at the 50 yard line--

And quickly spikes the ball to stop the clock.

1:28 remaining

CUT TO:

LUKE AND MINA

They're standing and cheering -- and so is everyone else in the stadium. It's loud.

ON THE FIELD

Jody stands on the hash mark. One hand covers his earhole, the other gestures desperately to Kempton on the sideline.

JODY
I can't hear... I can't hear you!

Jody throws his hands up in the air. Turns away. It's his show now.

JODY (CONT'D)
Roger! Roger 88! Roger 88!

The Eagles are in the hurry-up offense. Jody in the shotgun:

JODY (CONT'D)
Hut-hut!

Jody takes the snap, looks down field, fires and finds--

MOONEY

He makes the catch and falls out of bounds, dragging his tiptoes on the turf.

CUT TO:

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JODY

Cool and calm, fires another perfect strike, this one to--

OEHLER

The big tight end catches it in stride. He's in the open field. Chewing up yards.

Oehler bounces off one Raider and drags another, lumbering to the sideline, clearly aiming to get out of bounds.

A third Raider hits him -- HARD -- and Oehler falls, a few painful inches short of the sideline.

With the clock still running...

The UMPIRE spots the ball on the Oakland 15 yard line.

JODY
Omaha! Omaha!

Himmelberg crouches down. The offense is ready.

The ball is snapped...

ALL OUT RAIDERS BLITZ

It's a jailbreak. No time to react, Jody is swallowed up by silver and black.

He tucks and falls awkwardly on his shoulder, the same one he was icing the night before.

Jody gets to his knees, grimacing. His throwing arm hanging limp.

With Oakland celebrating the sack, the clock ticks down...

Jody hurries everyone into position. Quick snap and spike.

SCOREBOARD

3 seconds remain -- Oakland 21, Philadelphia 14.

ON THE FIELD

Himmelberg hustles over, concerned.

HIMMELBERG
You good?

JODY
Get in the huddle!

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KEMPTON

holds the laminated play sheet in front of his face. He's talking to--

RILEY

The backup QB flashes hand signals to Jody, who nods.

JODY'S POV

He steps into the huddle. Ten men staring back at him. Nothing else. Not even a sound, apart from their breathing.

Leaning in, close:

JODY (CONT'D)
Eagle 42-X under, Eagle 42-X under.
On two, on two.

Jody extends a hand. Ten more pile on top.

JODY (CONT'D)
Together on three. 1, 2, 3--

EAGLES OFFENSE
Together!

The ball rests on the 22 yard line. Jody and the offense hustle up to the line of scrimmage.

Jody stands tall in the shotgun and--

Takes the snap as linemen collide.

Jody looks left, right. Spots a Raider on a late blitz...

JACKSON

Steps up -- WHAM! Jackson upends the defender.

Jody steps forward, still looking for a receiver. Nothing.

Jackson breaks wide. Jody pump-fakes and the Raiders bite.

As the pocket collapses around him, Jody bursts forward, tucking the ball under his arm. He's going to run it.

He's at the ten yard line, cuts and jukes one linebacker...

CRUNCH!

He's HIT by another! The blow snaps his chinstrap and nearly knocks off his helmet at --

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THE TWO-YARD LINE

Jody stumbles forward but there's still one Raider to beat.

WOLF BARBOUR

Jody lowers his shoulder, anticipating the contact--

BAM!

Jackson knifes into frame and BLOWS Barbour off his feet.

Jody staggers into the end zone. TOUCHDOWN!

As the crowd explodes, we cut to:

INT. FORD FOCUS - SAME TIME

David Battle sits expressionless behind the wheel. The radio glows inside the rental car's dark interior.

The RADIO ANNOUNCER'S voice shouts over the crowd:

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Jody Thorensen has done it! The Eagles scoring drive culminates in a spectacular 23-yard run with no time left. Talk about a comeback!

BANG!

A DRUNK FAN slams his hand on the hood of the car. Battle doesn't flinch as the fan disappears into the night.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (V.O.)
Philadelphia is an extra point away from tying this game and forcing overtime. Or they can go for 2 and the win. It's decision time.

Battle reaches out and presses a button. Suddenly we hear--

CLASSICAL MUSIC

It's Beethoven's 9th Symphony. The sounds of the game are gone as the music rises. Increasing in volume as we cut to:

EXT. EAGLES SIDELINE - NIGHT

Beethoven's 9th Symphony continues to play as--

KEMPTON

stoic, holds two fingers high in the air.

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NOTE: The only thing we hear for the remainder of the game is Beethoven's 9th. No dialogue, no crowd noise. Just music.

CUT TO:

Himmelberg and four other linemen. They're huge. Behemoth.

IN SLO-MO

They lower into three-point stances, revealing--

JODY

The star quarterback, barking instructions. We can't hear what he's yelling, but the urgency is clear.

This play will determine the winner of the Super Bowl.

As the music continues to play:

Beefy, blood-stained knuckles wrap around the ball...

Cleats dig into the turf...

Eyes bulge through face masks....

JODY

points, clenching his teeth at the pain in his shoulder. He lowers himself under center. Looks, lifts his heel, sending--

MOONEY

into motion.

WOLF BARBOUR

shadows Mooney like a hawk, passing directly in front of Jody. Their eyes meet for a brief moment. Then--

The ball is snapped...

Giant 300-pound men collide in a violent yet poetic ballet.

Sweat flies, biceps strain, legs fire like pistons.

Jody gets flushed from the pocket. Running toward the sideline and quickly running out of real estate.

A MASSIVE RAIDER leaps high into the air, just as--

JODY

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throws... the ball spirals just over the defender's fingertips... arcing high into the night sky...

TWO HANDS

snatch the ball. It's Mooney, with a spectacular grab. He comes down in the corner of the end zone.

A SIDE JUDGE throws two hands in the air as the music cuts out and a huge ROAR rises up from the crowd.

Eagles win! Jody leaps into Himmelberg's arms.

QUICK CUTS

The Super Bowl party erupts. Karol embraces a stranger. Beer flying everywhere.

High-fives and fist-pumps in the ESPN production truck. Zee sinks into his chair, exhausted and thrilled by the finish.

The luxury box with the Japanese executives is shaking from the stadium's celebration. Just as we realize that Mina and Luke are missing, we cut to:

THE FIELD

Jody celebrates with his teammates. Some fall to their knees, overwhelmed by the moment.

SPLASH!

Kempton gets the traditional *Gatorade* shower!

CUT TO:

Beefy GUYS in EVENT STAFF windbreakers.

Luke reaches the rail ahead of Mina, slips under and runs out onto the field.

MINA
Luke! Wait!

But he's gone. Mina tries to follow. She's stopped by Security.

MINA (CONT'D)
Luke!

EXT. FIELD - NIGHT

Confetti flickers down on Jody, who stands with Suzy Kolber. The camera's red light is on... they're live.

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SUZY KOLBER
What does this mean? After everything that's happened today? What's going through your mind?

JODY
Oh man... That's tough. I'm so proud of what we accomplished as a team. We set out with the goal of winning a championship... Today, we did that.
(then; moved)
I'm the same person I was yesterday. But to be able to just... just be...

SUZY KOLBER
Be what?

Jody chokes up, unable to answer.

SUZY KOLBER (CONT'D)
Take your time.

No words come. Finally--

SUZY KOLBER (CONT'D)
It was an inspired performance. Congratulations, Jody.

He nods.

The red light goes out. The interview is over. Suzy goes.

JODY
Suzy!

She turns. Jody leans in close, speaking over the crowd.

JODY (CONT'D)
Where's Battle?

Before Suzy can answer, we cut to:

LUKE

pushing through the celebratory scrum at midfield.

LUKE
Dad! Dad!

Jody glimpses his son through the madness.

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JODY
Luke!

He fights through the bodies, grabs Luke and hugs him tight.

CUT TO:

MINA

Peering up at the giant screen. Luke is in Jody's arms. Father and son. Happy. Together.

Off Mina, tears in her eyes...

INT. STADIUM - POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE - NIGHT

Bob Fitzgibbons stands at the podium.

FITZGIBBONS
Listen, we're going to get going in just a sec and I know a lot of you have questions and we'll get to as many of them as possible--

REPORTER #1
Fitzy, has he seen the sex tape?

FITZGIBBONS
I don't know.

REPORTER #2
Are there any questions off limits?

FITZGIBBONS
Your guess is as good as mine. Oh, here he is...

He sidesteps away from the podium.

The room falls silent at the sight of--

JODY THORENSEN

Moving to the podium and lowering himself into a chair. He is moving stiffly, like a man who has been through a war. Ice on his shoulder and still in his sweat-soaked grays. Jody addresses the assembled media.

JODY
Questions?

Many voices but a single one rings loud and clear.

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REPORTER #3
Are you gay?

Jody gazes out at the expectant faces of those present and the wall of camera lenses... surrogate eyes for the tens of millions watching him at this moment.

Unscrews a cap from a water bottle, takes a long, slow sip.

JODY
What was the question again?

Jody cracks a smile, breaking the tension in the room. Scattered laughter from the press.

REPORTER #3
I'm not sure how to rephrase it...

JODY
Yes.

Cameras click.

JODY (CONT'D)
Yes, I'm gay.

The cameras continue to flash. The questions come just as fast.

REPORTER #1
Have you seen the tape?

JODY
No, I haven't.

REPORTER #2
How are your teammates reacting to the news?

JODY
You'd have to ask them that, but I can tell you that halftime was pretty intense.

REPORTER #4
Jody, we saw you in what was a very touching moment with your son on the field. But we didn't see you with your wife.

JODY
What's your question?

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REPORTER #4
Um, I don't know quite how to put this, but... you're a married man. And... uh... I'm just wondering about her. Did she know?

Jody takes a drink of water and looks away.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. INTERCONTINENTAL HOTEL - BEDROOM - NIGHT - **FLASHBACK**

The night before the Super Bowl... Inside a dark bedroom, a FIGURE sits hunched at the edge of the bed.

It's Jody, his face buried in his hands.

Mina stirs.

MINA
You okay?

He doesn't answer.

She reaches out, through the darkness, and touches him.

Jody recoils.

JODY
Don't.

Something is wrong. Mina sits up in bed, turns on the light.

MINA
Baby, what's wrong?

Jody turns. Anguished, trembling.

JODY
I'm sorry.

MINA
Tell me what's wrong.

JODY
I don't know where to start...

There is a pause.

MINA
Jody, I know.

Jody breaks down, sobbing. Vulnerable for the first time.

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Finally--

JODY
Do you hate me?

She thinks about it.

MINA
No. Not anymore.

JODY
I don't know how to do this.

MINA
It's okay.

JODY
It's just that...

MINA
Say it.

JODY
I care about you, Mina. I really do. But I love him. I love David.

There. He said it.

REPORTER #1 (PRELAP)
Jody...

INT. POST-GAME PRESS CONFERENCE - **PRESENT DAY**

Jody is still taking questions.

REPORTER #1
Can you talk about the last play?

JODY
Sure, we went with something we felt like we could execute. Nothing fancy...

Jody continues to talk as the--

CAMERA SLOWLY PULLS BACK

JODY (CONT'D)
A pretty standard crossing route...

As the camera continues to pull back, we now realize we are watching the press conference on a television inside--

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INT. HOTEL ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Jody continues talking on television.

JODY (ON TV)
...I got flushed and I saw Mooney in the back of the end zone. He got some separation...

A pair of legs dangle into the frame.

THE CAMERA CONTINUES TO PULL BACK

It's David Battle. Hanging from a ceiling fan. Dead.

JODY (ON TV) (CONT'D)
...and I let it fly.

INT. STADIUM LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

No reporters. No coaches. No players. Nobody.

It's a like a bomb went off... ribbons of discarded athletic tape... empty bottles of *Dom Perignon*... thigh pads, shoulder pads, and helmets haphazardly strewn about. As we pan along a row of lockers, one still has clothes hanging on a hook. Written on a piece of tape in black *Sharpie* pen, it reads:

#7 Thorensen

SHOWER

Jody bows his head, closes his eyes, as a stream of hot water cascades down his back. He's physically exhausted, emotionally spent. His body bruised, aching. He raises a hand, his knuckles bloodied, and shuts off the water.

LOCKER ROOM

Jody exits the shower, grabs a towel off a hook. He stands there, naked. He's a man. Stripped completely bare. Nothing left to the imagination. Nothing left to hide...

FADE TO BLACK.

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