

IN RANGE

Written by

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1st Draft

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OVER BLACK:

A CARD:

BASED ON A TRUE STORY

FADE IN:

INT. LIMOUSINE VAN - NIGHT

A man in a motorized wheelchair, in the back of a black, luxury van. He's looking out the window, the city lights flashing across his face.

EXT. MIAMI BEACH - NIGHT

Palm tree-lined streets. Neon glitz. Glass and concrete high-rises. Miami Beach: the height of materialism and glamour, in all its glory.

The van pulls up curbside to a luxury, mid-rise condo building.

INT./EXT. CONDO BUILDING - NIGHT

The van door slides open, and a ramp slides out.

DOUG
(to the driver)
7:30 tomorrow, Jimmy.

JIMMY
You got it Doug.

The man motors his chair out and down. This is Doug Blevins, 40ish, tan, sporting a crisp mustache and a Miami Dolphins hat - he's as fit and confident as a man in a wheelchair can look.

INT. DOUG'S CONDO - NIGHT

The condo's open kitchen/living room: pure swank, high-end finishes, plenty of glass, stunning views. We hear the door SHUT down the hall and the HUM of Doug's chair.

Doug motors into the room. The kitchen table's cleared except a lone plate of food - Doug's dinner.

DOUG

Hey yo!

Doug's wife, Camila (mid-30s, pretty, Latina) enters from a hallway.

DOUG (cont'd)

Where's my man?

CAMILA

School night - he already went back.

Doug motors by the table, grabs a bite off the plate with his right hand - his good hand. His left hand, wracked by spasticity, is curled into an uneven fist.

DOUG

I'll check on him in a few.

CAMILA

He's probably still awake.

Doug looks at his watch.

DOUG

The segment's about to come on.

Camilla folds her arms, purses her lips, but she's used to having two kids under her care.

Doug motors over into the living area, grabs the remote.

DOUG (cont'd)

Oh, how bout this? Word on the street is, Detroit's gonna fire Chad Evans.

CAMILA

Who's that? Their kicking coach?

DOUG

(fiddling with the remote)
Hell, no! Special Teams. It'd be a full coordinator position.

Camilla takes a breath.

CAMILA

Detroit?

Doug doesn't respond. He's got the television on now. We see him watching intently, a smile growing, as we hear the segment:

JOURNALIST (O.S.)

He's been described as a master, a savant, a wonder. He's coached some of the greatest kickers in the game, including Super Bowl hero, Adam Vinatieri ...

Camila steps over and picks up the remote. Doug's in a trance, staring at himself the television.

DOUG (O.S.)

I realized early on, I could just see things others couldn't.

EXT. TURF FIELD - DAY

CLOSE IN ON VIDEO:

Doug's on the field in his chair, holding court. The same Dolphins hat on his head, a pair of wraparound shades covering his eyes.

DOUG

You know the great ones - the great athletes - they say when they're really dialed in, the game slows down for them. That's how it is for me--

The video suddenly freezes.

INT. DOUG'S CONDO - NIGHT

Doug looks up. Camila's paused the segment.

CAMILA

It's recording. Vamos. Say goodnight, before he falls asleep.

Doug stares at her like a kid being told it's bedtime, before finally giving in with a smirking nod. He motors off.

Camila watches him go, as we hear Doug calling out ...

DOUG (O.S.)

My man, Roman! Don't go to sleep on me!

Camila turns back to look at the television, stares for a moment, then raises the remote and hits play.

EXT. TITLE SEQUENCE = NIGHT/DAY**Audio from the interview segment continues over visuals:**

Aerial shot pulls back from the condo window -- back over a beach, night turning to day -- out to sea ...

JOURNALIST (O.S.)

What makes him so special? Well, Doug Blevins was born with cerebral palsy - he has never walked, much less kicked a football, in his entire life.

Diving down to just above the water, the frame is soon filled by water speeding past ...

DOUG (O.S.)

You know, the role of the placekicker is really unique. Unique in all of sports, when you think about it.

The shot rises slowly from the water, revealing the banks of the Galax river, winding through the rolling mountains of southwest Virginia ...

JOURNALIST (O.S.)

Blevins started coaching when he was still in high school. By the time he was a student assistant at Tennessee, he knew if he was ever going to make it to the NFL, he'd need a specialty.

A quaint cluster of buildings, downtown Abingdon, VA -- across railroad tracks, a conveyor dumping coal -- past less quaint and progressively more depressing homes ...

DOUG (O.S.)

When that kicker trots out there with the game hanging in the balance, he's all by himself. The hopes and prayers of his teammates, his coaches, hell, every fan watching... it's all on his shoulders...

Down a single lane road out of town, day turning to night -- we arrive at a trailer park on the outskirts of Abingdon.

A CARD:

7 YEARS LATER

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

A pair of dirty-jeaned legs sticks out from beneath a banger white van parked on a patch of dirt/gravel. One rear wheel is up on a ramp block - a somewhat precarious setup. We hear the CLANG of tools and the CLICKING of a socket wrench.

The area's lit by a single, bare bulb fixture hanging from a wire - a stone's throw from Doug's double-wide trailer. It's surrounded by similar homes - a permanent shantytown.

Doug pushes the screen door of his trailer open with a CREAK and looks out.

DOUG
How's it going?

RICKY, Doug's next door neighbor offers a muffled reply from under the van...

RICKY
Almost got her. Ten, maybe twenty.

Doug frowns and looks at his watch.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

We're looking at mementos on a bookcase: young Doug coaching in his glory days; Doug, Camila and Roman as a child; a signed ball; a framed newspaper with an image of Adam Vinatieri kicking the game-winning field goal in Super Bowl XXXVI.

More of Doug's trailer comes into view. It's a small, well-worn home - grime and clutter have won the day.

Doug rolls back inside. He's in his late-40s now, and showing his age. Softer, haggard, a week's growth covering his face where his crisp mustache once was. He's a far cry from the Doug we met in Miami and the one in the photos.

Doug motors up to the cheap kitchen table - the closest thing he has to a desk. It's strewn with papers, files, an open laptop, his phone, and a handheld radio.

We hear the barely audible play-by-play of a high school football game on the radio. Doug begins clicking the laptop mouse ...

His phone BUZZES. He looks at the number and picks up.

DOUG
It's about time.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - DAY

PHIL ROGERS, Doug's agent, early 40s, is leaned back in his office chair, a generic cityscape visible through the windows behind him.

PHIL
Hey, I'm sorry, Doug. I got pulled into a meeting.

INTERCUT:

DOUG
Uh-huh, right. You hear back from Sampson?

PHIL
Yeah, I did... It's a non-starter, I'm afraid. There just isn't a market - I don't know how else to put it.

DOUG
Yeah, but did you talk to him directly? I'm telling you, they're gonna have a real shit-show up there this year.

PHIL
Yes, I talked to him directly. Just like I've talked to twenty-eight front offices in the past four months. I can't create a position out of thin air. You've said it yourself a thousand times: no one needs a kicking coach until they need one.

Several beats. Phil adjusts in his seat, leaning forward onto his desk.

PHIL (cont'd)
Look, Doug, no one denies what you can do - what you've accomplished...

Phil pauses, tapping his pen on his desk, afraid to ask...

PHIL (cont'd)
Who've you been working with lately?

DOUG
I gotta a few guys. A couple of D-II
players. A high school D-I prospect
out of Texas was here all summer.

There's a long pause on the other line. It's clear Doug's
glory days are in the distant past.

PHIL
Listen, why don't you put together a
few camps next spring? Make some
money. Get the wheels turning again.

DOUG
(disgusted)
C'mon, Phil, you know that's not how
it works. I can't run a goddamn
factory. Every kicker's different.

The play-by-play on the radio gets his attention.

DOUG
I gotta go.

PHIL (O.S.)
Okay, but listen, something's going
to--

Doug hangs up without saying goodbye. He turns up the radio.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Roman Blevins lines up now to try and
break this deadlock. Looks like
about... a thirty-two yarder ...
certainly no gimme.

Doug leans in, listening.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
The snap, the kick, and it's ... no
good! Blevins hooks it a hair left,
and we stay deadlocked at fourteen,
folks.

Doug takes a deep sigh and wipes spittle, another symptom of
his cerebral palsy, from the corner of his mouth.

RICKY (O.S.)
(yelling from outside)
I think she's good to go!

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Ricky's a pure-bread redneck native, wiry but strong, his sleeveless shirt as grimy as his jeans. He's got the van off the block and is picking up tools.

He flips off the flashlight and drops the wrenches into a tool box with a CLANG.

Doug rolls up.

DOUG
We good?

RICKY
(brushing the loose
dirt and gravel from
his clothes)
I think, but the wiring's a mess
under there - felt like I was working
on a bomb squad! You oughta take this
sonbitch in and have it looked at for
real.

DOUG
Thanks, but I like your rates.

RICKY
You still gonna try and make the
game?

DOUG
Yep.

Doug operates the controls on his chair and they watch the van ramp telescope out.

The ramp comes all the way out, it's end resting on the ground.

RICKY
Well, hell yeah.

Ricky picks up the toolbox and flashlight.

DOUG
Thanks, Ricky.

RICKY

Yep. You have any more trouble with it, give me a holler.

Doug begins rolling up the ramp, as Ricky heads towards his trailer, barely a hundred feet from Doug's.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Doug pulls into the school parking lot, an "oh-shit" look on his face - he's missed the entire game.

The lights of the field are on in the distance. Parents and fans linger, slowly making their way to their cars.

Doug circles through the packed lot, finally pulling up to a curb at the far end - about as far as he could be from the stadium and still be on school grounds.

EXT. SCHOOL BUILDING - NIGHT

Roman exits the locker room, into the night. Roman's girlfriend, a pretty junior, separates from a small group of friends and greets him. They walk hand-in-hand.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Doug putters across the parking lot in his chair, passing people and weaving through traffic.

When he finally reaches the stadium, he sees Camila, her boyfriend, Steve (late-40s, good-looking, good-natured lunk), Roman, and Natalie gathering on the sidewalk nearby.

He stops the chair, as Camila strides towards him, heels clicking - she's dressed for a night on the town more than a high school football game.

CAMILA

Nice of you to show.

DOUG

Sorry, I was waiting for a call.

CAMILA

Waiting for a call! From who, the Queen of England?

The more agitated Camila gets, the more her accent takes over. She looks back at the others. They're in earshot, and she makes a failed attempt to lower her voice a bit.

CAMILA (cont'd)
For Christ's sake, the first game of
the season?

DOUG
I told you, I was waiting for a call!
And the damn ramp wouldn't work.

Camila waves off the excuses, as Roman says goodbye to Natalie and begins walking over. Steve walks with him.

CAMILA
Well? Aren't you going to ask how it
went?

DOUG
I heard.

CAMILA
He kicked three extra points!

STEVE
He caught four passes too.

Doug throws Steve a smartass smile, but Steve's either too dumb, too good-natured, or both, to recognize it for what it is. Camila glares at Doug.

Doug turns to Roman, but Roman's already started off across the lot.

CAMILA
I'll pick him up at 10 on Sunday.

Doug doesn't answer, starts rolling away.

CAMILA (cont'd)
(calling after Doug)
He's got a history paper due on
Monday...

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Doug rolls through the front door, Roman behind him. Doug tosses his keys on the counter and rolls up to the kitchen table/his make-shift desk.

Long beat as Roman takes a look around. The place is a mess - clutter on every surface, dishes in the sink.

ROMAN
I'm gonna hit it.

DOUG
What are you talking about? You barely said a word on the drive home. Aren't you hungry?

ROMAN
Nope.

Doug's already settling in at the table, looking through papers, bringing his computer out of sleep.

DOUG
Well, can you throw something in the microwave for me?

Roman stares at Doug's back for a beat, then takes off his backpack and puts it on the counter.

He grabs a meal from the freezer, opens it, and tosses it in the microwave, punching the buttons with a few BEEPS.

We hear the WHIR of the microwave, as Doug pecks at the laptop keys with the fingers of his good hand.

DOUG (cont'd)
So you guys pulled it out late, huh?

No answer from Roman. When Doug glances back, Roman's gone.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - LATER

Doug's still sitting at the table (lit only by the GLOW of his computer screen now), scrolling with his mouse. The remains of his dinner sit off to the side.

He clicks on an online story, and we read the title: "Bucs Part Ways with Butler". Doug scrolls down for a second, then back up and clicks on the accompanying video.

Doug leans in, watching, listening intently, as we hear the talking head's report:

REPORTER (O.S.)

Tampa Bay released former Pro Bowl kicker, Blaine Butler, today, on the heels of a dismal, pre-season outing against Atlanta. Butler struggled last year, and one wonder's if this may be the end of the road for the 12-year veteran--

Doug stops the video, reads a few seconds more, then sits back in his seat.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Roman's hand-washing dishes, adding to the large stack already drying on the counter.

Doug rolls into the main living area - it's late-morning, but he's just gotten up. He eyes Roman, then takes in the scene: the kitchen table and the counter are organized, a stack of clothes, neatly folded, rests on a couch.

DOUG

Wow, you've been busy.

ROMAN

Yep.

Roman drags a trash can over to the fridge, as Doug rolls up to the table/desk.

DOUG

Close one last night, huh?

Roman grunts a reply. He pulls a Styrofoam container out of the fridge, sniffs the contents, and tosses it in the trash.

DOUG (cont'd)

So, no 3's, huh?

ROMAN

Missed one in the 3rd.

DOUG

Yeah, I heard that one. Pulled it, right?

Roman's taking more leftover items out of the fridge, sniffing and tossing.

DOUG (cont'd)

You gotta keep those hips closed.

Roman frowns. He's moved on to containers now, reading expiration dates, tossing items in the trash.

Doug's pecking at the laptop keyboard as he talks.

DOUG (cont'd)
You just gotta put in the reps, Rome.

Roman pauses, a jar of long-expired salad dressing in his hand. He looks up at Doug's back before throwing the jar in the trash container and pulling the bag out.

DOUG (cont'd)
It's gotta be muscle memory, you know?--

The screen door BANGS shut, cutting Doug off.

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Roman hauls the trash bag down the short driveway and tosses it into a weathered, metal can with a BANG.

Dogs BARK, as Roman eyes an overflowing mailbox. He pulls a massive stack of mail out and begins walking back, flipping through the items, pausing on a few.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Roman walks back into the trailer, still flipping through the mail. Doug's at the table, on the phone.

DOUG
Oh really?... right... I didn't realize that.

Roman opens a letter, as Doug continues his phone conversation.

DOUG (cont'd)
Yeah, that's tough, but I doubt it was a surprise. My guess is he saw the writing on the wall going into camp.

Roman unfolds the paper and reads it. It's from the power company. There's a red "SERVICE CUTOFF NOTICE" stamp at the top.

DOUG (cont'd)
Yeah. Right. Right. Hey, I really appreciate it. Take care.

Doug ends the call and goes back to work on the laptop.

ROMAN
Hey, you know they're gonna shut your power off?

DOUG
(without looking up)
What?

Roman walks closer, waving the paper behind Doug.

ROMAN
(deliberately)
They are going to shut off your electricity.

DOUG
I'll take care of it.

Roman sticks the notice in front of Doug's face. Beat. Doug leans back, takes it from Roman's hand.

DOUG (cont'd)
You worry too much.

Doug turns back to his work. Roman stays put.

ROMAN
I was thinking of catching a movie with Natalie tonight ... You think I could borrow the van?

DOUG
(shaking his head)
No can do partner. I've got some stuff I need to take care of.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - LATER

Doug's still in front of the computer, clicking, reading, watching tape. A college game's on in the background. A horn HONKS outside.

Roman enters from the hallway and heads for the door.

DOUG
Where're you going?

ROMAN
Over to Caleb's. Probably get a
burger later.

DOUG
What happened to a movie with
Natalie?

ROMAN
No van, no movie.

DOUG
Hold on, come here for a minute.

Doug spins his chair around, as Roman walks over.

DOUG (cont'd)
So, I've got to run out in a bit...
And I may not be back tonight.

The look on Roman's face says it all: he doesn't approve,
but he's not surprised.

DOUG (cont'd)
It's no big deal. I've just gotta
take a drive to see an old friend.
And if it runs late... I may just
stay up there.

We hear the horn again, several long HONKS this time.

ROMAN
Up where?

DOUG
Doesn't matter. What matters is that
you make sure you're back here by 11
or so, and that you don't do anything
stupid.

ROMAN
What does that mean?

DOUG
You know exactly what it means.
(spinning his chair
back around)

ROMAN
(mocking)
Okay. Got it Pops. Nothing stupid.

We hear the HORN again, this time accompanied by raucous VOICES as the screen door SLAMS behind Roman.

The noises register with Doug now, and he rolls over to the window, peering through cheap blinds...

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Roman's piling into the back of an already-packed Ford Mustang. The driver tosses a cigarette butt out the window and peels out, sending dirt and gravel flying.

EXT. I-81 - DAY

Doug's van cruises up I-81, through the picturesque Shenandoah Valley.

EXT. GAS STATION - DAY

Doug's van pulls up to the tanks across from a banger muscle car - a heavy BASS riff pours out the car's open windows.

Doug eyes the DRIVER, a young, tatted-up punk, pumping gas. His partner in crime, PUNK #2, is leaned back in the passenger seat, one sleeveless arm hanging out the window, a cigarette dangling.

Doug operates the remote controls, and rolls back from the driver position. The side door of the van slides open and the ramp begins telescoping out.

The Driver SLAPS the top of his car, getting the attention of Punk #2.

DRIVER

Yo, check it out.

Punk #2 sits up for a look, as their friend, PUNK #3, returns from the station store with a bag of snacks and an impossibly big fountain drink.

The three gang-banger-wannabe/redneck hybrids stare at the open door, as the ramp comes to rest on the concrete.

Doug pauses at the top of the ramp and eyes his audience from behind wrap-around shades. He's spent his entire life in a chair - he's used to the stares. He rolls out...

DOUG
(grandstanding)
Greetings, Earthlings! I come in
peace!

Beat, before the Driver busts out laughing, and PUNK #3 takes a long, loud SLURP from his drink.

EXT. I-81 - DAY

The sun is setting as Doug takes the I-66 (Washington) exit.

EXT. HOTEL - NIGHT

Doug pulls into the parking lot of a cheap motel. The sign reads \$59.99.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Doug rolls out onto the far end of the field and stops to watch. In the distance, a lone kicker sets up a ball with a holder tee.

The kicker methodically takes his setup steps. Beat. He steps forward and launches a booming kick, high and true. He hops at the end of his follow-through, watching as the ball splits the uprights.

The kicker grabs a net bag off the turf and walks away to retrieve the dozen or so balls scattered in the distance.

Doug rolls forward.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Doug arrives where the kicker was set up. The kicker's walking back with the full bag over his shoulder. He pauses when he sees Doug, then continues forward.

DOUG
(big grin)
Blaine the Drain.

The kicker, BLAINE BUTLER, laughs lightly, as he dumps the bag and grabs a ball to set up again. He's in his mid-30s, fit as a fiddle. Although he makes his living kicking, he possesses the good looks and swagger of a quarterback.

DOUG (cont'd)
 What, all business today?

Blaine stops and turns to him, ball in hand.

BLAINE
 How you doing, Doug?

DOUG
 Oh, I'm good. Just fine. How are you?

Blaine squints into the beautiful, blue sky, and nods.

BLAINE
 I'm good.

DOUG
 What happened down there in Tampa?

Blaine turns and sets the ball up.

BLAINE
 Out with the old, in with the new, I
 suppose.

Doug nods and watches, as Blaine takes his setup steps,
 pauses, then launches another kick. The kick sails high and
 far, way above the goal post, but just wide right.

DOUG
 Plant step was just a hair long.

Blaine snorts, grabs another ball.

DOUG (cont'd)
 Ten thousand kicks, and it's never
 automatic, is it?

Blaine stops and turns, one hand on a hip.

DOUG (cont'd)
 I mean even for the best of them,
 there's no such thing as automatic,
 is there?

BLAINE
 Doug, what are you doing here?
 (looking around,
 opening his arms)

DOUG
 Well, I guess I came here to ask you
 the same thing.

Blaine stares him down, silent.

DOUG (cont'd)
I thought you might need a little
help.

Blaine laughs this off. He sets up again, then launches another one. It bangs off the top of the upright, again to the right. He doesn't react to this miss, but he knows something's coming.

DOUG (cont'd)
That's fixable.

Blaine turns to face Doug now, getting irritated.

DOUG (cont'd)
Look ... You were undrafted out of
college. You needed fixing. You came
to me. I got you where you wanted to
go.

BLAINE
What?

DOUG
Now, here you are, twelve years
later... I've watched every kick you
took last season, and every kick you
took this preseason. You need fixing
again, my friend.

BLAINE
(laughing loudly)
Oh, that's funny.

Doug tries on a fake puzzled expression.

BLAINE (cont'd)
I mean, it's a nice story: you helped
me way back when, and now, here you
come again, riding in to save me...
but you're forgetting a few things,
aren't you?

DOUG
Like what?

Blaine stares at him. Doug sits back in his chair a little, his salesman's smile beginning to wane.

BLAINE

Well, as I recall, our partnership didn't end too well last time. I'm not exactly sure that's something I want to relive.

His point made, Blaine grabs another ball and begins setting up...

BLAINE (cont'd)

Where are you now?

DOUG

Abingdon. Right back where it all started.

Blaine takes his set up steps, pauses, and launches a another kick. Doug watches it split the uprights.

DOUG (cont'd)

I can help you get back.

Blaine begins setting up another ball. Talking to Doug without looking at him.

BLAINE

Who says I want to?

DOUG

You got cut three days ago. Hell, you probably just got home yesterday. And here you are.

Blaine takes his setup steps and pauses.

BLAINE

I'll get a call.

Blaine launches another kick (good again).

BLAINE (cont'd)

It might be next week, it might be next season, but it'll come.

Doug watches Blaine set up again. Clearly Blaine considers the conversation over. Doug rolls over to the empty net bag.

DOUG

Blaine the Insane.

He pulls out a card and drops it on the bag.

DOUG (cont'd)
My Main Blaine.
(laughing)

He continues watching Blaine - one last chance for the reunion to turn around, but Blaine just keeps working.

DOUG (cont'd)
Okay then, my friend, I guess I'm
gonna roll now.
(moving his motorized
chair back and forth)

Blaine laughs lightly at this, but hardly looks up.

DOUG (cont'd)
You take care buddy.

Blaine keeps going about his business, doesn't even look.

BLAINE
Alright, Doug. Take care.

Now, as Doug rolls away, Blaine stops what he's doing and watches.

EXT. I-81 - DAY

Doug's van crawls through heavy traffic. Boxed in by tractor-trailers, he tries to edge out into the passing lane but is immediately cut off by another truck.

His phone buzzes next to him. He picks it up, takes a quick look, and drops it again. He punches at the buttons on the radio, switching from one football game to another, and turns the volume up.

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Doug's van pulls into his drive.

INT. DOUG'S BEDROOM - DAY

We hear a POUNDING on the front door. Doug's eyes open.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

The POUNDING continues, as Doug rolls out into the main living area. He's bleary-eyed, disheveled.

DOUG
Hold on, damn it!

He opens the door to find Camila on the other side - she's red-lined from the get-go.

CAMILA
You left town?! You had him for the weekend, and you left?!

DOUG
Oh, take it easy. I was right up the road. What time is it?

CAMILA
It's ten-thirty in the morning - a Monday morning. That'd be break time for anyone with a job! What is wrong with you? Where did you go?

Doug turns his chair back inside - Camila close on his heels.

DOUG
It was just a quick trip, for Christ's sake. I had some business to take care of.

CAMILA
How about taking care of your son? Do you know what he was up to, while you were on your little excursion?

This catches Doug's attention.

DOUG
He was going out for a burger. Said he'd be home by ten or eleven. He's seventeen years old!

CAMILA
Yeah Doug, that's right. He's seventeen years old. Seventeen-year-olds don't tuck themselves in and read themselves a bedtime story. He called me at one in the morning, from the shoulder of Route 11.

DOUG
What?

CAMILA

He went to a field party with the Parson boys. A field party where some jackass set a tractor on fire. He ran when the police showed up.

DOUG

Did he get away?

CAMILA

Yes, he got away - I just said he called me from the side of the road didn't I? That's not the point.

DOUG

Why didn't he call me?

CAMILA

Why would he call you?! He didn't even know where you were!

DOUG

Why didn't you call me?

CAMILA

I did call you!

She grabs his phone off the counter and holds it up.

CAMILA (cont'd)

I called you nine times!

Doug has no answer.

DOUG

But he got away?
(trying to convince
himself all is okay)

CAMILA

Unbelievable.
(long beat)
Where did you go?

DOUG

Fairfax.

She stares at him for a long moment, genuinely shocked by the depth of his irresponsibility.

CAMILA

Do you have the papers?

DOUG
The papers?

CAMILA
Will you please stop repeating
everything I say?! I feel like I'm
talking to a first-grader. Yes, Doug,
the papers! Have you signed the
papers?

DOUG
Oh yeah, I'm working on it - my
lawyer's working on it.

CAMILA
There's nothing left to work on.
Please. Just get it done.

She drops his phone on the counter and leaves, the screen
door SLAMS behind her.

Doug rolls forward and watches her.

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

Camila walks to her car, a sleek, Mercedes sedan, climbs
inside, and drives off.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - CONTINUOUS

We return to Doug's face, expressionless, for a few beats,
before the BUZZ of his phone on the counter interrupts.

Doug continues to stare out the door as he slowly backs his
chair up. He reaches back to the counter and pulls the phone
off without looking.

DOUG
Hello?

BLAINE (O.S.)
Okay. If we were to do this, how
would it work?

DOUG
(his empty gaze
finally breaking)
You know how it works.

INT. DINER - DAY

Doug sits alone, save his cup of coffee. The half-empty diner's a real one - nothing fancy, cheap/decent food, no unis for the staff, local faces, been around for generations.

SONYA, a black woman, mid-40s, swings by to check on Doug. She likes to come off as all-business, but she's got a big heart - she's known every face in her place for years.

SONYA
 You gonna order, Doug?
 (topping off his
 coffee)
 Can't just sit here drinking coffee
 all day.

Doug looks around, eyes an ancient man in a booth nearby. The man's nodding off trying to read the paper.

DOUG
 Bob's been right there since about
 1958, hasn't he?

SONYA
 (frowns)
 Touche... Better make sure he's still
 breathing.

Sonya moves on, as the entrance door JINGLES. Doug glances up. Blaine strolls in and locates Doug. He arrives at the table, glancing around as he takes a seat.

BLAINE
 Wow. Where's Biff?

DOUG
 Biff?

BLAINE
 Marty McFly? Doc? The flux capacitor?
 ... Back to the Future?

Blaine grabs a menu from the napkin holder.

BLAINE (cont'd)
 I came straight down Main. This place
 hasn't changed a bit.

Sonya, walking up to the table, hears this.

SONYA
We got a Walmart now.

BLAINE
Nice.

SONYA
Not really.
(pouring Blaine a
coffee)
So you're the new project, huh?

Blaine eyes Doug.

BLAINE
I'm a project now?

SONYA
(to Doug)
You didn't tell me it was a re-tread.

A flash of confusion washes over Blaine's face.

SONYA (cont'd)
(to Blaine)
I don't suppose you need a job
washing dishes this time around, huh?
(to both)
I'll give you two a minute.

Just as Sonya begins walking away, Blaine recognizes her from years ago.

BLAINE
(calling out)
Sonya?

Sonya keeps walking, but shoots up a backwards wave.

BLAINE (cont'd)
Holy shit. You really are frozen in
time down here.

DOUG
Nah, just looks that way. She owns
the place now.

Blaine is processing this, but Doug is already done with the small talk...

DOUG (cont'd)
You ready?

Blaine quickly scans the menu.

BLAINE
Give me a second, I just sat down.

DOUG
I'm not talking about lunch.

Blaine drops the menu.

BLAINE
I just drove into town five minutes ago!

Doug takes a final swig of coffee.

DOUG
Yeah, and I've been waiting here for forty-five. I gotta go. Get yourself a room at the inn. Meet me at the field at seven.

Doug begins to leave.

BLAINE
Tonight?

DOUG
(rolling away)
What else you got to do?

BLAINE
Don't worry, I got your coffee...

EXT. DINER - DAY

Doug stops outside the diner and makes a call.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Roman's standing outside the high school with Natalie and several other kids. They're horsing around and laughing - enjoying the present moment as only kids can - Roman's right in the mix, until...

Roman's phone rings. He checks the number, his smile dropping like a stone. He steps aside and answers.

ROMAN
Hey, what's up?

INTERCUT:

DOUG
Hey. What are you doin'?

ROMAN
(stating the obvious)
Uhh, I'm at school.

DOUG
Well, listen, I need you to meet me
at the field after practice.

ROMAN
What? Today?

DOUG
Yeah, today. I need you to film.

ROMAN
I can't...
(glancing over at
Natalie and his
friends)
I've got plans.

DOUG
C'mon Rome, this is important...

Roman squints hard and raises his face to the sky.

ROMAN
Dad--

DOUG
Thanks, buddy. And don't forget the
camera.

Doug hangs up on him. Roman looks at his phone and swings
his arm to throw it down, but he doesn't let go.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

WIDE --

A football flies high over the left upright. Blaine sets up
another ball. Doug's circling in his chair, watching. Roman
is walking across the field towards them.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

CLOSE --

Roman arrives, pulling a video camera from its case, as Blaine launches another kick.

DOUG
(to Blaine)
You're dipping that shoulder still.

BLAINE
(grabbing another
ball)
I'm not dipping my shoulder.

Doug nods at Roman. Roman opens the camera screen. Blaine takes his set up steps, pauses, then launches another. He hops on his follow-through, watching as the ball hooks left.

BLAINE (cont'd)
Damn it.

DOUG
Shoulder.

BLAINE
It's not my shoulder! It's in the
plant - I can feel it.

DOUG
You're long on the step. You're
feeling that. But you're compensating
with that God-awful shoulder dip!

Blaine glares at Doug.

DOUG (cont'd)
Instead of fixing the problem, you're
doubling-down on it.

Blaine's still staring.

DOUG (cont'd)
(to Roman)
Show him.

Roman walks over, looking at the screen and rewinding the tape.

The three gather, as Roman hits play, pauses, and then forwards through, frame by frame.

DOUG (cont'd)
There. Stop. See the plant. Now go.

Roman continues, then pauses it again at the moment Blaine made contact with the ball.

DOUG (cont'd)
Bam! There it is.

Blaine leans in for a closer look.

DOUG (cont'd)
(trying to imitate
pop and lock dance
with his upper body)
You look like Rerun on Soul Train.

Blaine sighs, steps back, and eyes Roman, recognizing him for the first time.

BLAINE
Wait! Is this? -- you were sucking
your thumb last time I saw you!

Roman laughs. But before a conversation takes off...

DOUG
Okay, reunion's over. Let's go.

Blaine gives Roman a raise of the eyebrows and sets up again. Roman smiles and goes back to filming.

Blaine launches another kick. It hooks again, BONGING off the left upright.

DOUG (cont'd)
God, almighty. Okay, round 'em up,
Rome.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

Doug and Blaine are at the edge of the field, getting ready to leave. Roman's in the distance, picking up balls and gear.

DOUG
You get a room?

BLAINE
Yeah... The wife's not too happy
about this, you know.

DOUG
They never are.

BLAINE
I can't believe that's Roman - God,
I'm getting old. Is he playing?

DOUG
Yeah, he's kicking, of course. Some
slot on offense, a little DB in
nickel and dime.

BLAINE
Wow. That's great. How's his leg?

DOUG
Well, he won't make a living with it,
but he'd be better than decent if
he'd put in the reps.

Blaine, laughing, nods past Doug.

BLAINE
That ain't happening tonight.

Doug glances back to the field. The full ball bag lies in a
heap in the center of it. Roman's walking off in the
opposite direction.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - NIGHT

CLOSE ACTION: Abingdon High's Quarterback takes the snap and
runs right. He options out to the Tailback, who immediately
gets nailed for a loss.

Doug's watching from his chair, in front of the stands on
the 20-yard line. A fence separates him and the other
standing fans from the field.

DOUG
(to no one in
particular)
Pulled the trigger too soon. I don't
know why we gotta run this spread-
option crap.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
That'll bring up 4th down for the
Falcons...

Roman sets up for a short field goal. Snap, kick... it's a line-drive, but sneaks by the left upright. The crowd's cheers are tinged with relief - the kick was good, but ugly.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
Blevins is just good from twenty-seven yards out.

Blaine walks up behind Doug and steps into an opening beside Doug's chair. He leans on the fence, as Doug looks up.

BLAINE
He's opening his hips.

Doug looks up and grunts.

DOUG
You try telling him. I think he'd rather be the next Jerry Rice than the next Blaine Butler.

BLAINE
Hah! Can't say I blame him.

DOUG
What brings you out here?

BLAINE
Like you said, what else am I gonna do?

Blaine glances around.

The stands are packed. The student section is chanting in unison. The fence in front is lined with old-timers reliving glory days and talking shop. A swarm of younger kids play two-hand touch in the grass beside the bleachers.

BLAINE (cont'd)
The whole damn town's here.

DOUG
Yeah, well, they gotta helluva team this year. Three D1 players off the O-line alone. They could really make some noise.

BLAINE
The wife here?

Doug looks to the bleachers and nods.

DOUG
Front and center.

Blaine scans the crowd. Camila's sitting a few rows up on the 50-yard line, Steve beside her. She leans in and says something to him, smiling. They're laughing it up with the other parents around them.

BLAINE
I see... Well, she looks good,
anyway.

Doug sneers.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

The scoreboard tells the tale: Abingdon's up 24-14, with two-and-a-half minutes to go in the 4th quarter. Even with the game in hand, a current runs through the crowd - no one's leaving early - they want to see a kill shot.

Doug's phone buzzes. He looks at the number and rolls back away from the fence, answering.

DOUG
Hey.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Phil's pacing behind his office desk.

PHIL
How's my favorite kicking genius?

INTERCUT:

Throughout the call, we hear the CHEERS of the crowd ebb and flow with the action on the field.

DOUG
Never better. You got something for
me?

PHIL
Maybe... How does the National
Kiwanis Convention in Cleveland,
sound...

(running a finger
over a calendar)
Second weekend of February?

DOUG
 (rolling back further
 from the fence)

What?

PHIL
 I know you said you're done with the
 speaking gigs, but it'll put some
 money in your pocket and get you back
 on the radar. Now, it's not the
 keynote, but...

DOUG
 You ever been to Cleveland in
 February, Phil?... Wait, who's the
 keynote?

Phil takes a deep breath.

PHIL
 Ponch.

DOUG
 Who?

PHIL
 Ponch... from CHIPS - remember that
 80s show about the motorcycle cops?
 They got the guy that played Ponch.

DOUG
 Oh, sweet Jesus.

PHIL
 C'mon Doug. Work with me here.

The crowd erupts in the background. Doug looks up, but he
 can't see anything on the field now.

DOUG
 Goodbye, Phil.

PHIL (O.S.)
 Doug--

Doug hangs up and starts fighting through traffic, trying to
 get back to the fence, as we hear...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 Touchdown, Falcons!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - CONTINUOUS

Doug edges into his spot beside Blaine, but he's missed the play. Blaine smacks him on the shoulder.

DOUG
What happened?

BLAINE
You missed it, man! Roman on a wheel route. Perfect timing.

DOUG
Damn!

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
That'll do it folks. Abingdon 31 - Ridgeview 14. The Falcons will travel to Gate City next week. The rally bus will leave at 5:45 sharp...

Fans are making their way out of the stands. Doug and Blaine are moving too. An old-timer claps Doug on the back, making small talk.

Camila steps down from the stands in front of them. Steve is a few steps behind, talking to the group they'd been sitting with.

CAMILA
Did you see that catch?!
(making cradle catch gesture)

DOUG
Hell yeah, I saw it.

Blaine glances at Doug, but doesn't say anything. Camila looks up at Blaine, trying to place him.

CAMILA
Oh my God. Look at you!
(eyeing him up and down)

BLAINE
How're you doing, Camila?

Camila steps forward and hugs Blaine - a too-long squeeze, overdone, almost flirtatious, if it wasn't simply her nature. Blaine's cordial, but stiff - he smiles.

CAMILA

What are you doing here?

BLAINE

Oh, I don't know. I just came down to get a little--

DOUG

He came down to get some work in with me.

CAMILA

I see...

(turning to Doug)

Okay. So tomorrow. We have to be in Roanoke by no later than 7. I'm going to drop him off at 5.

DOUG

Got it.

Camila gives him a stern look.

CAMILA

We won't be back 'til noon or so on Sunday. You will take care of him, right?

DOUG

I said I got it.

CAMILA

I got it, I got it. You'd better 'got it'.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Doug's watching a college game on television. Camila and Roman's VOICES can be heard outside. The screen door opens, and they walk in. Doug hits mute on the remote.

ROMAN

Hey, Pops.

DOUG

Hey, Rome - great game last night! Dual threat man! Kicking and catching!

ROMAN
(light smile)
Thanks.

Camila's two steps in the door, frozen in place, looking around. It's a pigsty, but she let's it go.

DOUG
(to Camila)
I know, noon or after, tomorrow.

CAMILA
Yes. And he's grounded.

DOUG
What?

CAMILA
He's grounded. Last weekend of his sentence.
(she looks at Roman)
Right?

Roman moans and disappears down the hall, backpack slung over his shoulder.

DOUG
From the field party thing? C'mon, still? Besides, that's on me.

CAMILA
Just because his father doesn't behave responsibly, doesn't mean he shouldn't.

DOUG
(trying his best to keep things light)
You wanna ground me too? Or at least give me a spanking?

CAMILA
That's funny. No. But I do have something else I want to talk to you about.

DOUG
(still playing gregarious Doug)
Oh, God. What?

CAMILA
 You know Bill Conly? From the
 college?

Doug's smile begins to fade.

DOUG
 Yeah?

CAMILA
 Well, I ran into him the other day.
 Actually, I called him.
 (beat)
 I asked him about a job.

Confusion replaces what was left of Doug's smile.

DOUG
 You're going back to work?

CAMILA
 Not for me. For you.

Doug's confusion gives way to anger now. Camila continues
 before he can stop her.

CAMILA (cont'd)
 He said they could really use you -
 Coordinator of Disability Services--

DOUG
 No. No. No.

CAMILA
 He said with your background and
 experience, you could really do some
 good there.

Doug's rolling away, one hand up.

CAMILA (cont'd)
 Doug!

He stops, and she moves in front of him.

CAMILA (cont'd)
 It's a job. A good job. It'd be good
 for you - good for Roman too, I
 think.

DOUG
 What the hell does Roman have to do
 with it?

Camila takes a deep breath and stands up straight, trying to maintain her composure.

DOUG (cont'd)
Besides, I have a job.

CAMILA
What? Blaine?

Doug rolls his head, looks past Camila - he realizes he's brought a knife to a gunfight.

DOUG
I'm getting paid, Camila.

CAMILA
Getting paid what? And for how long?

DOUG
It's an opportunity.

Several beats as Camila takes this in.

CAMILA
Wait. You think if you can bring him back from the dead, you're somehow gonna... Ay bendito...

DOUG
It's a job!

CAMILA
A job pays you a salary! A job gives you benefits! Teaching grown men to kick a ball a few hours a week is most definitely not a job!

DOUG
You didn't think that way when we were living in a condo in South Beach.

Camila looks around, scoffs.

CAMILA
Yeah well, we're a long way from Miami, aren't we?

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - LATER

The game's still on, but Doug's staring at it blankly. Roman comes down the hall and plops down on the couch. They sit in silence for a few moments.

ROMAN
Hey, I was thinking--

DOUG
No way. I give you early parole, and she'll lock me up and throw away the key.

He looks over at Roman, who rolls his head away. Doug turns back to the game.

ROMAN
This is such bullshit.

DOUG
Excuse me?

ROMAN
So last time I was here, you up and left town, and now you're, what, standing guard over me?

DOUG
Yep.

Roman huffs on the couch. Doug stares at the television. Several beats.

DOUG (cont'd)
Hey, how 'bout we go over to the field tomorrow and get some work in?

Roman rolls his eyes.

DOUG (cont'd)
I'm just trying to help you.

ROMAN
Right. And Mom's trying to help you.

Doug snorts, shakes his head.

DOUG
I already have a job.

ROMAN
Yeah, well, I'm not it.

This catches Doug's attention - he looks over at Roman, who's staring past him at the television.

-- MONTAGE

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Blaine launches a long kick, Doug breaks it down, instructs.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - NIGHT

Abingdon players on sideline reacting, raising fists in celebration. The scoreboard reads 4th quarter, no time remaining, HOME 14, AWAY 10.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Doug and Blaine break down Blaine's form on the laptop.

EXT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Coach Robbins gives a half-time speech in the locker room. Roman's kneeling in the center of his teammates, dirty, sweating, focused.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Blaine explodes up from squat position, grabs the crossbar of the goal post, and rips off ab crunches. He holds the last crunch, straining with the effort, as Doug times with a stopwatch.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - NIGHT

Abingdon fans cheering wildly, cheerleaders dancing. Natalie hugging Camila in stands.

INT. DINER - DAY

Doug and Blaine enter the diner, passing by a newspaper rack. The headline reads:

"Falcons Roll to 6-0"

-- END MONTAGE

INT. GROCERY STORE - NIGHT

Doug's rolling through the aisles. He stops in front of the peanut butter, scanning - the kind he wants is high above his reach.

BILL CONLY, the man Camila talked to about hiring Doug, is standing several feet away. Bill's early 50s, graying hair, bespectacled, small-town distinguished. Bill recognizes Doug, and watches as...

Doug reaches up with his claw grabber and gingerly grabs the jar.

BILL
Doug?

DOUG
(looking up)
Oh, hey.

Bill sticks a hand out, and Doug shakes.

BILL
Bill Conly, Highlands College. How are you?

Doug smiles, but he's taken aback. There's nowhere to run.

DOUG
Yeah. Yeah. How are you Bill?

BILL
I'm good. Yourself?

DOUG
I'm good. Doing fine.
(holding up the
peanut butter)
Just grabbing some supplies here.

BILL
Hey listen. Camila gave me a call a while back. Said you might be interested in coming on board with us.

DOUG

Yeah, I dunno... I'm neck-deep in something right now. I'm just not sure the timing's right.

Bill nods earnestly.

BILL

Well, no pressure here. But seriously, when you get past what you're working on, we really do need someone in that position. I think you could contribute quite a lot.

DOUG

Thanks, Bill, I appreciate that. I really do...

Awkward silence for a few beats.

BILL

I tell you what...
 (pulling out a card)
 Think it over. If you change your mind, give me a call, and we'll sit down and talk.

DOUG

(taking the card with a smile)
 Will do, Bill. Thanks again. You take care.

Doug's smile fades as Bill turns and walks away. He stuffs the card in his pocket, ducks his head and glances around.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Blaine's in his setup stance. He pauses, steps, and kicks. The ball sails through the uprights. In the distance, Roman pretends to signal a fair catch and catches it.

DOUG

(gruffly, behind sunglasses)
 You're compressing.

Blaine kicks another one. Same result, perfect. Roman settles under the ball and cradles it one-handed. Blaine WHOOPS and laughs.

Doug is sitting stone-faced.

DOUG (cont'd)
You're still compressing. Straight
leg, straight toe.

BLAINE
I'm dead center every time.

Doug waves him off.

DOUG
Yeah. And you were born with the
fastest leg I've ever seen. You can
steer a 40-yarder all day long. Move
back ten and try it.

Doug rolls his chair back. Blaine grabs the holder and sets
up for a 50-yarder. The kick is long enough, but it
ricochets off the right goal post before going through.

ROMAN
Whoaaaa! Bank shot!

Blaine laughs loudly and pumps a fist.

BLAINE
See? Straight leg, straight toe.

DOUG
(getting irritated)
Sure, when you need the power, you
straighten out that lever. But then
everything else goes to hell - your
plant, your shoulders, your hips...

Blaine looks at Doug. He picks up the last ball, takes a
three-step drop, and throws a long, tight spiral to Roman.
Roman catches it and drops it in the bag. Roman begins
walking back towards them.

DOUG (cont'd)
Maybe you've got a second life as a
quarterback.

BLAINE
What the hell is your problem?

DOUG
It's not my problem. It's your
problem. It's always been your
problem.

BLAINE
What are you talking about?

Roman approaches with the bag of balls.

DOUG

You've got more raw talent than anyone I've ever worked with, but it doesn't matter in the end...

BLAINE

What--

DOUG

Fixing the mechanics is easy - you gotta dial it in up here!

(pointing to his head)

Whooping it up.

(imitates fist pumps)

Trick kicks. Bouncing around like a jackass. And every time I try to correct you, you get rattled.

BLAINE

I'm not rattled. I'm... annoyed!

DOUG

(practically foaming at the mouth now)

Annoyed is rattled! Having fun is rattled! Being hungry is rattled! Hell, having to take a leak is rattled! It's your leg, the ball, and those two yellow uprights! Nothing else can exist!

Blaine gives him a long stare.

BLAINE

(almost to himself)

What am I doing here?

DOUG

I thought you were trying to save your career.

BLAINE

Yeah, that's right. My career. 12 years in the NFL. How long did you last? You want to know why I had 12 years, and you barely got a glimpse?

Blaine gives Doug a chance to respond for a beat. Doug's still as a stone.

BLAINE (cont'd)
Because beneath all the charm, and
the kicking Yoda bullshit, you're
just an insufferable asshole.

Doug locks eyes with him.

DOUG
I may be. But we both know why I'm
out of the league.

Blaine stares back in disbelief.

BLAINE
Fuck you.

Blaine walks off the field.

ROMAN
Well done.

Doug slowly turns his head to Roman.

ROMAN (cont'd)
I swear to God. You really can't help
yourself, can you?

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Blaine sits alone, picking at the remains of a greasy steak.
Sonya comes by to check on him.

SONYA
You good here?

BLAINE
Fabulous.

SONYA
Little tiff with the boss, huh?

BLAINE
The boss?

SONYA
Well... It doesn't hurt to let him
think that now and again.

BLAINE
The last thing he needs is to have
his ego stroked.

SONYA

True... You know, I've known Doug since we were kids. Grew up practically across the street from each other. He used to dump himself out of his chair and flop around in the mud.

(laughing)

He just wanted to be a part of it all, anyway he could. And football... Lord almighty, he thought he was going to be the head coach of the Dallas Cowboys one day!

The door JINGLES, and Sonya looks over, then back at Blaine.

SONYA (cont'd)

I don't need to call security, do I?

Doug rolls up to the table.

SONYA (cont'd)

You kids play nice now.

She walks away, as Doug settles in.

DOUG

You packing up?

Blaine looks past Doug. Beat.

DOUG (cont'd)

Well, like you said, I'm sure you'll get a call.

Beat. Blaine's picking aimlessly at his food.

BLAINE

So you think you'd still be coaching in the NFL if I'd made that kick, huh?

Doug takes a deep breath and lets it out.

DOUG

It's not rocket science. I'd convinced them they needed me. Finally wedged my foot in the door - the only kicking coach in the league. A little hard to justify my existence though when the one guy I coach...

BLAINE

You know when I missed that kick...
A thing like that, most guys could
never come back... One kick. You make
it, you send your team to the Super
Bowl... You miss it, and...

(voice trails)

Of course teammates and coaches say
all the right things - the 'no one
play decides a game' crap, - but you
know where you stand in that locker
room. And the fans? God, the fans
hate you. They absolutely despise
you...

They lock eyes.

BLAINE (cont'd)

But at least I had you by my side.

(points at Doug with
his fork)

My coach, my mentor. The guy they
said got me there to begin with. You
sat up there in front of those mics
and said - what was it?: 'I can coach
him, but I can't go out there and
kick for him.'... What a douche.

DOUG

Yep, I said it. It's true. You're the
ninth most accurate kicker in NFL
history, but do you know what your
post-season record is?... 72%... And
do you know why that is? Because as
talented as you are, you never
accepted one, simple fact: you are
alone. And the bigger the stakes, the
lonelier it gets... Hell, you step
out there in that situation, you're
the loneliest man on the entire
planet.

They stare at each other for a beat.

DOUG (cont'd)

(leaning in)

You have to be willing to put
yourself on an island and burn your
damn boat.

BLAINE

Nice speech. What would you know
about it?

DOUG
 (grabbing the arms of
 his chair)
 I was born on an island. I never even
 had a boat to burn.

Blaine soaks this in for a moment.

BLAINE
 Yeah, well, maybe that miss did cost
 you your job. But at least I owned
 it - the whole world saw me own it.
 You? They just saw you trying to
 cover your own ass.

Several beats.

DOUG
 So what's the plan?

BLAINE
 The plan? Why do you care? I don't
 even know why you came and found me
 in the first place.

Doug considers this, weighing the truth.

DOUG
 Because I need you... I need you to
 make it back... And I need to be a
 part of the reason why you make it
 back.

They're staring at each other when Doug's phone buzzes. He
 looks at the number and rolls his eyes.

DOUG (cont'd)
 (to no one)
 Shit...
 (answering)
 Hey.
 (listening)
 What? Slow down.
 (listening, as Blaine
 looks up)
 Where is he now?

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Doug pulls into a parking space in front of a large brick
 building. The sign reads "ABINGDON POLICE DEPARTMENT".

INT. DOUG'S VAN - NIGHT

He hesitates, then grabs an envelope out of the glove-box.

EXT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Doug rolls towards the station. Camila and Roman are standing out front. Camila's dressed to the nines, but she's ready to pounce. She steps forward to meet Doug.

DOUG
What's happening?

CAMILA
What's happening? I'm in the middle of a dinner party, and I get a call telling me my son's been picked up for vandalizing the school!

ROMAN
We didn't even do anything!

Camila shoots a hand back and up.

CAMILA
They were caught on school grounds with backpacks of spray paint! Idiotas!

DOUG
Rome, why don't you get in the van.

Roman, head hung, walks past them. They wait for him to gain some distance. Camila begins shaking her head.

CAMILA
I knew this was going to happen.

DOUG
Knew what was going to happen?

CAMILA
You don't get it, Doug! You're not even there! I can't raise him by myself, Doug. He needs both of us!

DOUG
He had both of us. You're the one who left.

CAMILA

Oh my God! Seriously? We're not talking about that again!

Doug takes the envelope he'd grabbed from the glove-box and stuffs it in her hand.

DOUG

Here you go then.

CAMILA

What's this?

DOUG

The divorce papers - they're all signed. It's official. You can go back to your dinner party now.

INT. DOUG'S VAN - NIGHT

A somber Doug drives through town. Roman's leaning against the passenger-side door, staring out the window.

DOUG

Seriously, Rome? You're gonna be a graffiti artist now? What in the hell were you thinking?

Roman sighs deeply. He doesn't say a word, just keeps staring out the window.

DOUG (cont'd)

Hello? You got anything to say? Anything at all?

Doug looks over - still no reaction from Roman.

DOUG (cont'd)

Dammit, Rome!

ROMAN

I didn't think they were serious!

Doug stares at the side of Roman's head, until Roman finally looks at him.

ROMAN (cont'd)

I swear! We were just driving around, and next thing I know, they're pulling into the school. They wanted to climb the water tower.

(MORE)

ROMAN (cont'd)
I was gonna bail, but the cop came
out of nowhere!

DOUG
So, you're going with the dumbass
defense? Really? One thing you are
not, is stupid, Rome.

Roman sighs.

DOUG (cont'd)
You've gotta get your act together.

Roman raises his eyebrows, shakes his head slowly, awash in
the irony of Doug offering him this advice. Doug doesn't
notice.

DOUG (cont'd)
You guys have a real shot at going
all the way this year - you could get
kicked off the team for this kind of
thing. Doesn't that mean anything to
you?

Roman turns and glares at Doug.

ROMAN
Yeah, it does... Does it mean
anything to you?

DOUG
What are you talking about? Who's
been telling you you gotta put the
work in? Who's been telling you you
need the reps.

Roman sighs, shakes his head.

DOUG (cont'd)
What?!

ROMAN
Why do you even care? I'm not one of
your prospects! The only reason I'm a
kicker at all is because I'm your
son!

DOUG
You've been kicking footballs since
you were three years old! What, now
all the sudden, you don't want to?

ROMAN

It's not that I don't want to... I
just...

(trails off)

Several beats.

DOUG

Look, I get it. You wanted to play
slot, and you've made the most of it.
You're developing into a helluva
receiver. But you are the kicker.

Doug pauses for effect. Roman looks at him.

DOUG (cont'd)

And the kicker has to be able to go
it alone. You gotta be able to
shoulder the weight - all of it -
cause sooner or later, a game - hell
the entire season - could come down
to one swing of your leg. And when
that time comes, you have to be
ready. You understand what I'm
saying?

Beat.

ROMAN

(quietly)

Yeah.

They drive along in silence, Doug making turns through town,
until Abingdon High School appears in front of them. Doug
slows at the entrance to the football field lot.

ROMAN (cont'd)

What are you doing?

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Roman and Doug are out of the van, moving across the empty
lot. The lot lights are on, but the field's lit by only a
full moon. Roman's got the net bag full of balls slung over
his shoulder. They're keeping their voices low.

ROMAN

(forceful whisper)

This is stupid - beyond stupid. I
just got busted here.

Doug ignores him, keeps rolling.

ROMAN (cont'd)
You just picked me up from jail. This is your idea of getting my act together?

DOUG
Hey, you want to screw around, let's at least make it productive.

ROMAN
Well, if the cops show again, I'm running. What's your forty time in that chair? About 20 seconds? I swear, I'm not waiting for you.

DOUG
Nice.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - NIGHT

Roman is setting up to kick from thirty yards out.

DOUG
(whisper-yelling, as
he rolls downfield
towards the goalpost)
Remember, keep those hips tight.

WIDE --

Roman's blasting kicks. Doug's behind the goalpost, trying to field them from his chair. A ball BONGS off the side of the chair, another sails over Doug's head as he ducks. They're laughing and shushing each other.

Roman launches one high and true. Doug works the controls of the chair, backing up quickly, as the ball sails through the uprights. Doug's still backing up as the ball lands with a thud in his lap. We hear a distant MOAN followed by LAUGHS.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Doug eyes Roman as Roman takes his setup steps.

DOUG
Widen your stance just a little.
Remember, strong base, strong leg.

Roman makes the adjustment, moves forward, and kicks. The ball floats through the uprights.

DOUG (cont'd)
 Alright, now let's move it back five.

ROMAN
 You think he's coming? What time is it?

DOUG
 It's time to kick. Let's go.

Doug steals a quick look at his watch as he's rolling back. Roman sets up the holder 5 yards back, turns and...

ROMAN
 There he is.

Doug looks up.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

WIDE --

Blaine's strolling across the far side of the field.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - CONTINUOUS

Blaine arrives. Roman smiles and tosses him a ball.

ROMAN
 You good?

Blaine doesn't acknowledge Doug or Roman. He sets the ball up, then robotically takes his set up steps.

DOUG
 The Blaine Train. A man of few words today.

Blaine freezes in his stance, still not looking at them.

BLAINE
 Sorry boys. It's just my leg, that ball, and those two yellow posts... You all don't exist.

Blaine steps forward and launches a beauty. High, deep, and dead center.

DOUG
Smartass.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Doug's rolling around his kitchen, a man on a mission, in what's clearly a foreign environment. He pulls a pan of lasagna out of the oven, burning a finger in the process.

DOUG
Son of a bitch!

He opens a bag of pre-made salad and dumps it into a large bowl. Eyeing the contents, he decides to add another bag. He stares into the bowl for a moment, then plunges both hands in to mix the salad.

We hear VOICES outside, and the front door opens.

DOUG (cont'd)
(wiping his hands on
a towel)
Hey, hey!

Roman walks in with his girlfriend, Natalie. She's sweet and polite, but no shrinking violet.

ROMAN
Hey Pops.

DOUG
How are you doing, Rome?

ROMAN
Uhhh... I'm okay. This is Natalie.

Doug rolls forward, and Natalie sticks out her hand.

NATALIE
Hi, Mr. Blevins.

DOUG
Well, hello there, Natalie. It's
great to finally meet you.

Natalie smiles. Roman rolls his eyes, then glances around the small living area - it's as clean and orderly as he's ever seen it.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - LATER

Natalie and Roman are sitting on the couch, near-empty plates of lasagna and salad on the coffee table in front of them. Doug's in his chair beside them. They're watching a football game, of course.

Doug's in mid-story. Natalie's listening, laughing. Roman's heard the story a hundred times, but he's laughing too - relieved the night's not a disaster, and maybe even a little proud of his dad.

DOUG

We're talking about Jimmy Johnson here!

NATALIE

Yeah, but didn't he coach the Cowboys?

DOUG

(to Roman)

I like her...

(to Natalie)

You're right, he did - won two Super Bowls there - but that was before he went to Miami. So anyway, he says 'you like football, son?' Then he shoves a souvenir hat in my hands and says, 'hey, they've got a grill set up on the field, you want a hot dog or something?' He thought I was part of some tour group that had somehow wondered into his office!

NATALIE

No way! A hot dog?

DOUG

Yeah! And I'm like, 'Uhh... no sir. But I sure do like football - I'm Doug Blevins, your new kicking coach.' And he looks me right in the eyes and says, 'No you're not.'

NATALIE

What?

DOUG

I'm not kidding! And I say, 'Yes I am, sir.'

(MORE)

DOUG (cont'd)
 I'm Doug Blevins.' And his face turns to absolute stone, and he says, 'No, you're not.' He had no idea he'd hired a guy in a wheelchair! Took me ten minutes to convince him I was who I said I was!

NATALIE
 That is crazy!

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - LATER

Roman and Natalie are heading for the door, with Doug right behind.

NATALIE
 Thank you so much for dinner, Mr. Blevins.

DOUG
 You're very welcome, Natalie. I really enjoyed meeting you.

Doug's phone rings, and he glances at the number. He holds up one hand to stop Roman and Natalie, and answers with the other.

DOUG (cont'd)
 Make it rain, Blaine!

Natalie laughs. Roman's shaking his head.

INT. BLAINE'S INN ROOM - DAY

A quaint room in a historic inn - an open suitcase on an antique, four-post bed. Blaine's pitching clothes in the suitcase with one hand, holding his phone with the other.

BLAINE
 Hey! I gotta call from Jim Tiller about an hour ago. Washington let Nelson go last night.

INTERCUT:

DOUG
 What?

BLAINE
 Yep. They're bringing me and Spero in for a look.

Doug's confused, disoriented. His smile giving way to a furrowed brow. Roman's looking at him, knows somethings up.

BLAINE (cont'd)

You there?

DOUG

Yeah, I'm here. That's great.

BLAINE

Yeah, no kidding, right? Home team.

Doug's still processing the news, trying to regain his smile for Roman and Natalie.

DOUG

We still on for tomorrow though?

BLAINE

Are you kidding?! No! I'm leaving tonight! They want me up there at the facility by noon tomorrow! ... Listen, Doug, tell Roman I'm sorry I didn't get the chance to catch up with him. Tell him to keep on rolling - that I'll be following the team every week.

DOUG

Yeah, yeah, of course. He'll understand.

Blaine stops packing for a moment.

BLAINE

And hey, thanks, Doug. Really, man. I'll call you when I know something.

Doug ends the call and slowly drops the phone to his lap.

ROMAN

So?

DOUG

Blaine. He's got a tryout tomorrow with the Skins.

ROMAN

No way! That's awesome!

Doug's forces on a smile.

DOUG

Yeah!

INT. DOUG'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

Doug's tossing and turning, thinking. His eyes open with a start. He looks at the clock on the bedside table, then throws the covers back.

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

The sun's barely up. The screen door SNAPS behind Doug, as he rolls out to his van.

EXT. I-81 - DAY

Doug honks the van's horn angrily.

DOUG

Come on. Come on!

EXT. SUBURBAN SPRAWL - DAY

Doug's van exits off a suburban parkway.

INT. DOUG'S VAN - DAY

Doug eyes the hulking, white bubble dome of the Redskins practice facility out the window. He makes a turn and comes up on the entrance sign: "Bon Secours Washington Redskins Training Facility".

Doug turns in, navigates the lot, finds a spot and puts the van in park. He pulls off his wraparound shades and leans forward, craning to look at the facility for a beat.

INT. INDOOR PRACTICE FACILITY LOBBY - DAY

Doug's talking to two uniformed men: SECURITY OFFICER #1 behind a desk, SECURITY OFFICER #2 standing beside him.

SECURITY OFFICER #1

I'm sorry sir, but it's not an open practice. We're closed to fans except for select days during camp.

DOUG
I'm not a fan. I'm a coach.

Doug coughs and wipes spittle from the corner of his mouth. He's borderline frantic.

The Security Officers try not to stare, but they're taking in this man, in a motorized wheel chair, claiming he's a football coach. They glance at each other.

SECURITY OFFICER #1
With who?

DOUG
I was the kicking coach for the Miami Dolphins. I'm Blaine Butler's coach - he's in there right now.

The Security Officers try staring Doug down for a beat, to no avail.

SECURITY OFFICER #1
(picking up the phone
with a frown)
Mr. Teller, please.
(he waits)
Mr. Teller, this is Officer Williams.
I've got a guy down here in a... he
says he's a coach with the Miami--

DOUG
Was a coach with Miami. Was--

SECURITY OFFICER #1
Was a coach with the Miami Dolphins.
Says his name is Doug Blevins?

EXT. PRACTICE FACILITY PARKING LOT

Doug's found his way around the building to spot within the compound. He's loitering on the sidewalk, waiting. Pulls off his sunglasses, rubs his eyes. Waits some more. Frustration mounting ...

The sound of metal doors opening down the sidewalk, Doug looks up ...

Blaine walks out with one of the assistants, COACH DAVIS. Blaine's in workout clothes - they've just wrapped the tryout up. They're walking towards Doug, talking, when Blaine looks up and sees Doug. He freezes, trying to make sense of the sight.

BLAINE

Hey. Doug ... What are you doing here?

DOUG

My main Blaine! How'd it go in there?

Blaine's wearing the embarrassed look of a teen whose mom just showed up at the prom.

BLAINE

Uh, it went good - yeah. Coach Davis, this is Doug Blevins. I've been working with him on a few things.

COACH DAVIS

(all business)

Nice to meet you.

Painful silence for several beats. Coach Davis has no idea who Doug is, or why he's there. Nor does he care.

COACH DAVIS (cont'd)

(turning to Blaine)

Well, let's get over to the offices - we've got a few details to sort out. It was nice to meet you... Doug.

Doug musters a smile and sticks out his good hand. Davis gives it a quick shake. Doug catches Blaine's eyes. As the two walk away, Blaine points at Doug ...

BLAINE

I'll call you.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Doug rolls up to his van. He opens the side door and begins to telescope the ramp out, but it gets stuck halfway.

DOUG

(fiddling with the controls)

God damnit!

The ramp goes back in a little, then back out, getting stuck again.

Doug rolls his chair over, leans out, and tries pulling the ramp. His frustration growing, he starts shaking it, slapping it.

DOUG (cont'd)
 Son of a bitch!

He messes with the controls some more, until the ramp finally comes all the way out. He sits for a moment, panting, his face a mask of frustration and utter defeat.

The sound and feel of his phone BUZZING shakes him from his daze. He scrambles to pull the phone out of his pocket. He looks at the number and answers...

DOUG (cont'd)
 Hey.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Phil Rogers, Doug's agent, is sitting at his office desk.

PHIL
 How you doing, Doug?

INTERCUT:

Doug glances around at his environs - the parking lot, the practice facility dome. He'd love to tell Phil where he's at and what he's done with Blaine to get there if the whole day hadn't been such a disaster.

DOUG
 Just fabulous.

PHIL
 You okay? You sound out of breath.

DOUG
 Been working out. Training for the Paralympics.

PHIL
 That's great, but listen, our friends at the Kiwanis need an answer...

Doug clenches his eyes for a beat, doesn't respond.

PHIL (cont'd)
 C'mon Doug, work with me here. You've got a story to tell, and people want to hear it.

DOUG
 Yeah, me and Ponch both, right?

PHIL

... They've got Three Dog Night too.

DOUG

Three Dog Night?! They're still alive?! Well, joy to the goddamn world!

PHIL

Look, I've got a five-year, 36-million dollar deal for Devon Weathers sitting on my desk, but here I am on the phone with you! I'm trying to help you out--

DOUG

Let me ask you something, Phil. Do you know what it's like to sit up there in front of church groups, or a bunch of empty suits, or the freakin' Kiwanis Club - cracking jokes about having hemmoroids because I sit in a chair sixteen hours a day?!

PHIL

Doug--

DOUG

Do you know what that's like?! Playing the pity card at the same time I'm telling a bunch of asshole strangers, who really couldn't give a shit, that anything is possible!

PHIL

(rubbing his head)

Yeah, but Doug... you're good at it.

Several beats.

DOUG

Well, I'm not doing it. I. Am. A. Football coach.

EXT. ABINGDON HIGH SCHOOL - DAY

Establishing.

INT. PRINCIPAL'S OFFICE - DAY

Doug and Camila are sitting in a school office. They aren't speaking, and they aren't looking at each other.

The Principal, MRS. YOUNG, black, mid-40s, sharply dressed, walks in - she's all business.

MRS. YOUNG

I'm sorry to keep you two waiting.
(sitting down behind
her desk)

So as I mentioned, I wanted to have you both in here to talk about Roman and his involvement in an incident here last week.

CAMILA

But he wasn't actually charged with anything, right? I mean he didn't actually do anything.

MRS. YOUNG

No. No he wasn't... Let me cut to the chase, the point is not whether he did or didn't do anything, the point is that he was there at all. Roman's clearly the type of kid we don't want to see slipping off the tracks.

CAMILA

Slipping off the tracks?

MRS. YOUNG

It's just a figure of speech, Mrs. Blevins. Roman's an outstanding student, a member of several extra-curricular school organizations, and an athlete. Plainly speaking, this is out of character for him. I was hoping you might lend some insight into what might be going on...?

Doug fidgets, coughs lightly. Camila purses her lips.

CAMILA

Well, as you probably know, Roman's father and I are no longer together--

DOUG

I'm sitting right here, Camila.

Camila flashes Doug an indignant look.

DOUG (cont'd)

You don't have to say, 'Roman's father' - I'm sitting right beside you.

CAMILA

What I'm saying, Mrs. Young, is that while I've done everything in my power to guide Roman, he may not be getting the attention he needs...

DOUG

Christ almighty. Just say what you have to say.

CAMILA

Well, sometimes I wonder if Roman's father forgets he even has a son.

Mrs. Young raises her eyebrows.

DOUG

Are you kidding me? I've been at the field with him almost every day!

CAMILA

Sure, you've been dragging him out there because you need his help! How about what he needs?!

(turning to Mrs.
Young)

He lives in this make-believe world! He refuses to get a job--

Mrs. Young sits back in her seat, wondering how she's suddenly found herself in the middle of a Dr. Phil episode.

DOUG

I'm a football coach! Why can't anyone--

CAMILA

You used to be a football coach!

(again turning to
Mrs. Young)

I'm trying to get him a job - a real job at the college--

DOUG

Why do you care about my job?! Is this meeting about Roman or me?!

Camila falls silent for a beat. Doug looks at her, challenging - he thinks he's gained the upper hand with this last point.

Mrs. Young, recognizing Camila's brief silence as a sign of something significant to come, shifts forward a little.

CAMILA
I'm moving.

DOUG
What?

Camila calculates the weight of the hammer she's swinging...

CAMILA
Steve's taking a new position in
Roanoke.

Doug takes this in for a moment - a stunned, frozen face.

DOUG
You can't move. When?

Camila doesn't answer.

DOUG (cont'd)
(demanding)
When?

CAMILA
... Soon.

DOUG
What about Roman? Does he know? He
can't leave in the middle of his
senior year!

CAMILA
Yes, he does! And no, he can't!
That's one of the reasons I'm trying
to help you! I'll only be two hours
away - under an hour when he goes to
Tech next year! But right now, he
needs stability here! He needs you.

Doug stares open-mouthed, but before he can respond, Mrs. Young raises a hand.

MRS. YOUNG

Okay. Well, it's clear that Roman has been dealing with - let's just say - a lack of stability on the home front. Regarding the incident, considering Roman's track record, I'm willing to let it go. I did, however, make it clear to him that, while I'm a fan of second chances, I don't much care for third chances.

Mrs. Young stares them down for effect. Doug and Camila drop their heads.

MRS. YOUNG (cont'd)

Now, I'm not in the business of marriage counseling, but--

CAMILA

We're divorced.

Doug snorts.

MRS. YOUNG

Married, divorced... I'm not in the business of counseling adults of any kind. But this is a critical time for Roman. I believe he has a very bright future. If I might offer some advice, I suggest you two put aside your differences and make every effort to focus on that future.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Doug's sitting at his kitchen table, scrolling through the latest story links from the N.F.L. on his laptop. He stops when finds what he's looking for. The headline is short and sweet: "Washington Signs Blaine Butler"

He clicks, and reads through the short piece. When he's done, he sits back in his chair. He's still and silent, staring blankly at the screen for several beats.

He picks up a business card from the table and looks at it. He drops the card, picks up his phone, and begins dialing. He clears his throat...

ADMIN (V.O.)

Highlands College, Office of Academic Support Services?

DOUG
Hello, yes. This is Doug Blevins. I'm
calling for Bill Conly, please.

-- MONTAGE

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Doug methodically instructing Roman on his setup steps.

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Falcons in the locker room, in various states of dress,
celebrating another victory.

INT. DINER - DAY

Doug eating while reading the paper. The headline reads,
"FALCONS MOVE TO 9-0!"

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

A machine gun series of Roman's practice kicks - close shots
of his foot meeting the ball in quick succession. We watch
the final kick sail straight and true, as day turns to
night, the practice kick turning into a game kick ...

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME

... the ball spin-floating through the uprights...

Roman's holder patting him on the helmet.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

Camila and Steve celebrate with the other parents in the
stands. Natalie cheers wildly in the student section. Doug
gets slaps on the back from the men around him, as we
hear...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
And that's gonna do it, folks! Your
final score the Abingdon Falcons, 24,
the Pulaski County Cougars, 14.

--END MONTAGE

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Doug and Roman sit with drinks in front of them, waiting for their dinners. The diner is mostly empty. A small flat screen hangs in the corner close to them. Sonya swings by to greet them.

SONYA

Boys.

DOUG

(motioning to the
television)

You going sports bar on us?

SONYA

Gotta keep up with the times.
(turning to Roman)

Mr. Roman, it would seem
congratulations are in order.

Roman smiles.

SONYA (cont'd)

Ten-and-0, huh?

DOUG

First undefeated regular season in
school history. But it'll be a whole
different animal in the playoffs.

SONYA

Well, I suppose life is pretty messy
most of the time, isn't it?... How
'bout we just enjoy this little slice
of perfection while we got it.

INT. DINER - LATER

Doug and Roman are picking at the remains on their plates when footage of a kicker on the TELEVISION catches Roman's eyes.

ROMAN

(motioning to the
television)

Dad!

(turning to whoever
will listen)

Hey! Can you turn that up?

Sonya grabs the remote off the bar, and walks closer, hitting the volume button.

CLOSE ON TELEVISION:

INT. NEWS DESK - NIGHT

A TALKING HEAD sitting at a news desk...

TALKING HEAD

Butler's game-winner has, in fact, landed him in the record books. He now joins a short list of kickers who have made five field goals in back-to-back games. Since signing with Washington three weeks ago, the veteran kicker is a sizzling 13-for-13. Amy Reed caught up with Butler after the game...

INT. LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

A female reporter, AMY REED, pretty blonde, mid-30s, stands beside Blaine at his locker. Blaine's wearing a shirt and loose tie, no jacket. His hair's still wet from the showers.

AMY

Blaine, after being released by Tampa during the pre-season, could you possibly have imagined things would turn around for you in this fashion?

BLAINE

Honestly, no.

(laughs)

I knew I wasn't ready to hang 'em up, as they say, but it's never up to us, is it?

AMY

You had a few rough patches last season and couldn't seem to dial it in during the preseason - what do you attribute this hot streak to?

BLAINE

Well, when you've been doing this for as long as I have, you know there are gonna be ups and downs. You just have to stay focused and keep at it...

Blaine pauses here, but just as Amy is getting ready to wrap it up, he continues...

BLAINE (cont'd)

So I got with an old friend of mine, Coach Doug Blevins, and just put the work in. He played a big role in getting me into the league as a young player, and he really stepped in and helped me get back on track this go-round.

The interview cuts to the Talking Head, his voice trailing as we return to the restaurant...

INT. DINER - CONTINUOUS

Sonya is staring up at the television.

SONYA

Hot damn...

Roman is flashing a huge grin.

ROMAN

Dad?! Are you kidding me?! You did that! You made that happen.

Doug manages a bittersweet smile.

EXT. ABINGDON TOWN - NIGHT

We see the rubber wheels of Doug's motorized chair rolling along the sidewalk.

As Doug comes into view, we see he's dressed as Elliot, the main character from E.T., complete with a red hoodie. A rubber-headed E.T. sits in a large milk crate Doug's mounted to the front of his chair.

The town's out in full force to celebrate Halloween. Doug soaks up the laughs and compliments from the familiar faces he passes, as he motors into a public open space decorated with pumpkins, skeletons, scarecrows, hay bales, etc.

Doug looks around at the gathering crowd. He leans forward and pats E.T. on the head.

DOUG

How you doing, buddy? You doing okay?

He spots Camila and Steve approaching.

STEVE
Phooooone hooooome...

Doug replies with a weak smile - Steve's a nice enough guy, but he's a moron.

CAMILA
(to Doug)
Nice costume.

DOUG
Well, you know. The Annual Great
Pumpkin Lighting. Figured I'd pull
out all the stops.

Several uncomfortable beats.

CAMILA
I ran into Bill Conly the other day.
He mentioned you gave him a call.

Doug has no doubt she didn't just "run into" Bill Conly, but purposely checked in with him. He chooses peace, anyway.

DOUG
Yep. Got a meeting with him here in a
few days.

Two young boys, perhaps brothers, dressed as PIRATES, notice Doug/E.T. and walk right up.

DOUG (cont'd)
(to the Pirates)
Ahoy, mateys.

Doug reaches into a bag on his lap, pulls out two small candy bars, and gives them to the Pirates.

PIRATE ONE
(pointing to E.T.)
What's he supposed to be?

DOUG
Uhh, it's...
(they're too young to
know the movie)
It's an alien.

The two Pirates lean in for inspection, poking at the rubber mask.

PIRATE ONE

He's lame.

DOUG

What, no manners on your ship?

The Pirates look up at Doug for a moment. Then the smaller one, Pirate Two, shoots out a short punch, denting E.T.'s face, before they both run off.

Doug bites his tongue.

CAMILA

(calling after the
pirates)

Pequenos cabrones!

Doug spots Roman and Natalie walking up.

DOUG

There they are.

CAMILA

(planting a kiss on
Roman's cheek)

Hey baby.

Camila and Natalie share a quick hug - it's clear Camila approves of her. Natalie looks down at Doug in his costume.

NATALIE

Oh my God. I love it!

She leans down and gives Doug a hug.

NATALIE (cont'd)

Hey, you want a hotdog or something?

Doug and Roman laugh.

Camila laughs too, although she realizes she's not in on the joke. She looks at Doug - not quite a smile, but a crack in her typical sternness. She steps forward and pops the dent in E.T.'s face back out. They all laugh.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Doug's sitting at his kitchen table, working through a stack of mail, when his phone buzzes.

DOUG

Hello?

INT. AMY'S OFFICE - DAY

Amy Reed, the reporter who did the locker room interview with Blaine, is sitting behind a desk.

AMY
Doug Blevins, please?

INTERCUT:

DOUG
You got him. Who's this?

AMY
Mr. Blevins, this is Amy Reed, WNTA Sports, Washington. I've been covering the recent success of Blaine Butler, and I was hoping I might pay you a visit later this week.

DOUG
Uh, well. I...

AMY
I understand you were a coach with the Miami Dolphins at one time, and you're credited with the success of a number of NFL kickers.

Doug leans forward in his chair and clears his throat - she's got his attention now.

DOUG
Well, yeah... I've worked with quite a few guys over the years. Blaine was down here, in fact, until Washington signed him.

AMY
Yes, I know. Listen, I'd like to bring a crew down there on... Tuesday, if that works. I really think we could put together a real nice segment. Would that work for you?

Doug pauses for a beat, his mind racing.

DOUG
Okay, sure. I could do that. But I've got a... an interview on Tuesday. How about Wednesday?

AMY
Another interview?

DOUG
No, not you're kinda interview. It's
a... it's a job interview.

AMY
Oh, that's great. Can you tell me
what team?

DOUG
(long beat)
Actually, you know, I'd rather not
say just yet...

AMY
Gotcha. I understand. Well, we can
make Wednesday work then... And good
luck on Tuesday.

EXT. HIGHLANDS COLLEGE - DAY

Doug motors to a stop with Bill Conly standing beside him. They're overlooking the school's small, charming, quad. Students walk to and fro, backpacks over shoulders, coffees in hand - an idyllic setting on a sunny, fall day.

BILL
Nearly 10% of our student population
have a disability. One in five of
those are veterans. As Coordinator of
Disability Services, you'd be working
with my staff to adapt our general
services to their specific
circumstances.

DOUG
Sit behind a desk all day?

BILL
Well, you'd have a desk. But this
isn't about staring at a computer
screen and shuffling papers, Doug.
It's about people - young people who
face challenges others don't...

Doug's staring off across the quad, his wheels turning.

BILL (cont'd)
You're uniquely qualified for this
job, Doug.

(MORE)

BILL (cont'd)
You've overcome challenges yourself,
and you've spent your entire life
working with young people...

Doug's still staring ahead, but he's nodding his head slowly now. Beat.

BILL (cont'd)
When Camila called me, I knew it was
a perfect fit.

Doug frowns. Bill, realizing his mistake, holds his breath for several beats.

DOUG
You know when I was a kid, my mom had
to fight the school system to allow
me to attend regular school.

BILL
That's exactly what I'm talking
about, Doug. A student here shouldn't
have to fight for anything.

DOUG
No, I mean she fought to get me in.
After that, it was on me, alone. She
dropped me off that first day, and
never looked back...

Bill's listening intently, measuring Doug now.

DOUG (cont'd)
Now, that may sound cruel, but it
wasn't. It was a gift. By the end of
high school, I'd made a place for
myself. Assistant football coach my
senior year. Then a student assistant
coach at the University of Tennessee.
Before you knew it, I was the Kicking
Coordinator for NFL Europe, and then
a coach for the Miami Dolphins.

BILL
I know. It's an amazing story ...
Look, Camila called me, yes. She said
you might be looking for work. But
this isn't a favor - we need you.

Doug's nodding again, but just the mention of the word "favor" proves him right in his mind. Bill's on the defensive now, trying to save things.

BILL (cont'd)
Who better to relate to the
challenges faced by our special
student population?... You represent
what's possible, Doug.

Doug laughs lightly at this, shaking his head at the whole
idea.

DOUG
Right. What's possible.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Doug's in his chair, looking sharper than usual - not a hair
out of place. He looks at his watch.

Roman's milling about, putting things in order.

Doug eyes a cluster of photos on the bookcase, rolls over,
and moves a picture of him in Miami Dolphins garb to the
forefront.

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

A gleaming, black SUV pulls up to Doug's double-wide. Out
steps Amy Reed, her CAMERAMAN, and her SOUNDMAN. They
stretch and take a look around at the dumpy trailer and it's
environs. The Cameraman looks at Amy.

CAMERAMAN
I thought this was a feel-good
segment?

AMY
Uggh. Let's hope we can set up
inside.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

The crew has moved furniture around to create space for the
Cameraman and Soundman. Amy and Doug are sitting side-by-
side in two chairs arranged with the bookcase as a backdrop.

Doug's in his element, holding court, his confidence
growing. Amy's taking it all in, but trying to keep Doug on
track.

DOUG

... so Steinberg calls me up for a meeting in Pittsburgh - they had an away game there - and he takes one look at me, and digs right in. I mean he grilled me for two hours straight. He just couldn't believe that a guy in a wheelchair could know so much about the game of football...

The Soundman glances over at the Cameraman with a roll of his eyes. Roman's sitting on the couch aimlessly scrolling on his phone.

AMY

Okay, let's take a break.

DOUG

Sure, sure. Hey you guys want some coffee? Rome, get them some coffee.

Roman pulls himself off the couch. The crew is polite, but all they really want is to wrap this thing up.

AMY

(looking up at Roman)

So Roman, are you a kicker?

DOUG

That he is. Not exactly NFL material, but he does alright, right Rome?

Roman tries to ignore him and sets out four cups.

ROMAN

Do you all want cream and sugar?

SOUNDMAN

Oh it's good. We can get ours.

AMY

(to Doug)

Hey, how'd the interview go yesterday?

Doug's bravado is derailed for a moment - but just a moment.

DOUG

The interview? Oh, just fine. Great, in fact... But, to be honest with you, there aren't a lot of guys who can do what I do.

(MORE)

DOUG (cont'd)
It's gotta be just the right offer
before I sign on some dotted line,
you know?

Amy nods slowly, processing Doug's bullshit.

AMY
Yeah, of course... So Roman lives
here with you?

DOUG
From time-to-time. Depends on his
mother's mood! Right Rome?

Roman freezes for a split moment. Amy laughs uncomfortably.

DOUG (cont'd)
Hey, how about a cup for your old
man, Rome?

Roman pours him a cup and brings it over. As he's walking
away...

DOUG (cont'd)
(to Amy)
She's a real piece of work, Roman's
mom. But what did I expect? She was
basically a mail-order bride.

ROMAN
(stopping in his
tracks)
What did you say?

Doug looks up.

DOUG
Well...

Roman's staring right through him. Amy's and the crew's
heads drop in concert.

Roman turns and grabs his backpack off the kitchen counter.
The screen door SLAMS behind him.

There's a moment of profoundly awkward silence, before Doug
laughs lightly.

DOUG (cont'd)
It's not the best situation...

AMY
(clearing her throat)
Alright, let's get back at it. A few more questions. I think we've just about got what we need.

EXT. TOWN STREETS - NIGHT

Doug's driving around, looking for Roman. He spots him walking along the sidewalk, hood up, his hands stuffed in the pockets of his pullover. Doug rolls down the window and pulls alongside him.

DOUG
(trying on a laugh)
Hey, Rome! Where'd you go on us?!

Roman keeps walking, head down. Doug follows slowly alongside.

DOUG (cont'd)
C'mon, Rome. Get in. What are you doing?

Roman stops and looks at him.

DOUG (cont'd)
C'mon. Please. Get in.

Roman walks over and gets in. He's silent, staring out the window.

DOUG (cont'd)
I'm sorry, Rome.

Roman adjusts in his seat, his rage brimming.

DOUG (cont'd)
I just got carried away. I just...

Roman silences him with a glare - it's Doug's turn to look away.

ROMAN
What? Just what? Just couldn't help being who you are? Just couldn't help being a complete asshole?!

Doug's pulls the van into an empty parking lot. He puts the van in park and leaves the engine running.

INT. DOUG'S VAN - CONTINUOUS

DOUG
(quietly)
C'mon Rome. Take it easy.

ROMAN
Take it easy?! Seriously?! It's
always gotta be you against the
world, doesn't it?! It's never on
you, is it?!

DOUG
What are you talking about?

ROMAN
You blame everyone for everything!
You can barely toast a piece of bread
for yourself, but everything's
someone else's fault!

DOUG
Wow.

ROMAN
No! I'm not talking about your
disability! I'm talking about growing
up! I'm talking about living in this
life - not some fantasy world in your
head!

DOUG
What?

ROMAN
Yeah, that's right.
(mockingly)
You're some kind of football genius.
You have this gift. I know. I get it.
But let me let you in on a little
secret. Nobody gives a shit!

DOUG
No, I don't think you do get it,
Rome...

Roman sighs, exasperated.

ROMAN
What exactly don't I get?

Doug remains silent for a long beat, staring out the
windshield.

DOUG

You don't get that it's the only thing I can do, Rome. And I made a life with it. No one gave it to me... I took the only part of me that works, and I made a life with it.

Roman snorts out a laugh. He looks out the window, raising his open hands to the world around them: an empty parking lot in the middle of a small town, in rural Virginia.

ROMAN

Yeah? And what kind of life is that?

Doug turns to look at Roman, but he doesn't answer.

ROMAN (cont'd)

You wanna know? I'll tell you. You know those speeches you like to give? The ones I've heard you give to every kicker you've ever coached? All that bullshit about embracing isolation, about being the loneliest man on the planet?...

Doug turns away - he's wrenching the steering wheel now.

ROMAN (cont'd)

That's your life. That's who you are. You are the loneliest man on the planet. You have to be. You don't know any other way. But the rest of us?... Maybe we don't want to be alone.

Roman's stare burns a hole in the side of Doug's head. They sit in silence, the van idling... then...

A SIZZLE sound breaks the silence. Roman turns back to look. Faint smoke appears from where the ramp telescopes into the floor.

ROMAN (cont'd)

Dad!

Doug looks up, then back, as the smoke increases.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Roman jumps out of the van and runs around to Doug's side.

He yanks the door open and grabs Doug. Doug leans back, grunting and struggling as Roman heaves him out of the seat. They tumble to the pavement with a crash, as smoke begins to rise in the van.

Roman drags, and Doug pushes, as they make their way clear of the van. Doug lays back, panting, then pushes himself back up as Roman marches back to the van. Doug raises a hand, too out of breath to talk.

Roman opens the side door of the van. A rolling wave of smoke pours out. He kneels in, grabs Doug's chair, and begins pulling it out.

DOUG

Roman!

Roman's got one end out, but it's way too heavy for him to lift the whole chair. He considers his options for a split second, then gives a mighty yank. He falls back, as the chair crashes down to the parking lot.

Roman gets up, yanks the chair back a little, and moves back to the door. He's coughing through the smoke, reaching in along the sidewall with one arm. He pulls out a small fire extinguisher, takes a step back and lets loose.

DOUG (cont'd)

Roman!

Roman finishes his work and marches right back over to Doug. He drops the extinguisher with a CLANK and plops down beside Doug. They sit like that for a moment, before Roman pulls out his cell phone, a disgusted look on his face.

EXT. PARKING LOT - LATER

Doug and Roman are sitting on the pavement, silently contemplating their sorry lots.

DOUG

Rome?

Roman's staring straight ahead, thinking, shaking his head.

DOUG (cont'd)

C'mon, Rome--

ROMAN

I need time.

DOUG

What?

ROMAN

I just need... Just give me time...
Maybe don't come around for a while.

Doug takes this in, shocked by the weight of it.

Camila pulls up in her Mercedes. She hops out.

CAMILA

Oh my God!

She rushes over to Roman.

CAMILA (cont'd)

Are you alright, baby?

ROMAN

(without looking up)
I'm fine.

CAMILA

(taking in the van
and the fire
extinguisher)
What?... What happened?

Roman looks at Doug, then up at Camila.

CAMILA (cont'd)

(to Doug)
I drop him off to help you with an
interview, and you end up almost
getting him killed?!

ROMAN

Mom...

CAMILA

What is wrong with you?!

Doug's holding his head in his hands.

CAMILA (cont'd)

That's it! That's it! I can't do
this!

ROMAN

(his voice rising)
Mom...

CAMILA

No!

(to Doug)

I called Bob Conly today! Do you know what he said? He said he met with you, and you turned down the job! He said you thought it was charity! That you weren't interested! And now look at you!

Doug's hands tighten on his head.

CAMILA (cont'd)

You are not fit!

(jabbing a pointed
finger at Doug)

You are not fit!

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Doug's sitting in front of a muted television, a half-eaten microwave dinner on the table beside him. He's holding his handheld radio in his lap.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

That's gonna bring us to half-time, folks. We're still locked up at 7-all here. Abingdon's done a helluva job slowing down Staunton River's potent passing attack, but--

Doug flips the radio off. He's staring aimlessly ahead, an utterly despondent look on his face, when something on the television catches his eye - Amy Reed's face. He grabs the remote and unmutes it.

AMY (ON TELEVISION)

... Some artists work with canvas. Others work with clay. Doug Blevins? Well, Doug Blevins works with kickers.

INTERCUT:

Doug leans forward, staring at the television, his face slowly contorting, as Amy continues...

AMY (ON TELEVISION) (cont'd)

Born with cerebral palsy, confined to a wheelchair, Blevins fell in love with the game of football at an early age.

(MORE)

AMY (ON TELEVISION) (cont'd)
 Through sheer force of will, he would eventually carve himself a place in that world, as, surprisingly, kicking coach to the stars.

The interview cuts to Doug. He's sitting in front of the bookcase, just feet from where he sits now.

DOUG (ON TELEVISION)
 Vinatieri, Akers, Mare... Each kicker brings a different set of skills, of inborn talents, to the table. My job is to shape those skills and talents.

Back to Doug in present time. He's staring at his own image, disgusted.

AMY (ON TELEVISION)
 Blevins latest masterpiece? Recently-signed Redskins kicker, Blaine Butler. The veteran kicker hasn't been shy about Blevins' role in reviving a career that--

Doug hits the power button on the remote. The trailer falls silent, save his own, steady breaths. He stares at the blank screen for several long beats.

He tosses the remote down and motors towards the door.

INT. DOUG'S VAN - NIGHT

Doug behind the wheel, shadows dancing across his face, as he listens...

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 14-7, Abingdon, with just over seven minutes to go, now. It has been an absolute battle here tonight, folks, and with a trip to the state semis on the line, I can't say I'm surprised
 ...

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

Doug pulls into the school parking lot. The lights of the stadium glowing in the night sky. He drives through the packed lot, as we hear the radio call...

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 Abingdon continues to march downfield
 again, chewing up clock, looking to
 put this thing away for good ...

Doug pulls into a spot at the furthest end of the lot.

INT. DOUG'S VAN - NIGHT

Doug stares at the lights of the stadium, alert with
 anticipation, listening to the radio call.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 Willis lets it go. Short pass over
 the middle... finds... Blevins it
 looks like, and he's fighting forward
 for that first down marker ...

Doug can hear the rise of the crowd, and rushes to roll the
 window down, letting the sound wash over him.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 I tell you what, it took four
 Staunton River tacklers to bring
 Blevins down there, but I do think
 he's just short of the marker...

Doug's hanging on every word.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Yes he is short, and now Coach
 Robbins has a decision to make here.
 Up 14-7 with just 1:48 to go, 4th
 down, on Staunton River's 19-yard
 line. Will he go for it and try to
 run the clock out, or -- No, it looks
 like he's gonna try to seal this
 thing with a field goal.

Doug's nodding.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 And Roman Blevins, who came up just a
 yard short on that 3rd down play, is
 now gonna try to finish this thing
 off with his leg.

Doug's eyes are closed now.

DOUG
 Hips closed. Hips closed. C'mon
 buddy.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 And here we go. The snap, the hold
 ... It's blocked! The kick is
 blocked! -- And, oh my God, Staunton
 River's got it! 38's streaking up the
 sideline!

A communal cry, followed by a tsunami of crowd noise floods the van. Doug's eyes go wide, as he turns towards the stadium lights.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Holy moly! The kick came out low, and
 a Staunton River lineman got a hand
 on it! They pick it up and return it
 80 yards! And just like that, they
 can tie this thing up with an extra
 point!

Doug raises a hand to his head, grimacing.

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Wait! Hold on here! Look at this!
 Staunton River's bringing out their
 regular offense! They're going for
 two! An extra point ties it up, but
 they are going for the win! And now
 Abingdon's scrambling to get their
 defense on the field...

Doug's bug-eyed now, staring out the window at the lights again, listening to the crowd, trying to imagine what's unfolding...

RADIO ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)
 Here we go! This is for all the
 marbles! Crawford takes the snap -
 fakes the dive - he's rolling out
 now - under pressure - he gonna tuck
 it and run - one cut ... and he's
 swarmed under by a pack of Falcons!
 The Falcon defense has held! The
 Falcon defense has held!

The roar from the stadium is deafening now. Several long beats, as Doug closes his eyes, lets his head fall off to one side. He's panting.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Roman's out kicking on his own. Boots a long one. As he watches it drop, notices a figure approaching.

A grin-faced Blaine Butler's closing in...

ROMAN
Hey! What are you doing here?

BLAINE
Bye-week, man. Had to come back and
get my bike.

Blaine throws a hand back over his shoulder towards his pickup truck - trailer and Harley in tow - in the distance. Roman takes it in, nods.

Blaine looks around.

BLAINE (cont'd)
Where's the swami?

ROMAN
No idea. You check his trailer?

BLAINE
Yeah, I went by, but the van wasn't
there.

A light laugh escapes Roman as he picks up another ball.

ROMAN
Yeah well, the van kinda blew up.

BLAINE
What?!

Roman's setting the ball up.

ROMAN
Well, it didn't exactly blow up, it -
it's a long story. Anyway, he was
probably there.

Blaine looks at his watch, as Roman takes his setup steps.

BLAINE
Crap. I gotta get... So you're left
to your own devices then, huh?

ROMAN
Yep.

Roman boots it. Blaine's watching him closely - there's obviously something more to the "long story." He stays silent until Roman looks at him.

BLAINE

Let me guess. The van wasn't all that
blew up?

Roman picks up another ball.

ROMAN

You know how he is.

BLAINE

(laughing)

That I do, my friend. That I do.

Roman's spinning the ball on his hand, his head down...

BLAINE (cont'd)

He's done a helluva lot for me,
though. I can tell you that.

ROMAN

Yeah, and he's helped himself every
step of the way.

BLAINE

Maybe. But I'd like to think, beneath
it all... he cares.

(laughing, pinching
his fingers)

At least a little bit.

Roman laughs...

BLAINE (cont'd)

And I know he cares about you, man. I
mean, as far as fathers go, I've seen
a helluva lot worse...

They look at each other for a beat.

BLAINE (cont'd)

Bottom line is... family's messy. At
some point you just gotta take 'em as
they are and love 'em anyway, you
know?

Blaine smiles, and Roman nods. Blaine steps up for a bring-
it-in high-five hug.

BLAINE (cont'd)

Tell your pops I came by. And I'll be
in touch, okay.

ROMAN

Alright.

Roman watches Blaine walk away.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - NIGHT

Doug sits, brow furrowed, deep in thought. His laptop's closed, the television's off, the trailer's silent.

We hear the CRUNCH of tires outside, a car DOOR slamming, FOOTSTEPS approaching, breaking Doug's trance. He looks up as Roman walks in.

Roman takes a quick look around - the trailer's actually tidy. He pulls his skull cap off, and runs a hand through his hair.

Doug and Roman eye each other for a beat.

DOUG

Good game, Friday.

Roman laughs lightly, the look on his face tells the story: they may have won, but he almost lost it for them.

DOUG (cont'd)

I heard the snap was low. You had to hesitate a hair?

ROMAN

(shaking his head)

No. The snap was good. The hold was good. The blocking was good... I just misfired.

Doug nods slowly.

ROMAN (cont'd)

You didn't see it?

DOUG

(laughing lightly)

Wasn't sure you wanted me there ... Well, you all lived to fight another day, anyway.

ROMAN

Yeah... I just stopped by to tell you I went by Norman's to check on the van. He said it was an electrical short.

(MORE)

ROMAN (cont'd)

It's gonna need a little work on the inside - mostly cleaning. And he's gonna have to re-wire the ramp, but you should have it back in a week or so.

DOUG

Thanks.

ROMAN

Chair working okay?

Doug looks down at his chair.

DOUG

A little banged up, but it still rolls.

(beat)

How's your mom? She cool down any?

Roman replies with a scrunch of his face.

ROMAN

They're going to Roanoke the week after next to look at houses.

Several beats.

ROMAN (cont'd)

(turning to leave)

Well, Natalie's waiting outside. I'd better get going.

DOUG

Roman?

ROMAN

Yeah?

Roman turns around, but Doug's looking away now.

DOUG

You think I'm alone because I want to be - cause I don't know any other way... Maybe you're right. But no matter how we'd like things to be, we're all alone at some point... Coming to grips with that is the only thing that gave me any kind of life at all.

Doug looks up. Roman's staring at him - he's been listening intently, and he nods now.

DOUG (cont'd)
 Anyway, I'm sorry. I said some
 things... I can make things right.

Roman's head drops, he's wringing the hat in his hands.

DOUG (cont'd)
 You know, your mom... I don't know if
 she ever loved me. And honestly, I
 don't know if I ever really loved her
 either... But I can tell you this.
 From the moment you came into this
 world, we both loved you. And we
 always will.

ROMAN
 I know, Pops.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

--EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Doug rolls out the front door and down the short drive. He
 picks up the paper with his claw grabber, pulls it open, and
 nods as he reads the headline:

"Falcons to Face Tough Test Against Brookeville"

--EXT. ROAD - DAY

Doug rolls along the shoulder. A box truck slows and passes
 him. We see the edge of town just up the road.

--EXT. ABINGDON STREET - DAY

Doug rolls along the curb of a street and stops at a red
 light. An aging pickup truck pulls up beside him. The
 passenger-side window's down, and the driver, an ELDERLY
 MAN, glances over.

ELDERLY MAN
 (with a tip of his
 cap)

Doug.

DOUG

Leo.

The light turns green and both the truck and Doug roll forward.

--EXT. INTERSECTION - DAY

Doug comes to a full stop at a stop sign, before making a right turn. He passes a large sign: "ABINGDON HIGH SCHOOL".

--EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DAY

Doug pulls up to fence in front of the field. The Abingdon Falcons are practicing in the distance.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - LATER

Doug's still watching as players and coaches exit the field. Roman, carrying his pads over his helmet, spots him and walks over.

DOUG
Coach got something special planned
for this week?

ROMAN
A lot of Nickel and Dime. They throw
the ball all over the place.

DOUG
Yep. That kid can sling it. And their
D's not going to let you guys
breathe. Gonna have to pound it on
'em. Try to slow it down and keep it
close.

The head coach, Sam Robbins, is walking towards them. Doug greets him as he arrives.

DOUG (cont'd)
Coach.

COACH ROBBINS
Doug. How you doin'?

DOUG
Good. You?

COACH ROBBINS
Damn good. Eighty years of football
at this school, and we've never
played for the state title. We're one
game away.

DOUG

I hear you.

COACH ROBBINS

You guys gonna get a little extra work in?

DOUG

If he's up for it. You up for it, Rome?

ROMAN

I need it.

COACH ROBBINS

(to Roman)

Well, I have no doubt this is gonna be a tight one. I thought about limiting your snaps on offense to save your leg, but I need you out there. Can you handle it?

ROMAN

Yes sir.

COACH ROBBINS

(to Doug)

Doug, I was gonna give you a call, actually. Was wondering if you might want to watch this one up close and personal?

Doug stares at him for a beat.

COACH ROBBINS (cont'd)

I was thinking maybe you'd like to join us on the sideline. Our own kicking specialist.

Doug looks at Roman. Roman looks back, nods.

DOUG

I'd like that.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL FIELD - DUSK

WIDE--

The sun's setting. In the fading light, we see Roman taking his setup steps. Doug's patrolling in his chair, pointing out something in Roman's pre-snap stance.

Roman adjusts, pauses, steps, and kicks. The ball sails deep and true through the uprights.

CLOSE--

Roman's setting up another ball, when Doug's phone BUZZES. He fishes it out of his pocket, motors away a little and picks up.

DOUG

Hello.

INT. PHIL'S OFFICE - DAY

Phil Rogers, Doug's agent, is pacing behind his office desk.

PHIL

I just got off a call with Terry Holmes. Third call today. Carolina's interested.

INTERCUT:

DOUG

What?

PHIL

I said Carolina's interested. They're more than interested, in fact. It's a done deal if you want it.

Doug's silent for several beats. He glances over as Roman boots another one.

PHIL (cont'd)

Hello. Did you hear me? They're in the playoff hunt, and Franco's gone off the rails. They're not gonna release a pro-bowl kicker - they need a fixer. They wanna bring you in.

DOUG

The Carolina Panthers?

PHIL

No Doug, The Carolina Hufflepuffs. Yes, the Carolina Panthers! It's nothing permanent, but it's an in.

DOUG

When?

PHIL
They're in Seattle Sunday. But then
they're home the next three. They
want you down there Monday.

Doug looks over at Roman. Roman's holding a ball, watching
him now.

PHIL (O.S.)
Look, I'm gonna email you the
contract tomorrow morning--

DOUG
Let me call you back.

PHIL
Doug--

Doug hangs up, lowers the phone to his lap. He can't hide
the shock on his face.

ROMAN
What's up?

Doug takes a beat to compose himself, then looks at Roman.

ROMAN (cont'd)
(laughing)
What?

INT. DINER - NIGHT

Doug's sitting alone, an empty coffee cup in front of him.
The diner's nearly empty. Sonya comes by with a coffee pot.
Doug looks up, sees her, and covers his cup with his hand.

SONYA
I'm gonna have to start charging you
rent.

Doug looks down. Sonya stares at him pathetically.

SONYA (cont'd)
Looks like our hero's in trouble,
huh? ... Whatta we got here? We gotta
a love story?

Doug tries to laugh, shakes his head.

SONYA (cont'd)

Oh c'mon. May seem like a good versus evil, right versus wrong, thing, but it's always a love story.

DOUG

Maybe.

SONYA

Uh-huh...

Sonya sits on the edge of the booth.

SONYA (cont'd)

You know, the thing about you, Doug? You never had a damn thing going for you.

Doug looks at her.

SONYA (cont'd)

No, let's face it. You never had a damn thing going for you... But I'll say this: you always knew who you were. You're a survivor, if there ever was one... For a guy that can't walk, you always seem to land on your feet.

Doug's staring at her, when the door chimes. Sonya sees Camila walk in and stands up. She gives Camila a silent nod as she steps away. Camila settles into the booth opposite Doug...

DOUG

I know what you're gonna say.

Camila's stern, but even - more exhausted than anything. She stares at Doug until his eyes drop.

CAMILA

I just don't know where it all ends, you know... Say things go well - let's say you get lucky and straighten this guy out. Let's say you ride this all the way to the Super Bowl... Then what?

DOUG

I don't know.

The silence lingers for several beats.

CAMILA

You know, I asked Roman the same thing. You wanna know what he said? He said "He's a football coach, Mom."

Doug shakes his head.

CAMILA (cont'd)

What else is he gonna say? He's seventeen years old... and... He loves his Dad.

Doug closes his eyes.

CAMILA (cont'd)

And that's what scares me the most, Doug. He loves you. In spite of everything, deep down he wants to see you make it - just wants you to be happy.

Doug's grimacing now. Camila takes a moment to get her words in order...

CAMILA (cont'd)

The problem is, when this dream of yours finally comes to an end, I'm afraid that man he loves and wants the world for is gonna be broken. He's gonna be broken, and he's gonna need someone to take care of him... And what Roman doesn't see, is that more than likely, that someone will be him.

The final dagger to Doug's heart - he looks like someone just shot his dog.

CAMILA (cont'd)

Now, we both know you could pick up that phone and call Bill Conly back. You could have a stable job, with health benefits, a future, the whole nine yards...

Doug's nodding, taking his medicine. Camila lets this sink in before continuing...

CAMILA (cont'd)

But honestly, I don't know what's worse for Roman: seeing you let go of your dream or seeing you destroyed by it.

Doug looks up. They stare into each others' eyes for a long beat.

CAMILA (cont'd)
 So... I'm willing. If this is what
 you want, I'm willing to have you see
 it through.

Doug drops his head again, nodding slowly. Camila lingers for a moment, then gets up and walks out.

We see that Sonya's been lingering too - off to the side, messing around at the coffee station, but keeping an eye on them.

Doug glances up at her when she walks up. She holds the pot of coffee out, looking at him with pursed lips, until he relents and pushes his empty cup towards her. She pours.

SONYA
 I told you it was a love story.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - NIGHT

OVER BLACK:

The sound of the CROWD, and

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
 It's time, folks! Abingdon,
 Brookville - with a trip to the
 Division 3 state championship game on
 the line!

The sound of the CROWD rising now and we hear players' hands SLAPPING thigh pads ...

FADE IN:

... to Roman's helmeted face. His right hand's raised. The rest of the kickoff team is crouched on the line, slapping their pads. Roman drops his hand, moves forward, and kicks off.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS:

CLOSE IN, machine gun clips to establish action and intensity of environment: linemen clashing, violent contact, cheerleaders dancing, crowd erupting, Abingdon players screaming from sideline, Brookeville quarterback rolling out, Coach Robbins watching/reacting/throwing his head in disappointment.

END OF SERIES

We see the scoreboard: mid-way 2nd quarter, Brookville 6, Abingdon 0.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

Doug's on the sideline in his chair, locked into the action on the field. We stay on him as he watches the play unfold.

Doug grabs the DEFENSIVE COORDINATOR by the sleeve and the coach leans down.

DOUG
 (raising his voice to
 be heard)
 They keep motioning into trips right.
 C.J.'s gotta drop with that backside
 tight end in the flat.

The coach nods, and turns back to the field to signal in the next defensive formation.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

SERIES OF SHOTS:

CLOSE IN, machine gun clips to continue action: Camila cheering in stands, Abingdon quarterback spitting cadence, violent contact, student waving Abingdon Falcons banner, player being helped off field, coaches frantically flipping playsheets, crowd cheering, Natalie watching/erupting in excitement.

END OF SERIES

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

Doug rolls back to the bench area and grabs a cup of Gatorade. He drinks as the sound of the CROWD rises and falls to the unseen action on the field.

He looks around, soaking up the scene in all its glory:

--Abingdon players, sweaty, dirty, their young faces streaked with focus and intensity

--Roman, who's just come off the field, standing with his comrades

--a coach whiteboarding a play

--an athletic trainer taping an ankle

--cheerleaders cheering

--the local crowd - behind the fence, packing the stands - dialed in, wholly invested in the fate of their hometown team

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - LATER

The crowd's at a fevered pitch.

Coach Robbins is huddled with a handful of players on the sideline, his hand gripping the Abingdon Quarterback's face mask. He's screaming, but we can only hear the Announcer...

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Here we go, now! Abingdon will take
over on their own 46-yard-line, with
1:04 remaining, and one timeout.

The SCOREBOARD tells the tale: 4TH QTR, 1:04, BROOKVILLE 9, ABINGDON 7.

EXT. HIGH SCHOOL FOOTBALL GAME - CONTINUOUS

Abingdon huddles up.

We see the Brookville defensive players, nasty, their eyes focused, as Abingdon comes to the line.

A bubble screen to Roman for a decent gain.

The CLOCK is running 00:55, 00:54, 00:53...

Abingdon rushes to the line. Brookville scrambles into position.

The crowd erupts as Abingdon's Tight End hauls in a pass.

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)
Big first down for Abingdon! That'll
take them inside Brookville's 30!

Coach Robbins is several steps out onto the field, screaming through the chaos, a field commander at the center of a pitched battle. He's frantically motioning for a personnel change.

An ASSISTANT is holding Robbins by the back of his shirt, making sure he doesn't get flagged, as Roman sprints off the field. As Roman reaches Robbins, the coach grabs him and barks one instruction ...

COACH ROBBINS

Get ready!

The chain crew gets set, the REFEREE SIGNALS the clock to start again.

Roman makes his way behind the players on the sideline to warm up his leg.

As Doug starts motoring after him, we hear:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.)

Jet sweep to Freeman ... cuts it back
... he's brought down at line of
scrimmage!

Doug rolls back and finds Roman kicking into a net. Immune to the chaos around him, he stops to watch. We see him breaking down the mechanics in his mind, as we hear:

ANNOUNCER (O.S.) (cont'd)

Willis rolling right ... dumps it off
to Garcia ... Garcia fights forward
... tackled, at the - looks like the
23!

The CLOCK is ticking 00:23, 00:22, 00:21.

As the fans around her go nuts, Camila spots Roman kicking into the net, Doug beside him. The crowd noise FADES for a moment as we hold on her face, frozen, staring at her boys. The bedlam RISES again in concert with:

ANNOUNCER

... He's forced out the pocket ...
scrambling right ... and he's brought
down at the line of scrimmage!

Coach Robbins frantically signals a time out. We see the SCOREBOARD clock stop at 00:06.

COACH ROBBINS

Kicking team! Kicking team!

Roman steps to Doug. Doug leans forward.

DOUG
(screaming through
the chaos)
It's right on the edge of your range!
Keep those hips closed, but whip that
leg now!

Roman's nodding, his eyes intense, focused. Doug reaches up, grabs him by the face mask, and pulls him in close.

DOUG (cont'd)
You got this, Rome. You're not
alone - I'm right there with you.

Roman pulls away from Doug, a hint of a smile flashing across his face.

ROMAN
The two loneliest men on the planet.

Before Doug can respond, Roman's gone, trotting out onto the field. Doug stares into space for a moment, then rolls to the sideline to watch.

Natalie hold a hand up to her head. Camila closes her eyes and lifts her face to the heavens.

An electric current, set to explode, courses through the stadium. Both lines are digging in, as Roman takes his setup steps. In the moments before the snap, the sound of the crowd DROPS, until we're left with just Roman's BREATHS.

Doug stares from his seat.

The ball is snapped. We see and hear Roman's STEPS, final PLANT, and the IMPACT of foot on ball.

CUT TO BLACK

INT. DOUG'S BEDROOM - DAY

We're looking at an open suitcase, half-packed, on a bed. We hear the HUM of Doug's chair, before he rolls up and places a stack of folded clothes into the suitcase.

He disappears again. The hum FADES a little, as we hear Doug RUSTLING around in the bathroom.

The HUM picks up again, as we get a view of Doug's tiny bedroom. Doug rolls back in and drops a toiletries kit into the suitcase.

INT. CAMILA'S BEDROOM - DAY

We're looking at a pile of unfolded clothes on a bed. Camila grabs a blouse and folds it. She sets the blouse on a stack of folded clothes and scoops the stack up.

Clothes in hand, she disappears into a walk-in closet, as we get a view of her and Steve's master bedroom. It's three times the size of Doug's - a model of suburban luxury.

Camila walks back out, heading back to the bed, as Roman sticks his head through the doorway.

ROMAN

Hey.

CAMILA

(grabbing another
stack of folded
clothes)

Hey, yourself.

ROMAN

I'm gonna head over there now.

Camila disappears into the closet again. Roman steps into the bedroom doorway and waits.

Camila comes back out.

ROMAN (cont'd)

I'll be back in an hour or so.

CAMILA

(continuing to fold)

Okay.

ROMAN

Mom...

Camila stops folding, stands up straight, and looks at Roman.

CAMILA

The keys are in it.
(a quick hand gesture)

Go.

Roman hesitates, looking down at his feet, kicking at nothing on the floor.

CAMILA (cont'd)
(giving in, but
genuine)
Tell him good luck.

INT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Doug's sitting in the silent trailer. His laptop bag, phone, and keys are on the otherwise bare kitchen table, his packed bag by the door. He looks around, spies something on the bookcase.

He rolls over to the pictures and memorabilia - the tangible representation of his life to this point.

He focuses in on the picture of he, Camila, and a young Roman, from years ago. It's tucked behind the photo of him in Miami Dolphins apparel - the one he'd moved to the forefront for his Amy Reed interview.

He gently moves the football photo aside, and picks up the one of his family.

He takes a close look at it, then rolls over to the table and stuffs it in his laptop bag.

We hear the CRUNCHING of tires on gravel, followed by a car door OPENING and CLOSING.

Moments later, the front door opens, and Roman walks in. He looks around at the tidy trailer, the stuff on the table, and the packed suitcase.

ROMAN
Looks like you're good to go.

DOUG
Yep.

Doug rolls over and grabs the stuff off the table.

Roman picks up the suitcase, and they leave, shutting the door behind them.

We see and hear the deadbolt TURNING as Doug locks it behind him. Then we hear the screen door SNAP lightly closed.

EXT. DOUG'S TRAILER - DAY

Roman opens the passenger-side door and puts the suitcase in, as Doug rolls up the ramp. Roman walks around to the open driver's side window, as Doug settles into driving position.

ROMAN
Ramp been working okay?

DOUG
Yep.

ROMAN
That's good. You don't want to roll in there and burst into flames.

DOUG
Make a helluvan impression though, wouldn't it?

Roman laughs. Several beats.

DOUG (cont'd)
Hey, I'm sorry I'm going to miss the big one.

Roman nods slowly.

DOUG (cont'd)
Bring home the title?

ROMAN
Will do.

Doug starts the van.

DOUG
I might be back in a week or two...

ROMAN
You'd better not be.

DOUG
I love you, buddy.

ROMAN
I love you too, Pops.

With that, Doug pulls away. When he gets to the edge of the small cluster of trailers, he glances back in the rear-view mirror. Roman's still standing in the same spot, hands in pockets, watching.

WIDE --

Doug's van pulls out onto the road and slowly accelerates away, as Roman turns and begins walking over to Camila's sedan.

FADE TO BLACK

CARDS INTERCUT WITH REAL PHOTOS OF DOUG:

DOUG BLEVINS COACHED 8 SEASONS IN THE NFL, FOR THE NEW YORK JETS, THE MIAMI DOLPHINS, AND THE MINNESOTA VIKINGS...

HE'S WORKED WITH SOME OF THE GREATEST KICKERS OF ALL TIME, INCLUDING ADAM VINATIERI, DAVID AKERS, AND JUSTIN TUCKER...

IN 2012, DOUG WAS NOMINATED FOR INDUCTION INTO THE PRO FOOTBALL HALL OF FAME.

CREDITS