"COACH"

Pilot

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"COACH"

<u>Teaser</u>

(HAYDEN, ELOISE, LIVINGSTON, DAUBER)

FADE IN:

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

THE TINY AND VERY MODEST HOME OF ELOISE DUPREE AND HER 17 YEAR OLD SON, LIVINGSTON. BOTH OF THEM ARE SEATED ATTENTIVELY ON THE SOFA, LISTENING TO THE VETERAN HEAD FOOTBALL COACH OF MINNESOTA STATE UNIVERSITY, HAYDEN FOX. SEATED NEXT TO HAYDEN IS HIS 25 YEAR OLD ASSISTANT, MIKE "DAUBER" DYBINSKI. HAYDEN IS PRESENTLY IN THE MIDDLE OF A RECRUITING SESSION. IT'S SOMETHING HE'S DONE A THOUSAND TIMES IN HIS LIFE, AND SOMETHING HE CAN BE DANGEROUSLY GOOD AT.

HAYDEN

Mrs. Dupree, when a mother gives me her son - and that's what you'll be doing if Livingston comes to play football for Minnesota State - I consider that an act of faith. And that's not something I take lightly. I think "Dauber" here can attest to that. (INDICATING DYBINSKI) I've always called him Dauber because

(MORE)

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

the way he's built always reminded me of a mud dauber. (HE SMILES AFFECTIONATELY AT DYBINSKI) At any rate, a few years back when I was recruiting this young man to play for the Screaming Eagles, his mother was very ill. In fact, she was more than just ill. She was dying. Her last wish for her boy...her big, strapping Third Team High School All-American nose guard...was for him to graduate from college. And she knew she wasn't going to be around to guarantee that.

DYBINSKI LOOKS APPROPRIATELY MISTY-EYED. THIS SPEECH OF COACH'S ALWAYS GETS TO HIM.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

On the final day of high school recruiting that year, I went to see Dauber's mother in the hospital. And right there, in front of her, and the doctors, and God, and all those machines, I promised her I'd see to it he did just that. (EMOTIONALLY) That was seven years ago. And even though Dauber's mother never lived to see that

(MORE)

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

graduation, I never forgot the promise I made. And next year, or maybe the year after, when Dauber finally has enough credits, he's going to graduate.

EVERYONE IS NOW EMOTIONALLY SUCKED INTO THE TALE COACH IS WEAVING.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

And I don't mind telling you when that day comes, there's going got be a lump in this guy's throat. (HE INDICATES HIMSELF) And I'll tell you something else. I think America is going to have itself a helluva gym instructor.

COACH LOOKS AT DYBINSKI AND AFFECTIONATELY TUSSLES HIS HAIR. MRS. DUPREE LOOKS AT COACH. HOW COULD A MOTHER NOT LOVE THIS MAN?

MRS. DUPREE

(REVERENTLY) Where do we sign, Mr. Fox?

HAYDEN LOOKS AT MRS. DUPREE AND SLIDES A NATIONAL LETTER OF INTENT TOWARD HER. IT'S A MOMENT OF ENORMOUS IMPORT FOR HER AND HER SON. FOR HAYDEN, IT'S ALSO A BIG MOMENT, FOR BENEATH HIS SOMBER AND SAINT-LIKE EXTERIOR, A COMPETITIVE HEART IS BEATING IN ANTICIPATION, WONDERING IF LIVINGSTON IS THE KIND OF FINE YOUNG MAN CAPABLE OF SOMEDAY KNOCKING AN OHIO STATE BUCKEYE ON HIS BUTT.

SFX: A WHISTLE BLOWS

SMASH CUT TO:

MAIN TITLE SEQUENCE

AS THE MINNESOTA STATE MARCHING BAND CROSSES A FOOTBALL FIELD IN FULL DRESS FORMATION, BLARING OUT THE SCHOOL FIGHT SONG (WHICH ALSO HAPPENS TO BE THE THEME SONG) AS IT SPELLS OUT "C O A C H" IN GIANT LETTERS. AS THE MARCH AND THE MUSIC COME TO A ROUSING FINISH...

FADE OUT.

END TEASER. END MAIN TITLE.

ACT ONE

SCENE A

(HAYDEN, FEMALE REPORTER, MALE REPORTER, LEWIS, LUTHER, DAUBER)

FADE IN:

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - DAY

LOCATED IN THE BASEMENT OF THE FIELDHOUSE, THE OFFICE IS A COLLECTING BIN FOR EVERY POSSIBLE ITEM YOU CAN MAKE TO PROMOTE MINNESOTA STATE FOOTBALL, INCLUDING COFFEE MUGS, GLASSWARE, LAMPS, WASTE BASKETS, BLANKETS, CALENDARS, KEY RINGS, SEAT CUSHIONS, CAPS, SWEATSHIRTS, BUMPER STICKERS, LITTLE STUFFED SCREAMING EAGLE MASCOTS, ETC. ALSO PROMINENT ARE A BLACKBOARD, A WEIGHT SCALE, A POSTER OF THE UPCOMING SEASON'S SCHEDULE, AND A LARGE WALL-HANGING PROCLAIMING: "THIS IS MINNESOTA STATE FOOTBALL!" AT THE MOMENT, HAYDEN IS SITTING BEHIND HIS DESK, ENDURING AN INTERVIEW WITH TWO YOUNG REPORTERS FROM THE STUDENT NEWSPAPER.

FEMALE REPORTER

Coach, we know you're busy so we won't take up too much more of your time, but with the season opener less than two weeks away, do you have any thoughts on the East Texas team?

HAYDEN

Well, East Texas should be an outstanding test for us. They're a physical team, well coached. They had some tough luck last year only winning two and losing eight but a break here or there and they could just as easily have been eight and two. So we're looking at East Texas as a good match up.

MALE REPORTER

One last question, Coach, and then we'll go. You're starting your fifth season at Minnesota State, which I believe is also the last year of your present contract, is it not?

HAYDEN

Is it? I guess you're right. I don't pay much attention to those things. My focus is on winning. I figure the rest of life will take care of itself.

MALE REPORTER

Do you feel more pressure to win this year because of your contract?

HAYDEN

No, not until you just mentioned it I didn't.

HAYDEN FORCES A LAUGH. HE HATES THIS KID.

Needless to say, we want a winner this year. The great fans of Minnesota deserve it. But I think what has always been more important to me than winning are the relationships I've been able to have with the fine young men who play for the Screaming Eagles...

HAYDEN'S DOOR OPENS AND <u>LEWIS</u>, ONE OF THE FINE YOUNG MEN, POKES HIS HEAD INSIDE.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(IRRITATED) I'm in an interview, pal,
you want to wait a minute?

LEWIS QUICKLY DUCKS BACK OUT.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

...and the wonderful friendships I've made with fans and alumni alike.

FEMALE REPORTER

Any last thoughts before we go?

HAYDEN

You looking for something philosophical, are you? Mine's pretty simple. Like anybody, I guess I'd just like to leave here someday with the knowledge I did the best I could, maybe made a difference to someone along the way, and hopefully, with the Good Lord's help, had a stadium named after me.

HAYDEN SMILES GENUINELY. THE TWO YOUNG REPORTERS FOLD UP THEIR NOTEBOOKS AND RISE.

FEMALE REPORTER

Well, thank you for your time.

HAYDEN

Always a pleasure to talk to the press. HE LEADS THEM TO THE DOOR.

MALE REPORTER

Good luck this year.

HAYDEN

Yeah, thanks. Good luck to you in whatever you finally decide to do.

THE MALE REPORTER LOOKS CONFUSED AS HAYDEN OPENS THE DOOR AND NUDGES THEM OUT. AS HE DOES, LEWIS STANDS WAITING TO SEE HIM.

LEWIS

Coach, sorry I interrupted, but...

HAYDEN

(PLACING A FATHERLY HAND ON HIM) Lewis, how many times have I told the team I do not have an open door policy? If the door is closed, knock. If the door is open, wave. But under no circumstances do you just barge in. Now what do you want?

LEWIS

We're going to run Fred Webb over to the doc. He might have a slight concussion.

HAYDEN

What the hell happened?? I told you guys no contact today.

LEWIS

Oh, we weren't practicing. We were just horsin' around and Fred got hit in the head with a tub of Gatorade.

HAYDEN JUST HANGS HIS HEAD, WEARILY.

LEWIS (CONT'D)

I thought you should know. See ya.

HAYDEN JUST NODS. BEHIND HIM, THROUGH THE DOOR BEHIND HIS DESK, LUTHER VAN DAM SUDDENLY ENTERS. IN HIS MID '50'S, MARRIED ONLY TO FOOTBALL, AND WITH A WALK THAT LOOKS AS IF HE'S BEEN BLOCKED IN THE KNEES ONE TOO MANY TIMES, LUTHER IS A MAN LIVING FOREVER UNDER THE BELIEF THE SKY IS FALLING, AND IT'S ABOUT TO LAND ON HIM.

LUTHER

Well, you can kiss the next four years goodbye.

HE THROWS HIMSELF IN A CHAIR, DEPRESSED.

HAYDEN

(TO HIMSELF) Did I do something to deserve this day?

HAYDEN SHUTS HIS FRONT DOOR.

LUTHER

Guess where Tommy Jordan just announced he's going to school?

HAYDEN

(TAKING A GUESS) Miami?

LUTHER

Do you believe that? Best high school quarterback in the country. And you know why he's going to Miami?

HAYDEN

Because it's a great school for quarterbacks.

LUTHER

Because of the weather. You going to tell me Jimmy Johnson is a better coach than you? But a kid goes down there to all that sunshine and they take him to a beach party and fix him up with some girl in a bikini and he's as good as signed. Then we bring him up here to the tundra and take him ice fishing with a girl in a parka. I'm telling you, Hayden, we're never going to win here.

HAYDEN

Well, Luther, we'd better win here or we sure as hell won't get a chance to win anywhere else.

DAUBER ENTERS CARRYING A LARGE STACK OF ENVELOPES.

DAUBER

Excuse me, Coach, mail just came.

HAYDEN

Put it on the desk.

DAUBER

It's all divided. (INDICATING ONE STACK) These are ticket requests. (INDICATING A SECOND STACK) These are speaking requests. (INDICATING A THIRD STACK) These are questions from alumni. (INDICATING A SINGLE ENVELOPE) This one's marked "personal." I didn't open it because I thought it might be, you know...

HAYDEN

Personal?

DAUBER

Yeah.

HAYDEN

(TO LUTHER) Sharp as a tack, isn't he?

I'm going to miss you when you graduate,

Dybinski.

DAUBER

This could be the year, Coach.

HAYDEN

(PICKING UP THE ENVELOPE) Let's hope so. (LOOKING AT IT) Oh, this is from Kelly.

DAUBER

Your daughter Kelly?

HAYDEN

No, Gene Kelly. (SCOWLING AT DAUBER AS HE OPENS THE LETTER) She's going to be a freshman in college this year. I told her to write me if she needed any help getting in someplace. I figure the least I can do is pull a few strings for her.

DAUBER

You ought to have her come here.

HAYDEN

(READING THE LETTER) That'd thrill her mother.

LUTHER

Doesn't seem possible Kelly's old enough to go to college. First time I ever saw her was the day Beth brought her into the locker room at half time of that Louisville game. She couldn't have been more than a few weeks old. God, we played lousy that day.

HAYDEN, WHO HAS CONTINUED READING THE LETTER, NOW SUDDENLY STOPS AND LOOKS UP.

DAUBER

What's the matter?

HAYDEN

Dybinski, are you sure you didn't read this letter?

(AFFRONTED) No, why?

HAYDEN

(STUNNED) This is where Kelly wants to come to school.

LUTHER

You're kidding.

HAYDEN

No. She doesn't even need my help.

She's already been accepted. She just wants to know before she comes how I feel about it.

LUTHER

How do you feel about it?

HAYDEN

How do you think? I haven't been a father to Kelly since Beth and I split up. Kelly was two years old. I can't do this.

DAUBER

Do what??

HAYDEN

Be responsible again. I wasn't all that responsible before.

DAUBER

Coach, I doubt if she wants you to be responsible.

HAYDEN

She wants something from me. Otherwise, why is she coming?

LUTHER

What does she say in the letter?

HAYDEN

(MOCKINGLY) Oh, some cockamamie thing about us having a terrific dance and music department.

DAUBER

(INNOCENTLY) That's true. We do.

HAYDEN

So do a lot of other schools. She could go anywhere. She's obviously coming here because I'm here.

LUTHER

He's right. Otherwise, she could go to Miami.

DAUBER

So what are you going to tell her?

HAYDEN

(A BEAT) I don't know. I mean, I want to see her again, sure. I'm just not sure I'm ready to see her every day.

I'm not sure I'm ready to see anybody every day.

You don't think she'd want to live with you, do you?

HAYDEN

(PANICKY) I hadn't even thought of that.

DAUBER

Actually, I think all freshmen girls have to live at the market.

HAYDEN

The what??

DAUBER

Shaeffer Hall. It's called "the market" because it's a tradition at the start of each year for all the jocks to go over there and check out the fresh...

DAUBER STOPS HIMSELF, REALIZING WHAT HE'S ABOUT TO SAY.

DAUBER (CONT'D)

...faces.

HAYDEN

Oh, great. See, this is what I'm talking about. I don't want to be responsible for this. I don't even want to know about this. I'm telling you, I'm just not the father type.

LUTHER

So what are you going to tell her?

HAYDEN SCOWLS.

HAYDEN

She's my daughter. I have to tell her the truth. (SADLY) And the truth is, I'm just not the kind of father she can expect much from. (A BEAT) Would you guys excuse me? I've got to make a phone call.

DAUBER

Sure.

THEY BOTH WAIT FOR HAYDEN TO GO.

HAYDEN

I meant you guys leave.

DAUBER AND LUTHER

Oh.

HAYDEN HEADS BOTH OF THEM OUT. AS HE DOES, LUTHER TAKES HIM ASIDE.

LUTHER

Listen, I know that's not going to be an easy conversation. I just want you to know...well, I don't know what I want you to know. That I know that, I guess.

HAYDEN

(CONFUSED) Thanks.

HAYDEN ESCORTS THEM OUT AND CLOSES THE DOOR BEHIND THEM. HE CROSSES TO THE PHONE AND TAKES A DEEP BREATH; THEN VERY DELIBERATELY DIALS A LONG DISTANCE NUMBER. MEANWHILE, WE CAN SEE THE FEET OF LUTHER AND DAUBER AS THEY WAIT UP ON THE SIDEWALK OUTSIDE HAYDEN'S BASEMENT WINDOW.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Hello, Beth? Hayden...

Fine, thanks. You?...Oh? What's

wrong?...Yeah, well, I just got it a few
minutes ago as a matter of fact. That's

why I'm calling...Well, what can I say?

I was surprised, obviously. And

thrilled, of course...Beth, I don't know
as I'd categorize it as a "tragic"

decision...No, I realize being a parent

was never my long suite, but...

AS HE TALKS, HAYDEN NERVOUSLY PICKS UP A FOOTBALL AND TOSSES IT IN THE AIR.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

...Beth, that was sixteen years ago. I have changed some since then...Well, I think I'm a lot more solid, more well-rounded. I mean, it's not all football anymore...

HAYDEN TOSSES THE BALL ACROSS THE ROOM INTO A GIANT BULL'S-EYE PILLOW ON THE SOFA.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

...Look, is Kelly there? Maybe I should talk to her about this...Oh. Well, when she gets back would you tell her I called and let her know I...I couldn't be more pleased about her coming.

(MORE)

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

I really am. I'm looking forward to seeing her next week and getting to spend time together and really making a commitment to getting close in a way I don't think we've ever been before. And you know when I make a commitment I stick to it. That's why I don't make that many of them...Well, I'm glad you feel a little better. Really, I couldn't be more excited...Okay, be sure and tell her I called...You, too. Goodbye.

HAYDEN SMILES AND HANGS UP.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(TO HIMSELF) There, that wasn't so hard. The <u>truth</u> would've been hard.

SUDDENLY DROPPING HIS SMILE, HAYDEN LOOKS UP TO CATCH LUTHER LOOKING IN AT HIM FROM THE SIDEWALK. AS SOON AS LUTHER SEES HAYDEN LOOKING BACK, HE LOOKS THE OTHER WAY. AS HE DOES...

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE B

(HAYDEN, LUTHER) KELLY, A VOICE)

INT. HAYDEN'S CABIN - ONE WEEK LATER

A ROUGH-HEWN HOME ON THE WATERFRONT OF ONE OF MINNESOTA'S SMALL LAKES. IT'S A VERY MASCULINE ENVIRONMENT, WITH A LARGE STONE FIREPLACE DOMINATING THE UPSTAGE WALL OF THE LIVING ROOM, FLANKED ON EITHER SIDE BY LARGE WINDOWS LOOKING OUT OVER THE LAKE VIEW. A SMALL DEN IS STAGE RIGHT WITH A WINDOW THAT LOOKS OUT TO THE FRONT SCREENED-IN PORCH. IT IS THROUGH THIS PORCH THAT PEOPLE PASS TO GET TO THE FRONT DOOR. THE OPEN KITCHEN IS STAGE LEFT, ALL KNOTTY PINE AND ACTUALLY VERY COZY. THE HOME IS FURNISHED WARMLY IN ODDS AND ENDS, BUT NOTHING IS "DECORATED." A LARGE MOUNTED FISH INDICATES ONE OF HAYDEN'S OTHER PASSIONS. EXCEPT FOR A FEW THINGS IN THE DEN, THERE ARE VERY FEW REMNANTS OF HAYDEN'S LIFE AS A COACH. RATHER, THIS PLACE IS AN ESCAPE FROM THE PRESSURES OF THE JOB. AT THE MOMENT, HAYDEN IS IN THE KITCHEN DOING DISHES. OFF-STAGE, WE CAN HEAR THE SOUND OF AN ELECTRIC SWEEPER RUNNING. MOMENT, IT SHUTS OFF. IN ANOTHER MOMENT, LUTHER ENTERS FROM THE DOOR LEADING TO THE BEDROOMS, CARRYING THE SWEEPER.

LUTHER

I think I just broke your vacuum.

HAYDEN

Did you finish?

Almost.

HAYDEN

Then don't worry about it.

LUTHER

I think it sucked up a comb.

HAYDEN

It's okay, Luther.

LUTHER

I'll put it back on the porch.

LUTHER CARRIES THE SWEEPER TO THE PORCH.

HAYDEN

(CALLING) How do you think the place looks?

LUTHER

(RE-ENTERING) I thought it looked okay before we spent six hours cleaning it. You sure are going to a lot of trouble for someone who you don't want to have live here.

HAYDEN

I still want to make a good impression.

LUTHER

What are you going to do if you find out she wants to stay?

HAYDEN

This is going to be enough of an adjustment without complicating matters.

I'll just be honest and tell her that.

LUTHER

Yeah, honesty worked real good last time.

HAYDEN

Well, this time I'll do it.

SFX: THE PHONE RINGS.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Would you get that? My hands are wet.

LUTHER

(ANSWERING PHONE) Hello?...No, can I tell him who's calling?...Hold on.
(CUPPING PHONE) Student newspaper.
They want a prediction for Saturday's game.

HAYDEN

(BY ROTE) Tell them in our season opener we're just looking to play competitively and keep our mistakes at a minimum. We're not so concerned about the score as we are about seeing what we've got and what we can build on for the rest of the season.

LUTHER

(INTO PHONE) He says 10-7.

LUTHER HANGS UP. HAYDEN JUST LOOKS AT HIM.

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Nobody reads the student paper anyway except journalism students.

OUTSIDE, A CAR HORN HONKS.

HAYDEN

Hey, is that her?

LUTHER

(LOOKING OUT THE WINDOW) White Mustang?

HAYDEN

(RIPPING OFF HIS APRON) That's her. I bought her that car for her sixteenth birthday. Guess she must have liked it, huh?

HAYDEN QUICKLY MOVES TO THE WINDOW AND LOOKS OUT.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Look at her, would you? My God, I can't believe she's that grown up.

LUTHER

You don't need me here. I'll just slip out the back way.

HAYDEN

No, I want you to meet her.

LUTHER

Well, good, because there isn't any back way, I just realized.

THROUGH THE SCREEN PORCH WE SEE <u>KELLY</u> CROSS TO THE FRONT DOOR. HAYDEN SMILES AS HE OPENS THE DOOR. SHE STOPS AS THEY STAND THERE FOR A MOMENT, JUST LOOKING AT EACH OTHER.

HAYDEN

Well, would you look at this? Hello, sweetheart.

KELLY

(SOMEWHAT SHYLY) Hello, Dad.

THERE IS AN AWKWARD MOMENT BEFORE HAYDEN REACHES OUT AND THEY SORT OF HAVE A HUG.

HAYDEN

(REMEMBERING) This is a good friend of mine, Luther Van Dam. This is my daughter, Kelly.

LUTHER

Actually, I met you once before at a game at Louisville. You don't remember.
You were about...(INDICATING HER
SIZE)...ten weeks old.

KELLY

(SMILING) No, I don't remember.

LUTHER

Well, listen, you two have things to talk about. Nice to meet you, Kelly. Hope I see you again real...somewhere.

(MORE)

LUTHER (CONT'D)

Hayden, see you at practice tomorrow.

I'm going to take your sweeper and see if I can get it fixed.

HAYDEN

You don't have to do that.

BUT IT'S TOO LATE. LUTHER TAKES THE SWEEPER AS HE GOES.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(CALLING) Thanks!

HAYDEN SMILES NERVOUSLY AS HE TURNS BACK TO KELLY.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(EXPLAINING) I asked Luther to come over and kind of help me get the place in order. This time of year, with the season starting, things are sort of in a mess.

KELLY

It looks fine. (LOOKING AROUND) I like it.

HAYDEN

Do you? It's pretty secluded. Of course, that's great for me. I can't eat lunch or go to the bathroom in town without someone stopping and wanting to talk about the team. It's nice to have a place where I can get away from everybody.

· - /

HAYDEN LOOKS WISTFULLY OUT THE DOOR.

A VOICE (O.S.)

(CALLING) Hey, Coach, how's it going'?
HAYDEN SMILES AND WAVES AND CLOSES THE DOOR.

HAYDEN

Of course, they pretty much find you no matter where you are. (AN AWKWARD BEAT) You look wonderful, by the way. You must have left a few broken hearts behind in Ohio.

KELLY

(KINDLY) Just Mom's.

HAYDEN

(REALIZING) Yeah, right. (ANOTHER BEAT) Well, so, where are you going to be staying? Here, I hope.

KELLY

(CAUGHT OFF GUARD) Here?

HAYDEN

Well, you're more than welcome to.

There's plenty of room.

KELLY

Actually, I wasn't sure that'd be such a good idea. This is going to be enough of an adjustment without making it more complicated.

Well, golly, I hadn't thought about that but maybe you're right.

KELLY

To tell you the truth, I wasn't all that sure you'd really want me here.

HAYDEN

Wouldn't want you here? Didn't your mother tell you how excited I was you were coming?

KELLY

Yeah. She also told me you sometimes say whatever you think people want to hear. I just didn't want to come out and mess up your life.

A BEAT.

HAYDEN

(GENUINELY) Kelly, I may not always have shown it, but the happiest day I've ever had in my life was the day you came into it.

SHE LOOKS UP AT HIM AND SMILES, SOMEWHAT EMBARRASSED.

KELLY

And now I'm back.

HE FORCES AN AWKWARD SMILE.

HAYDEN

Right.

SFX: THE PHONE RINGS.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

That's probably another reporter.

Sorry. (ANSWERING THE PHONE) Coach

here...(CAUGHT OFF GUARD) Christine...

HE SHOOTS A NERVOUS LOOK TOWARD KELLY.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

What a surprise. Where are you calling from?...

AS HE TALKS, KELLY BEGINS TO ROAM ABOUT THE HOUSE LOOKING AT VARIOUS MOMENTOES OF HER FATHER'S LIFE, INCLUDING PHOTOGRAPHS. AS SHE DOES, SHE GRADUALLY BEGINS TO REALIZE HOW MUCH OF HIS LIFE THERE IS, AND WHAT A LITTLE PART OF IT SHE APPARENTLY IS.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

That close, huh? I didn't realize you were working a game in this area...(HE CUPS THE PHONE) Christine's a sportscaster for the network. She doesn't get into town all that often.

KELLY NODS.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) What?...Oh, I was just talking to my daughter...Yeah, she just got into town a little while ago. She's going to be going to school here...(HE SMILES AT KELLY)...Just a freshman...
Yeah, it looks like four years at least...(HE SMILES NERVOUSLY)...

(MORE)

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Gee, I'd have loved to, but it's her first night and all. You understand...(HE SMILES ONCE MORE AT KELLY, WHO SMILES BACK SELF-CONSCIOUSLY)

I knew you would. But we'll take a raincheck, okay?... Yeah, if anything changes...You, too... G'bye.

HE HANGS UP AND SMILES.

KELLY

(SELF-CONSCIOUSLY) Dad, if you want to go out tonight you should go. I don't expect you to drop your whole life now that I'm around.

HAYDEN

I wasn't expecting to do anything anyway.

KELLY

Do you and Christine see each other a lot?

HAYDEN

Whenever schedules permit.

KELLY

And tonight they permit so I really think you should go out and I should go back to the dorm.

(MORE)

KELLY (CONT'D)

I've got a million things to do anyway.

I don't want to be an intruder.

HAYDEN

You're not.

KELLY

Well, I feel like it tonight, so please let me go back. I'll see you tomorrow. We can talk then and catch up.

SHE GIVES HIM A VERY QUICK KISS ON THE CHEEK.

HAYDEN

Kelly, you're not intruding. I want you to stay.

KELLY

I'll call you tomorrow.

SHE HURRIEDLY HEADS OUT.

HAYDEN

Kelly, wait...

SHE RUNS OUT THE DOOR, ACROSS THE PORCH, AND DOWN THE STEPS.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(CALLING OUT) Okay, but tomorrow for

sure, huh?

OFF-STAGE WE HEAR A CAR DOOR OPEN AND SHUT. IN ANOTHER SECOND, THE ENGINE STARTS. AS HAYDEN STANDS AT THE DOOR WATCHING WITH MIXED FEELINGS AS HIS DAUGHTER DRIVES OFF...

FADE OUT.

END OF ACT ONE

ACT TWO

SCENE C

(HAYDEN, CHRISTINE, YOUNG MAN, CLERK)

FADE IN:

INT. HOTEL LOBBY - THAT NIGHT

THE VERY SMALL LOBBY OF A TINY DOWNTOWN HOTEL, CONSISTING PRIMARILY OF A RESERVATION DESK, A MAGAZINE STAND, AND A SMALL SEATING AREA. THE ONLY PEOPLE PRESENT ARE A CLERK AND A VERY ATHLETIC-LOOKING YOUNG MAN SITTING IN THE WAITING AREA. HAYDEN ENTERS, DRESSED IN SLACKS AND A SWEATER, AND APPROACHES THE RESERVATION COUNTER.

HAYDEN

Excuse me, can I use the house phone?

THE CLERK MOTIONS FOR HAYDEN TO GO AHEAD. HAYDEN LIFTS THE RECEIVER AND DIALS A ROOM NUMBER.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Hi, I'm downstairs...Okay,

see you in a minute.

HE HANGS UP.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(TO CLERK) Thanks.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(CASUALLY) Who do you play for?

YOUNG MAN

(LOOKING UP) Excuse me?

HAYDEN

Football. Who do you play football for?

YOUNG MAN

Oh, I don't play football.

THE YOUNG MAN SMILES POLITELY AND RETURNS TO HIS MAGAZINE.

HAYDEN

(LOOKING AROUND) A big, husky guy like

you? You don't play football?

YOUNG MAN

(SMILING) No.

HE RETURNS AGAIN TO HIS MAGAZINE.

HAYDEN

How come?

YOUNG MAN

(WITH A SHRUG) I don't know. Too busy

running track, I guess.

HAYDEN LOOKS AT THE YOUNG MAN, AMAZED. THE YOUNG MAN CONTINUES TO LEAF THROUGH HIS MAGAZINE.

HAYDEN

Track? You're a track man?

Yeah.

HAYDEN

What do you run?

YOUNG MAN

Dashes. Sixty and the hundred.

HAYDEN

Dashes. Sixty and the hundred.

HAYDEN GLANCES AROUND ANXIOUSLY.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

What do you run the hundred in?

YOUNG MAN

(SHRUGGING) 9.8 - 9.9.

HAYDEN

(ALMOST SALIVATING) Big, husky guy like you runs the hundred yard dash in under

YOUNG MAN

(MODESTLY) Yeah.

ten seconds?

HAYDEN LOOKS AROUND, UNABLE TO BELIEVE HIS GOOD FORTUNE, AND QUICKLY MOVES OVER CLOSE TO THE YOUNG MAN. HE SITS DOWN BESIDE HIM.

HAYDEN

Tell me, what size thighs do you have?

THE YOUNG MAN LOOKS AT HAYDEN AS IF HE'S SOME KIND OF A SICKO AND IMMEDIATELY RISES.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Oh no, I think you misunderstood, son.

(MORE)

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

I'm a coach. I'm Hayden Fox. (AS THE YOUNG MAN WALKS OFF) I coach the Screaming...

AT JUST THIS MOMENT, <u>CHRISTINE ARMSTRONG ENTERS</u> THE LOBBY. YOUNGER THAN HAYDEN BY A FEW YEARS, CHRISTINE HAS THE PERFECT GROOMING AND SOPHISTICATED GOOD-LOOKS OF THE TYPICAL ON-CAMERA NETWORK PERSONALITY.

CHRISTINE

Hi, you ready?

HAYDEN

(QUICKLY JUMPING UP) Oh, there you are.

Yeah...

SHE GIVES HIM A QUICK KISS.

CHRISTINE

Hope I didn't keep you waiting.

HAYDEN

No, I was just having a conversation with...

HE STARTS TO INDICATE THE YOUNG MAN, WHO IS NOW BACK OVER AT THE MAGAZINE STAND.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

...well, it doesn't matter.

CHRISTINE

I'm glad you had a change in plans. Did you decide what we're going to do tonight?

HAYDEN

(AS THEY BEGIN WALKING OUT) Your call. We could go out for dinner, or we can go back to my place and make dinner.

CHRISTINE

I think I'd like to go to your place and make it.

AS THEY PASS THE YOUNG MAN:

YOUNG MAN

Lots o' luck, lady.

OFF BOTH HAYDEN AND CHRISTINE'S REACTIONS...

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE D

(HAYDEN, CHRISTINE

INT. HAYDEN'S CABIN - LATER THAT NIGHT

HAYDEN AND CHRISTINE SIT AT THE CANDLE LIT TABLE, HAVING DINNER AND A BOTTLE OF RED WINE. BEHIND THEM, THE REMNANTS OF A FIRE CRACKLES IN THE FIREPLACE. EVERYTHING THEY USED TO MAKE DINNER IS STILL SITTING OUT IN THE KITCHEN, BUT IT DOESN'T LOOK SO BAD IN THE ROMANTIC GLOW OF FIRELIGHT. HOWEVER, IT'S OBVIOUS BY HAYDEN'S DEMEANOR THAT HE IS NOT REALLY INTO THE ROMANCE OF THE EVENING, ALTHOUGH THAT'S NOT ANY FAULT OF CHRISTINES. SHE'S MAKING AN EFFORT.

CHRISTINE

(INDICATING HIS PLATE) Didn't you like it or were you just not hungry?

HAYDEN

(REALIZING) No, it was good. I was...just trying not to get too full, that's all.

It's always attractive when the man you're with picks at his food while you eat yours and his both.

HAYDEN SMILES, AMUSED.

HAYDEN

I think you're attractive.

CHRISTINE

Really? Somehow I don't feel like I have your full attention tonight.

HAYDEN

(SHRUGGING THIS OFF) It's the game coming up Saturday. I'm always this way before the season starts, you know that.

CHRISTINE

You want to talk about it?

HAYDEN

I don't want to spoil this evening.

CHRISTINE

I was actually thinking it might save the evening.

HAYDEN

What about our rule? I thought we promised we have so little time together we wouldn't waste it discussing...you know...

...things that really matter to us?

HAYDEN

Yeah.

A BEAT.

CHRISTINE

Well, if we're going to get to the business we both came for, I think we'd better clear up the personal stuff first.

HAYDEN

Maybe so. (CONFESSING) I was thinking about my daughter.

CHRISTINE

(CONCERNED) I thought you said you were thinking about the game.

HAYDEN

I lied. You still want to hear this?

CHRISTINE

(SQUEAMISHLY) Okay, go ahead. Just go slow. We're both new at this, remember.

HAYDEN

(WITH A SIGH) I just wonder what kind of guy I am sometimes, that's all. I could've made Kelly stay this afternoon.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

I went through the motions of acting
like I wanted her to, but the truth is
there was a part of me that wanted to be
here tonight with you and not with her.

CHRISTINE

I'm having a hard time telling you that was a terrible thing.

HAYDEN

It's not terrible, it's just selfish. I've been that way my whole life. I've always told myself I was doing the noble thing by not being more a part of her life. As if somehow being closer to her would make things confusing for her. The truth is, I just didn't want to take the time. Oh, I'm great when it comes to calling every now and then and sending stuff at Christmas and birthdays, but when it comes to really being there, I never am. Sometimes I wonder if I got into coaching because I really like it, or because four years is about all the time I'm capable of committing to any one human being.

(PUSHING AWAY FROM THE TABLE) 0-kay, that's going deep enough.

HAYDEN

(QUICKLY TAKING HER HAND) I'm not talking about you.

SHE STOPS. HE LOOKS AT HER A MOMENT, HOLDING HER HAND.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Can I say something really honest?

CHRISTINE

(UNEASILY) Yes. If you really have to.

HAYDEN

I wish I'd made Kelly stay today. I know that's a lousy thing to say to you, and I don't mean it to be, but--

CHRISTINE

Hayden, you don't have to be sorry for feeling something for your daughter.

I'm not jealous.

HAYDEN

No?

CHRISTINE

No. In fact...(SUDDENLY SURPRISED)...
how's this for honest? All those times
I've told you I found you sexy? Like
when you're stalking the sidelines

CHRISTINE (CONT'D)

during a game, or you're working in the den real intensely coming up with some brilliant new strategy?

HAYDEN

Yeah?

CHRISTINE

You're not nearly as sexy as you are right now.

HAYDEN

(SURPRISED) Yeah?

CHRISTINE

Yeah. (A BEAT) And now I have to leave you.

HAYDEN

(CONFUSED) Why??

CHRISTINE

Because you have to call your daughter.

The wrong person's hearing these things.

SHE RISES.

HAYDEN

(ALSO RISING) But you don't have to leave. You can wait. I'll call my daughter while you're cleaning up the kitchen. Or heck, I'll clean up the kitchen and you can just drink wine.

(GATHERING UP HER THINGS; AMUSED) Not tonight, Hayden.

HAYDEN

But I don't think you realize how much better I feel now.

SMILING, SHE WALKS OVER TO HIM AND GIVES HIM A VERY LONG AND TENDER KISS.

CHRISTINE

I'll see you next time I'm in town.

SHE GRABS HER COAT AND PURSE AND A SET OF HIS KEYS AND STARTS OUT.

HAYDEN

Christine, wait...

CHRISTINE

I'm taking your car. I'll park it discreetly on the side street near the hotel. You can ride your bike in tomorrow.

HAYDEN

My bike?

CHRISTINE

It'll be good for you. I have a feeling you're going to have a lot of pent up energy to burn anyway.

HAYDEN

Come on, don't do this to me...

(AS SHE HEADS OUT) Call your daughter, Hayden.

HAYDEN

Christine!...

CHRISTINE

(AS SHE CROSSES THROUGH THE PORCH) And clean your kitchen. (STOPPING AND TURNING BACK) God, I want you.

SHE TURNS AND EXITS FROM THE PORCH.

HAYDEN

But this isn't fair...

OFF-STAGE, WE HEAR A CAR DOOR OPEN AND SHUT. IN ANOTHER SECOND, THE ENGINE STARTS UP.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Why do women keep walking out on me today?

HE TURNS AND LOOKS AT THE PHONE. WITH A SIGH, HE CROSSES TO IT AND, THUMBING THROUGH A UNIVERSITY DIRECTORY, FINDS THE NUMBER HE WANTS AND DIALS.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(INTO PHONE) Yes, could you connect me with Kelly Fox's room?...Thank you...(HE WAITS FOR IT TO RING) Kelly?...Oh, sorry, you sounded like her. Is she there?...Oh. Do you happen to know where she went?...And no idea when she'll be back, huh?...

HE LOOKS OUT THE WINDOW AS WE HEAR THE SOUND OF THE CAR DRIVE AWAY.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

No, that's okay. When she comes back, just tell her her Dad called...No, no message. Just to talk...Thanks. (HE STARTS TO HANG UP BUT GETS STOPPED) I beg your pardon?...Oh, well, I appreciate that...Well, let's hope so...(WEARILY) Gee, I don't know. 10-7?

AS HAYDEN HOPELESSLY FINDS HIMSELF TRAPPED BY YET ANOTHER AVID FAN...

DISSOLVE TO:

SCENE E

(HAYDEN, KELLY, LUTHER, SECRETARY LEWIS)

INT. COACH'S OFFICE - THE FOLLOWING AFTERNOON

THE OFFICE IS EMPTY AS THE HALLWAY DOOR OPENS AND KELLY IS LEAD IN BY A SECRETARY FROM THE ATHLETIC DEPARTMENT.

SECRETARY

Practice just let out so you can wait here. He should be in any minute.

KELLY

Thank you.

SECRETARY

There's a pop machine around the corner if you're thirsty.

KELLY

I'm fine, thanks.

THE SECRETARY EXITS. KELLY TAKES A MOMENT TO LOOK AROUND THE OFFICE, SEEING YET ANOTHER PART OF HER FATHER'S LIFE THAT SHE'S NEVER REALLY BEEN PART OF.

SHE PICKS UP A SMALL TROPHY FROM THE COFFEE TABLE. IT TURNS OUT TO BE A MUSIC BOX WHICH PLAYS THE SCHOOL FIGHT SONG. SUDDENLY, SHE HEARS HAYDEN'S VOICE APPROACHING, AND IT'S LOUD.

HAYDEN (O.S.)

(ANGRILY APPROACHING) Is that what they call effort? I didn't see any effort out there! Tell them I want to see 'em in the study room in two minutes! No showers! Two minutes!

HE BURSTS THROUGH THE DOOR HEADING STRAIGHT FOR HIS DESK.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(TO HIMSELF) I'll show them effort.

Most pathetic excuse for a practice I've

ever seen...

HAYDEN SLAMS HIS CLIPBOARD DOWN ON HIS DESK AND TURNS, SUDDENLY SEEING KELLY.

KELLY

(SELF-CONSCIOUSLY) Hi.

HAYDEN

(CAUGHT OFF GUARD) Kelly. I didn't know you were here.

KELLY

I just came. I called ahead to find out when practice was over.

HAYDEN

(ALSO SELF-CONSCIOUS) Sorry about coming in like that. I was just blowing off steam.

KELLY

You don't have to apologize. I understand.

HAYDEN

I was hoping to see you earlier today.

Did your roommate tell you I called last
night?

KELLY

Yeah, I was out for a walk. I didn't get back 'til late.

HAYDEN

I thought we could have lunch or something. Probably won't be a lot of time once classes start tomorrow.

KELLY

I don't think I'm going to be going to classes tomorrow.

HAYDEN

What do you mean??

KELLY

I think my coming here was a big mistake.

HAYDEN

(CONCERNED) Why??

I realized last night when I thought about it that I wasn't being honest about any of this.

HAYDEN

(DISCOURAGED) Is that the one trait you got from me?

KELLY

(SMILING) I've been trying to tell
myself all along that I was coming here
to study my dance and my music and that
it was just kind of a neat coincidence
that you happened to be here, too. But
that's a lie. I did come here because
of you. And I think I was expecting
something from you that I had no right
to expect.

HAYDEN

You mean that I'd be a father and be interested in you and think more about you than I thought about myself? That kind of stuff?

SHE SHRUGS. THAT'S EXACTLY THE KIND OF "STUFF" SHE MEANT, EVEN THOUGH IT SOUNDS EMBARRASSING TO HEAR HIM SAY IT.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Yeah, that's a lot to ask.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

I mean, I bought you a car for your sixteenth birthday. What more do you want from me?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM, NOT SURE IF HE'S BEING SERIOUS OR SARCASTIC. IT WAS SARCASTIC.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Kelly, I don't want you to leave. And I'm not saying that because I think it's what you want to hear. I'm saying it because it's what I want. I know that's selfish, but that's the kind of guy I am.

SHE FIGHTS A SMILE.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

I want to get to know you. And I want to have a shot at getting better at something I'm not so hot at...being your father. I have no right to ask any of this, but will you give me a chance?

SHE LOOKS AT HIM, TORN BETWEEN WANTING TO SAY YES AND WONDERING IF IT'S REALLY THE RIGHT THING TO DO. THE DOOR BEHIND HAYDEN'S DESK OPENS AND LUTHER POKES HIS HEAD IN.

LUTHER

Hayden...(SPYING KELLY)...oh, sorry, I thought you were alone in here. Hi Kelly. (TO HAYDEN) The team's in here waiting.

HAYDEN

One second.

LUTHER DUCKS BACK OUT.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

Don't say no yet. Take another second and think about it. (INDICATING THE OTHER ROOM) I've got to go do this but it'll only take a minute. (CAUTIOUSLY BACKING OFF) I'll be right back.

HE STOPS AND TURNS TO THE DOOR; THEN TAKING A DEEP BREATH, HE SUDDENLY HURLS THE DOOR OPEN WITH TERRIFIC FORCE.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(SCREAMING) You guys think you're ready to play football Saturday?!

HE SLAMS THE DOOR BEHIND HIM. IN THE ROOM NEXT DOOR, WE HEAR HIM RANTING. KELLY LISTENS, ALMOST MESMERIZED.

HAYDEN (CONT'D - O.S.)

(STILL SCREAMING) You're not ready to play volleyball! You're pathetic, do you hear me?! Twenty-six years I've been coaching and this is the worst team I've ever put on a field, and that includes a freshman intramural team in Chattanooga! I'm embarrassed! I am absolutely embarrassed! And you're going to be embarrassed come Saturday because East Texas is going to come in .

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

here and kick your fannies in front of 30,000 friends and fans and you won't be able to look one of them in the eye when it's over! If you're not going to practice any harder than that then let's not practice at all! Hell, I don't need the practice. I know what I'm doing! But if you don't have any more pride than you showed out there today, then fine! Let's just go out there Saturday and see how humiliated we can be! You're dismissed! You don't want to be here anyway so get out!

THE DOOR FLIES OPEN AGAIN AND HAYDEN STORMS BACK INTO THE OFFICE, SLAMMING THE DOOR BEHIND HIM WITH ENORMOUS FORCE. HE TAKES A DEEP BREATH AND A PAUSE AND LOOKS AT KELLY, WHO IS LOOKING BACK WITH A MIXTURE OF FASCINATION AND EVEN A SLIGHT BIT OF FEAR.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(TOTALLY CALM) So, what do you think? Did you decide?

KELLY

(COMPLETELY DUMBFOUNDED) That was all for effect? (SHE INDICATES THE OTHER ROOM)

HAYDEN

(IGNORING THE QUESTION) Say you'll stay, Kelly. Please. I'm not saying it's going to be easy for either one of us, but I want us to give it a try. And I think you should stay at the house.

KELLY

Boy, you really <u>don't</u> want to make this easy, do you?

HAYDEN

Hey, if I'm going to be your father, I'm certainly not going to have my daughter staying at "the market." Now what do you say? (OFF HER LOOK) A man can change, Kelly. Even a son-of-a-bitch like me.

HAYDEN TAKES KELLY AND HOLDS HER CLOSE TO HIM, ONLY THIS TIME IT'S NOT A "SORT OF" HUG, IT'S A REAL ONE - THE KIND PARENTS AND CHILDREN HAVE WHEN THEY FIT TOGETHER RIGHT. BEHIND THEM, THE DOOR TO THE MEETING ROOM OPENS AND LEWIS, THE YOUNG MAN FROM THE FIRST SCENE, STICKS HIS HEAD IN.

HAYDEN (CONT'D)

(IRRITATED) I'm having a hug here, pal, you want to wait a minute?

LEWIS OUICKLY DUCKS BACK OUT, HAVING SCREWED UP AGAIN. AS HAYDEN AND KELLY CONTINUE TO HOLD EACH OTHER, WE...

FADE OUT.

THE END