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Ballers

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Ballers

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the
University of New Orleans
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of

Master of Fine Arts
in
Film, Theatre, and Communication Arts
Creative Writing

by

Oscar K. Gorney

B.A. Louisiana State University, 2010

August, 2012

FADE IN:

INT. ST. JAMES GYM - DAY

State championship banners cover the rafters of the beautiful, recently renovated gym of St. James High School.

Ten students of an all-boy PE CLASS play a full court game of basketball while rest of the class watches with peaked interest.

HENRY ALLEN (18), a short, scrawny mustached teen whose so-called prime was in middle school, drives towards the basket for a lay-up.

The students' eyes follow Henry's path to the basket. They know what's coming.

RUSSELL DAVIS (18), a big-bodied center who's never needed a fake ID, crashes into Henry and rejects the ball into the stands.

The class goes wild as Henry's head breaks his fall.

The game stops as the students run over and celebrate Russell's monster rejection. Some of Henry's teammates nearly trip over him running over to join in.

LARRY MONROE (18), a tall, flat-footed teen whose body shows his expertise are in watching sports rather than playing, drags Henry over to the bench.

LARRY

So we're not callin' fouls anymore,
Coach? Is that what's going on
here?

COACH COOPER (40s), a man who firmly believes the rules were written by the losers of the world, looks over at Larry in disgust.

COACH COOPER

He's fine. Hell, he didn't call
anything.

LARRY

That's probably because he's
unconscious, coach.

Larry lifts Henry's arm and drops it.

COACH COOPER
Monroe, if I wanted to hear an
asshole I would've farted.

LARRY
You sure you're allowed to have
varsity in this PE class
scrimmaging us....everyday?

COACH COOPER
Let me check.

Coach Cooper looks up and counts his banners.

COACH COOPER (CONT'D)
State. State...Hold on a
sec...St...Nope, hold on. Wow, that
one says national. Geez. Looks like
they can.

SHAWN JEFFRIES (18), a point guard who's the best player at
St. James and makes sure everyone knows it, steps up to Coach
Cooper. He's exhausted from laughing.

SHAWN
Woo! How are my stats looking,
coach?

COACH COOPER
Shawn, another stellar performance.
You almost got another triple-
double, my man.

Coach Cooper holds out for a five. Shawn leaves him hanging.

SHAWN
Bro. I got trips deuce.

COACH COOPER
But I've been keeping track.

SHAWN
That's strange, Cooper, because it
sure doesn't look like it.

LARRY
I can come back at another time if
you two need some privacy.

SHAWN
Hey, how's your game been, Larry?
We missed you at tryouts. What,
fourth time's not the charm?

Larry's got nothing.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

That's what I thought. Get the fuck out there. We need one more loser.

COACH COOPER

You the man, Shawn.

Larry walks back into the game and takes his defensive position in the paint against Russell.

Shawn handles the ball and gets a pick from Russell forcing Larry to switch to Shawn.

Shawn calls for isolation and toys with Larry for a bit with his dribbling skills. Larry can feel the class mocking him.

Shawn drives. Larry holds his hands up as Shawn takes flight.

Shawn dunks on Larry, swinging his crotch into Larry's face, knocking him down to the court.

The class goes nuts again.

Shawn comes to a landing next to a defeated Larry. He points two fingers at Larry, making him flinch.

SHAWN

Stay down.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Larry and Henry eat lunch at their isolated, crummy table with their friends JEFF BEAUREGARD (18), a great athlete, but would rather a pickup game than a coach in his ear, STEPHEN MCDANIEL (18), a soft-spoken meathead who's uncoordination is more sad than funny, and PAUL HAMPTON (18), a big body who'll talk smack while he eats all your food.

HENRY

I can't believe Shawn Jeffries fuckin' teabagged you.

JEFF

I can.

LARRY

He just dunked on me.

PAUL

And his balls careened into your face.

STEPHEN
He's the best.

LARRY
He's a prick is what he is.

HENRY
He's all-state.

LARRY
Hey, Henry, at least I didn't get
rag-dolled by fuckin' Russell
"Donkey Kong" Davis.

PAUL
(eating all their fries)
Those fries look good. Can I have
some, thanks.

STEPHEN
How's the head, by the way?

HENRY
Not that bad.

Henry turns his head to show that it is THAT BAD.

PAUL
Hmm. Yeah. Not bad.

LARRY
Having those douches in our PE
class now is like having to
scrimmage the goddamn Dream Team
everyday, without Laettner.

JEFF
Jesus.

LARRY
We had our own little corner of the
court, and no one would bother us.

HENRY
People still fucked with us.

LARRY
Well, yeah. But it was less than it
is now.

PAUL
Hey, guys, check out Parks over
there.

The guys look across the courtyard and see Shawn and Russell harassing ADAM PARKS (18), a pathetic looking short stack who's the only basketball player that takes pride in his participation trophies, by the soda machines.

TAYLOR (18), PAT (18), and DEVON (18), St. James players that are all about the team to a fault, step up to Parks.

TAYLOR
Won't do it!

PAT
No balls!

DEVON
You won't!

Shawn tosses Parks's soda onto the roof of the school.

Shawn walks away laughing. The rest of the team follows.

LARRY
What I tell ya, guy's a total prick. And it's just because no one's brought him back down to earth.

Parks walks around looking for someone to sit with.

JEFF
What are you tryin' to say, dude?

LARRY
I mean he's no Oscar Robertson.

The guys look confused.

LARRY (CONT'D)
The Big O. One of the greatest point guards ever. The only guy to average a triple-double for a whole season.

STEPHEN
Nobody cares.

LARRY
I'm just saying he's not that good. That's all.

The guys taunt Larry.

Parks walks up to the guys.

PARKS

Hey dudes, any of you wanna be on my basketball team?

PAUL

Parks, I blocked you online, remember?

PARKS

No, I'm playing for reals, in a rec league. It's in the city. I gotta stay in shape if I'm gonna play in college. That's what my mom says at least.

JEFF

Dude, why would we be on your team? You're worse than us?

HENRY

Yeah, and it's in the city. I don't feel like losing and then getting shanked in the parking lot.

PARKS

We could carpool.

PAUL

Fuck off, Parks.

PARKS

OK. Just shoot me an email when you want in. I asked Shawn Jeffries. I think he's a maybe.

Parks walks away unaffected.

STEPHEN

Weirdo.

LARRY

Good thing he's around. That guy keeps us afloat at second to last in...everything.

JEFF

Not grades.

EXT. ST. JAMES PARING LOT - DAY

Larry and Henry take their time navigating the parking lot to their cars as the rest of the student body leaves campus at a dizzying pace.

HENRY

So you comin' over to smoke? My brother says he's got some shit that's bomb, just really sticky...whatever the cool way to say you've got good weed is, yeah. I think Lil Wayne called it Paul Pierce once. Not sure why, but I'm assuming it's cool.

LARRY

Anything we smoke is called Kwame Brown.

HENRY

Why?

LARRY

Only good in high school.

HENRY

So you in?

LARRY

Pass.

HENRY

Look, you can just tell me you're goin' to see Cate. You can tell me you're goin' to go do whatever she asks and not get any. It's not a crime. The absence of fucking is, but other than that-

LARRY

Please. Compared to you, I'd say I'm doin' alright. You, my friend, have got the lady problems. Crystal's been bad mouthing you like it's her job.

Larry tosses his bookbag in his car. Henry puts his in his truck bed.

HENRY

She's just blowing off a never-ending amount of steam.

Larry lights a cigarette.

LARRY

Shouldn't have dumped her.

HENRY

I'm a man with sensitive needs.

Shawn drives by in his truck blaring rap music. Basketball players sit in the back.

SHAWN

Nice shot, Monroe!

LARRY

(waving)

Yep. Just keep driving, pussy.

The truck stops.

Shawn floors it in reverse, almost hitting some students in the process. He stops by Larry and Shawn.

SHAWN

What did you call me?!

HENRY

He said you have a bad-ass truck!
Way to go, bro! You did it!

Shawn flicks off Henry.

SHAWN

Thanks, chode!

Henry's eyes light up as Shawn drives away laughing.

HENRY

Seriously, though. Move on from
Cate, dude. It's the best thing for
you.

LARRY

No can do. Cate and I...we're gonna
be together.

HENRY

Pretty sure you're wrong. She's
still got the boyfriend. Enjoy
getting led on again today.

Henry gets in his truck.

LARRY

I won't because it's not gonna
happen.

EXT. POOL - DAY

CATE MURPHY (18), a short, curvy young woman trapped in high school but making the most of it, lounges at an empty pool area wearing sunglasses and a life guard shirt over her swimsuit.

A hand holding a drink extends towards her face.

LARRY

Here you are. Just how you like it.

Cate smiles and accepts. She sits up and takes a sip. Larry sits down next to her and lights a cigarette.

CATE

You gotta be careful coming 'round here so often. Kyle sees you he's not gonna be happy.

LARRY

What? I'm workin' on my tan. He never shows up anyway.

CATE

Just clearing my name in case he kicks the shit out of you.

LARRY

How kind of you. Guy hasn't said anything to me yet. I think he's too stupid to suspect anything.

CATE

He is stupid. What would he be suspecting?

LARRY

Only this incredible chemistry between us.

CATE

Oh boy.

LARRY

That we're meant to be together. And...and it doesn't matter what he does because...

Cate and Larry fight back laughing.

LARRY (CONT'D)

B-because our love will...ring true?

Cate shakes her head.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Come on that was...some steamy
stuff, eh?

CATE
I came.

Larry's speechless.

CATE (CONT'D)
So-um...Bring me to school
tomorrow, stud?

LARRY
Yeah, yeah. Sure.

CATE
Just put it on my tab.

LARRY
Oh, you mean your tab of blowjobs
you owe me for all the rides I've
given you?

CATE
That's the one. You like finger in
the ass, too, right? No? Two
fingers?

LARRY
Uh...

Cate points across the pool.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Pointing? So you just point now?

CATE
Can you get me one of those
umbrellas and bring it over?

They look at each other.

LARRY
It's always been my dream to bring
you an umbrella.

Larry gets the umbrella and sets it up for Cate.

A muscle car drives up blaring death metal.

KYLE BRIGHTON (18), a short, bowl-cut, douche who'll only work out if there's a mirror in the room, sits in his parked car and looks at himself in his sideview while he adjusts his hair.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Is that him? Man, I hardly noticed he was here.

CATE
See you tomorrow.

Larry walks out to the parking lot.

Kyle gets out of his car. Larry towers over him.

LARRY
How's it going?

Kyle brushes his hair.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Yeah, I heard that.

KYLE
Piss off, dude.

INT. LARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Larry walks in his room and finds his father, DENNIS MONROE (50s), a gentle giant who's never had idle hands, hanging a frame of SCHOLARSHIP LETTERS above Larry's desk.

Larry's walls are covered in basketball-related posters.

DENNIS
Hey, bud. Just hangin' up my letters here. I didn't really like 'em in the study.

Dennis finishes and they walk past each other.

LARRY
You know I'm gonna be out of here in like less than a year, right?

Larry sits at his desk and watches TV. Dennis stands by the doorway.

DENNIS
Then they'll be here when you come back and visit.

Larry watches NBA highlights.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
So-uh, you been shooting lately?

LARRY
Net's rotted off.

Dennis leaves.

Larry opens FACEBOOK on his computer and sees CRYSTAL DALTON'S (18), the kind of teenager who proudly duckfaces in every photo, status: "HENRY ALLEN HAS A CHODE!" Hundreds of LIKES.

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Larry, drives his car and smokes a cigarette. Cate rides shotgun.

CATE
And at choir practice last night we learned Eleanor Rigby.

LARRY
One day you will sing for me, Cate Murphy.

CATE
You don't wanna hear me sing.

LARRY
Now why wouldn't I wanna-

CATE
Stop right there. You were about to compare me to an angel and it's too early in the morning.

Larry nods in agreement. Smokes away.

CATE (CONT'D)
I broke up with Kyle.

Larry coughs. Tosses his cigarette.

LARRY
Why wasn't that the first talking point when you got in the car?

CATE

It really wasn't that big of a deal...but you might want to distance yourself from him...He thinks you might have been an influence.

LARRY

Thinks? He's thinking now? And what do you mean by influence? Does he think we've...like...

CATE

Fucked?

LARRY

Y-yeah, or made fuck-I mean love, or whatever. Yes. That stuff.

CATE

No...But the point is I just feel like free now, like I'm down for whatever.

LARRY

Oh...right...Well, if you need a ride home now I can totally pick you up.

CATE

I'm just gonna get one from a friend.

LARRY

Oh...OK, cool. That's neat. I was just wonderin' is all. No biggie. Just curious. I didn't know you had a friend-I mean another friend to take you home. That's cool.

EXT. ST. JAMES GYM - DAY

Larry and Henry, in their PE uniforms, share a joint behind the gym.

HENRY

I can't believe she dumped him. I mean it makes sense. I just didn't think she was that smart.

LARRY

So what do I do?

HENRY

Did you fuck her yet?

LARRY

Hold on let me crunch the numbers.

Henry seriously waits for the results.

LARRY (CONT'D)

No. Can't say I have.

HENRY

OK, then you fuck her, that's what you do. Problem solved. You're welcome.

LARRY

She practically jumped out of my car when I dropped her off this morning.

HENRY

That means she likes you.

LARRY

But she just ended like a really long term relationship and I-

HENRY

Dude. Cate's what you've been waiting for, like a bitch, I might add.

LARRY

I can't.

HENRY

You know what Charles Barkley said once?

LARRY

Sure. I am not a role model.

HENRY

No. When he got pulled over in Arizona he told the cop he was hurrying over to meet up with a woman who'd given him the best blowjob in his life. His whole life, dude.

LARRY

So what?

HENRY

So what? That guy was stopping at nothing to get to that nice young lady's house.

LARRY

Didn't he get arrested for a DUI?

HENRY

The moral of the story is you gotta at least make an attempt for Cate. You gotta at least try.

LARRY

No, I think it's the man really is not a role model.

HENRY

Who are you gonna trust more, yourself or Sir Charles?

LARRY

Depends on who's driving.

Larry finishes the joint and tosses it.

HENRY

Alright. Let's go exercise.

INT. ST. JAMES GYM - LATER

At a side goal away from the rest of the class, Larry practices his jump shots while Henry rebounds.

HENRY

Got a lil streak here. What's that, two in a row? You've been workin' out?

LARRY

I have been jackin' off a lot.

HENRY

Good cardio. I get it.

Shawn steals the ball from Henry.

SHAWN

Gotta think fast, pussies.

HENRY

Oh my god, it's still so funny every time you do this. Now gimme the ball.

SHAWN

Nah. I think I'm holdin' on to it, chode.

Students, including the St. James players gather around.

HENRY

Oh, look. It knows how to use the internet.

SHAWN

You could say that, chode.

HENRY

Go right ahead! Crystal's a liar, especially about personal matters like someone's...width. And don't call me that again, moron, or I'll return the favor.

SHAWN

Relax, chode. And shave that fuckin' moustache.

Students laugh as Shawn bounces the ball off of Henry's head.

HENRY

Alright, that tears it!

Larry holds Henry back.

LARRY

H, stop. You're just giving him what he wants.

SHAWN

And who would've thought Dennis Monroe's kid would never make the team? Damn shame, really. Makes me want to cry, except I'm not a pussy.

LARRY

Why don't you get back to practice, Shawn? Maybe learn how to pass the ball for once.

Students quiet down.

SHAWN

The fuck's that supposed to mean?

LARRY

It means...you're a selfish player,
and the rest of your team is a
bunch of fucking brainless
mongoloids runnin' up and down the
floor. And we all know you only won
state because of a bad call.

Larry realizes he's still holding onto Henry and let's go.
Shawn walks up to the two of them.

SHAWN

That's a lot of talk from a guy who
couldn't even make JV. You're
acting like, I dunno, like you
could do better or something. I'm
confused, honestly.

LARRY

Maybe. Maybe we could.

Students laugh and mock Larry.

HENRY

Dude, please stop.

SHAWN

We're state champs, chodes. You two
faggots really want a game? That's
gonna be tough because you need at
least three more losers who feel
like getting destroyed.

LARRY

It just so happens I've got exactly
three more friends. Suck on that
for a little while.

SHAWN

We're here all day, ladies.

HENRY

I have noticed that. There's
something really unethical going on
there.

Russell gently taps Shawn on the shoulder.

RUSSELL

Uh, Shawn...what about Coach?

PAT
Yeah, he said we gotta take it easy
for the Classic and-

SHAWN
Shut up! I know!

The bell rings. Class disperses.

SHAWN (CONT'D)
We're gonna play, Monroe. And
you're gonna get fuckin' owned.

Shawn throws a hard chest pass at Larry.

SHAWN (CONT'D)
Hold onto that ball. Remember it's
dribbling. Not skipping around like
you did in grade school.

Shawn walks away. Henry looks disappointed at Larry, shaking
his head.

LARRY
What? Show a little excitement.

HENRY
Oh boy. I can't wait to get my ass
kicked.

LARRY
Dude, Cooper isn't gonna let 'em
play. Tonight's the Roseville
Classic. After that comes the
playoffs, and they'll probably go
deep into the playoffs. After
that's done, they'll have forgotten
all about it. So we can safely go
back to y'know...

HENRY
Being chodes.

LARRY
Right.

HENRY
Did you really used to skip when
you dribbled?

INT. DINING ROOM - NIGHT

Larry sits and eats at the dinner table with his mother, AMANDA MONROE (50s), a woman with a constant smile thanks to prescriptions and who's very aware she has just one child. Dennis finishes setting up the framed letters in the dining room and joins them at the table.

DENNIS

Did you see I put the letters in here?

LARRY

I can see that.

DENNIS

Better, huh?

AMANDA

Of course it is, honey.

DENNIS

So, I-uh heard the Roseville Classic's tonight. You know I shot twelve-for-twelve that night back when I played.

AMANDA

What's that mean?

LARRY

It means he was perfect.

DENNIS

Baby, I couldn't miss. Yep, that game sparked some interest from a few colleges.

AMANDA

A few? Dennis, please. There is such a thing as too much humble pie.

Amanda and Dennis share a long laugh.

AMANDA (CONT'D)

Larry, your father had offers from colleges all over-good ones at that.

LARRY

If only there was a reference point close by.

DENNIS
UNLV, NC State, Purdue, Cornell.

AMANDA
That's Ivy League.

LARRY
I know, ma.

Larry excuses himself from the table. Walks into kitchen.

AMANDA
He had all those letters, but he
didn't tell me. He could've gone
anywhere, but he didn't go.

Larry mixes an alcoholic drink. Parents are oblivious.

DENNIS
I had all that I wanted right here.

Larry drinks.

AMANDA
Aww. Did you hear that, Larry bear?

LARRY
Heard it, ma.

Larry sits back down at the table.

DENNIS
I just couldn't miss that night.

AMANDA
He was so brave.

DENNIS
Everyone carried me off the court,
after I hit the game winner of
course.

LARRY
Of course.

AMANDA
He was so brave.

LARRY
Already established that.

Dennis takes Amanda's hand.

AMANDA

Your dad was pretty popular in high school...pretty popular.

Larry leaves the room. Dennis and Amanda hold hands, admiring each other.

INT. ST. JAMES HIGH GYM - NIGHT

The stands are packed with ROWDY FANS from both schools for this rivalry game. Larry and Henry watch the game from the top of the stands.

ON COURT...ST. JAMES and ROSEVILLE trade buckets.

One Roseville player, BLAKE DAWKINS (18), a freakish man-child who's been on the scouts' radar since kindergarten, single-handedly keeps the game close by dominating Russell on offense and defense.

LARRY

Blake Dawkins is owning Russell out there.

HENRY

Shit yeah he is. Shawn's not gonna find the bucket so easy tonight with his goon on lock down.

Shawn drops a three. The crowd CHEERS.

A manic FAN (18) RATTLES the caged windows at the top of the stands. Larry and Henry take cover.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Time to put this game in my own hands.

LARRY

Whaddya mean?

HENRY

Just follow my lead...NUTTY BUDDY!

Henry CLAPS in rhythm.

HENRY (CONT'D)

NUTTY BUDDY! NUTTY BUDDY!

Larry and Henry clap together.

FAN

Hey, man, what's with the cheer?

Henry whispers in the fan's ear.

The cheer spreads.

Shawn looks at the stands and his man drives past him for a dunk.

LARRY

H, what the hell does that mean?

INT. BASEMENT PARTY - NIGHT (FLASHBACK)

JUNIOR HIGH STUDENTS dance. A younger Shawn dances with a TALL GIRL who towers over him.

She gets up closer on him.

Closer...Rougher...It's too much.

Shawn stops. His knees quiver and he limps down.

The lone wallflower, a younger, still mustached Henry, points a STAIN out on Shawn's pants. Everyone's grossed out.

INT. ST. JAMES HIGH GYM - NIGHT (BACK TO PRESENT)

Larry and Henry watch the game. The cheer is in full force and it's hurting Shawn's game.

LARRY

You've really been rockin' that 'stache for a long time. So you told that guy the same story?

HENRY

Just changed the jerseys.

Shawn goes up for a lay-up. Blake blocks it into the stands.

INT. ST. JAMES PARKING LOT - DAY

Larry, Henry, Jeff, Paul and Stephen relax in lawn chairs. Henry tans with a sun reflector in his truck bed while Paul and Stephen sip coffee, Jeff reads the paper and Larry smokes.

LARRY

Man, they really let that game get away from 'em.

HENRY
I'd even say they choked.

JEFF
So dude, what exactly did you say
to Shawn Jeffries?

PAUL
Yeah. Like when you said your
friends would play...did that mean,
y'know...us?

LARRY
Well, I didn't mean the Bulls,
Paul.

PAUL
Shit.

JEFF
And you're saying he won't bother
taking us up on it because of the
playoffs, right?

HENRY
Dude. Yes. Calm down.

STEPHEN
So you're sure that we won't have
to play them?

LARRY
I'm fuckin' positive.

JEFF
Larry, what's St. James' record?

LARRY
Good?

Jeff shoves the newspaper in Larry's face.

Headline reads "ST. JAMES LOSE CLASSIC, MISS PLAYOFFS"

Henry gets yanked to the ground from his truck.

The guys turn around and see Shawn and the St. James
basketball team.

Henry scrambles up.

HENRY
What the fuck? Just tryin' to get
some...

Henry sees the team standing high above him.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Rays.

SHAWN

Stay down, chode.

PAUL

(caughing)

Nutty butty.

Shawn takes Paul's coffee and slams the cup on the ground.

Empty.

STEPHEN

I'd offer you coffee, but we don't
have enough for everybody.

SHAWN

Monroe, remember you sayin'
something about playing us?

LARRY

I've got a poor memory. It's the
drugs. It's them dang drugs.

SHAWN

We missed the playoffs. By one.
Fucking. Game!

JEFF

No shit, douchebag. It's in the
paper.

SHAWN

We'd like to accept your invitation
to kicking your ass.

Larry looks to his friends for backup.

TAYLOR

Won't do it!

DEVON

No balls!

PAT

You won't!

No support.

SHAWN

I can't hear anything. Shh. Shh.
You guys hear that? No! All talk.
You fuck with my season. I'm gonna
fuck with you, all of you. Rest of
the year's gonna be tons of fun
ladies. Enjoy.

Shawn and the basketball team leave.

STEPHEN

Damn. I knew I should've brought
more coffee.

INT. LIVING ROOM - NIGHT

NBA TV plays.

Larry sits at his desk and shoots a paper in the trash can.

Miss.

He turns his computer to FACEBOOK.

SHAWN JEFFRIES' STATUS: CHODES PUNKD OWT. NUTHIN NEW. LMAO!

LARRY

Can't even spell.

NBA TV starts a classic '80s PISTONS/CELTICS GAME.

Dennis walks in holding his framed letters.

DENNIS

Hey, bud, you think the hallway
would work better maybe?

Larry closes his computer.

LARRY

I dunno.

DENNIS

I was sleeping, but then it dawned
on me that the hallway would get
way more traffic than the-

Larry flips the channel.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

Hold up. Go back to that.

LARRY
Just tryin' to find the highlights.

DENNIS
Highlights? Go back. Click it.

Larry puts the game back on.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
Bad Boys and the Celtics. These
guys beat each other up. They were
some badasses.

LARRY
I know who they are, dad.

DENNIS
Yeah, but have you watched them?

LARRY
All I know is they wouldn't be the
same in today's game.

DENNIS
Oh yes they would. These guys,
they didn't take any crap. They
just kept playin' their game. Just
some tough guys, man.

Larry flips to the ESPN highlights.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
You know somethin'...I might have
another net in the garage if you
need me to use the ole reach.

LARRY
That's ok, dad.

DENNIS
Night.

Dennis walks out.

Larry puts the game back on.

He inches closer to the screen.

EXT. DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

One modest light flashes on.

Larry dribbles out to the driveway. He sets up his shot for the goal.

Air ball.

He walks over to the yard and retrieves the ball.

He tries a baseline jumper.

Miss.

He starts rushing his shots, frustrated.

Brick, after brick, after brick.

He's slow to rebound.

He goes for an easy layup, but trips on his own footing. He stills directs his shot as he falls to the tough concrete.

He sees the ball fall followed by rotten pieces of net.

He gets back up and keeps doing work.

He goes after the rebounds for quick put-backs.

He gets in a rhythm and starts sinking jump shots over and over.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Larry, Henry, Paul, Stephen and Jeff eat lunch at their table.

HENRY

I don't think it's gonna be that bad.

PAUL

Probably not for us, but you two have PE with those wackaloons.

STEPHEN

No, I ran into Russell this morning and he threw my bookbag into the lake. Then he said something like "that fasshole Paul Hampton's next" as he laughed hysterically.

Paul samples all of their meals, prepping his own buffet plate.

PAUL
What's a fasshole?

JEFF
A fat asshole.

Larry watches Shawn take Parks's soda. Larry watches Parks carefully.

Shawn sees Larry.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Aw, man. Why'd you have to go and look at him?

Shawn walks over with the varsity.

SHAWN
What's up, queefs? You ready to apologize?

Russell slaps away Paul's massive lunch before he can take a picture of it on his phone.

LARRY
We're in.

The basketball team laughs.

HENRY
Dude.

Shawn puts Parks' drink down.

SHAWN
Fuckin' A-right. So when do you wanna get beat down?

LARRY
Easy, there asshole.

Larry stands up to Shawn.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Gimme four weeks.

SHAWN
Shit. You need more like four years. Fuck that.

LARRY
That's how long it would've been anyway, had you not CHOKED at the Roseville Classic.

Jeff and Paul pretend to choke themselves.

PAUL

One might even argue that he...BLEW HIS WAD...before the playoffs.

Stephen gives Paul a low-five. Shawn's red in the face.

SHAWN

Better not be bitchin' out.

LARRY

Don't worry, stupid.

SHAWN

You're fucked, Monroe. You're all fucked.

Shawn walks away the basketball team follows.

Larry looks at his friends with delight.

JEFF

You're an idiot.

HENRY

What the shit was that?

STEPHEN

Yeah. Now that I think about it, we're gonna get raped out there.

PAUL

In hindsight I probably shouldn't have mocked the man. You see that posse he's rocking? Sure they look like a bunch of Dukies, but every last one of them could curb stomp me, easily.

LARRY

Come on, guys. What have we done with our time here? I'll recap for you. We've gone from being pussies, to tards, to now chodes. Always one inch away from the bottom of the totem pole, and taken shit from douchebags like Shawn Jeffries for four fuckin' years. No. Not anymore, goddamnit. And who knows, maybe we make it close enough that it's their team that walks away embarrassed.

STEPHEN
That would kick so much ass, so
hard.

JEFF
Yeah, it's something I could tell
strange kids about when I'm senile.

PAUL
Fuck those guys.

Larry looks at Henry. He extends his hand.

LARRY
Sir Charles.

HENRY
Sir Charles.

Larry and Henry pull off a choreographed hand-shake.

JEFF
But dude-uh. How are we like, gonna
get ready?

Larry looks around.

LARRY
Hey Parks!

Parks sits alone eating lunch on the ground.

Larry tosses his stolen drink to him. Parks misses and the
can explodes.

INT. ROSEVILLE GYM OFFICE - DAY

Larry and the rest of the team sit in a messy office. SHAY, a
very big woman who gossips more than she works, sits behind
her cluttered desk laughing at them.

SHAY
You boys are at the wrong gym.

STEPHEN
You and I are on the same page,
lady.

SHAY
(points at JEFF)
Except him.

PARKS

Me?

SHAY

Not you, ET. Him. Yeah, I've seen him ball 'round here. Got some game.

LARRY

Jeff, you got street cred? Good job. I'm proud of ya.

JEFF

I try to set goals for myself.

HENRY

So what's the comp like in these parts?

SHAY

Just one group of kids in your age group that aren't doin' AAU or playin' for school.

PAUL

Either you're slangin' crack rock or you got a wicked jump shot.

LARRY

Dude.

SHAY

No, he's on the money with that. But these punk-ass kids probably sell drugs, too.

Shay turns her attention to her computer.

HENRY

Real quick. What's the jersey situation like as far as size scale?

SHAY

Y'all fuckin' up my spider solitaire. Go on.

She waves for them to leave. They walk out.

Henry pokes his head back in.

HENRY

You got a PA system in this crack den?

EXT. ROSEVILLE GYM - LATER

Larry and Henry wave goodbye as the rest of the team drives away in their respective cars.

HENRY

She's gonna fuck us with those jerseys, man. I already know.

Larry lights a cigarette.

HENRY (CONT'D)

You should be more worried than me about this athletic nonsense.

LARRY

How ya figure?

HENRY

You wouldn't pass the presidential fitness test. And chain smoking doesn't really improve your forty time. Other than that, you're a fuckin' specimen.

LARRY

Basketball court isn't even forty yards, so what's your point?

HENRY

What about ole Cate Murphy? How's all that bullshit going?

LARRY

Just waiting for that right moment.

HENRY

Right moment? The right moment's anytime you can get her to sit on your face before she and Butt-cut get back together.

Larry looks confused.

HENRY (CONT'D)

First break up, dude. This is just a test between them to see which one caves and comes crawling back to the other.

Larry blows smoke at Henry.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Go ahead. Wait.

LARRY

What if I show up and he's already there? It's pretty hard mackin' on a bitch if an ex is present.

HENRY

You ever see those videos of the two deers just fuckin' each other up with their antlers?

LARRY

I can handle myself. I'm a big guy, and I used to have abs. I mean, it's not like he's got street cred.

HENRY

Yeah, see, but you have like negative street cred.

Larry and Henry hear two gun shots go off in the distance.

They fumble around for their keys and make for their vehicles.

EXT. POOL - DAY

Larry walks up to the gate and sees Kyle's car.

Before he can turn back he bumps into Kyle.

KYLE

What's up, bro?

LARRY

Kyle. Totally not the last person I wanted to talk to at this moment. What luck.

KYLE

Cate and I split. Sure you've heard. It's all over Myspace.

LARRY

Damn. See, I'm only on Friendster.

KYLE

It's whatever, though. I mean, I'm a rockstar. I can't be held down. Look at this hair. Check the hair, bro. Can't fuckin' tame this. You kiddin' me?

Kyle looks back and sees Cate by the pool.

KYLE (CONT'D)

It's cool though. She blew it. I'm just gonna write a song about her and she'll hear it on the radio and be really pissed.

LARRY

But your music's fuckin' horrible.

Kyle sucker punches Larry in the gut.

EXT. CATE'S STREET - NIGHT

Larry, holding his belly, walks beside Cate.

CATE

I'm sorry Kyle fucked with you. Really, Larry. I feel shitty about it.

LARRY

I could try to make you feel bad and say I was defending your honor, but in all reality I was defending music.

Cate takes Larry's hand.

CATE

So my pussy never entered your mind at all?

They walk up Cate's driveway.

LARRY

Well, no, I mean-yeah it was, but I criticized his music and that's when he socked me.

They stop at her front steps.

CATE

Lamest fight ever. But hey, thanks for walking me. It was nice.

LARRY

Yeah, no problem. So, I-uh I'll see ya 'round.

They hug. Larry walks away. He stops. He turns around and finds Cate still waiting at her door.

They smile at each other.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Hey, so-um if you're not doing
anything Friday, like if you want
to hangout or-

CATE
Eight o'clock?

LARRY
Y-yes. Eight works. I will pick you
up at eight, young lady.

CATE
Awesome. Later.

LARRY
Later.

Larry walks down the driveway, grinning.

Once he's out of her view Larry runs full speed down the
street.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET - CONTINUOUS

Larry turns the corner off Cate's street.

He falls down exhausted, gasping for air.

INT. ROSEVILLE GYM - DAY

The stands are almost empty in the dilapidated gym except for
a few NEIGHBORHOOD YOUTHS in attendance with nothing really
better to do. The energy couldn't be lower.

Larry enters the gym in a blue basketball uniform that's a
few sizes too small. The rest of the team, already in
unorganized shoot-arounds, has similar jersey problems.

HENRY
I told ya. I fuckin' told ya. Look
at these shorts. Good thing my
dick's...

LARRY
What?

HENRY
Nothin'. Forget it.

Larry shakes his head and flinches when the gym door is kicked open and sees an intimidating group of teenagers strut in laughing.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Finally. Got some fans comin' in.

The thugs suit up in RED JERSEYS and start shooting.

They showcase major skills as they run practice drills.

LARRY
Are we early?

The tallest player, JIMMY BANKS (18) a talented guy who puts more hours in on his hi-top fade than his post game, catches an alley-oop and throws down a powerful dunk and hangs on the rim.

Henry squats down and takes a moment.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Looks like he's one-dimensional.

Henry gets back up.

Jimmy drains a baseline three-pointer.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Who is that guy? Think I've seen him somewhere.

HENRY
Sure it wasn't Sportscenter?
(to JEFF)
Jeffrey, come hither. I'm sure I've got this guy's rookie card.

Jeff dribbles over to Larry and Henry.

JEFF
That's Jimmy Banks. Mad skills. Guy made local news recently.

HENRY
So, you read the paper and watch local news. How old are you?

JEFF
He got caught fuckin' a cheerleader in the locker room.

HENRY

That's it? Meh. Kind of cliché if you sit down and think about it. Not impressed.

LARRY

Yeah, that's like saying I haven't fucked a cheerleader in the locker room.

JEFF

He did it during a game, dude.

Jimmy misses a shot. He gets his own rebound and dunks over an unsuspecting teammate.

LARRY

I'm so not intimidated by this guy.

HENRY

Totally.

BUZZER RINGS.

INT. ROSEVILLE GYM - LATER

The Blue Team stands at their bench. The Red Team sits ready and waiting for tip-off.

LARRY

You really set up music and everything?

HENRY

Gotta get pumped. And it'll win the crowd over.

PAUL

What crowd?

JEFF

Stephen, go check what's wrong with it.

Stephen runs off.

PAUL

Probably stolen.

LARRY

No way.

Stephen runs back.

STEPHEN

It's gone.

HENRY

Goddamnit!

LARRY

Fuck it. Let's huddle up.

Blue Team huddles up.

The REFEREE (40s), a man who takes his lack of sports glory out on teenagers, and if he had a wife she would've left him a very long time ago, stands at mid-court.

REFEREE

Turn that fuckin' music off!

PARKS

There's no music on, sir.

REFEREE

Whaddya mean?

STEPHEN

He means you're insane, sir.

The Referee waves them off and sits down at center court, drinking from his flask.

LARRY

Okay, so um, Jeff, you're clearly the best player so whatcha thinkin'?

JEFF

Alright. Let's start with me, obviously, Henry, Stephen, Larry and Paul.

PARKS

What about me?

PAUL

You're on the bench because you can't count.

JEFF

Cool it. Let's..I dunno,bring it in.

They stacks hands.

LARRY

OK, um. Don't worry. It's totally understandable to be afraid right now and it's unlikely we'll suffer any permanent injuries.

The team looks at one another and settle for the speech.

They break huddle and take their positions on the court for tip-off. Larry lines up with Jimmy for the tip.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Good luck.

JIMMY

Lock your windows. Close your doors.

REFEREE

Babies, let's give it a rest and play the stupid game, alright? Terrific.

Jimmy effortlessly wins the tip, and gets the ball back.

He dribbles around Larry, blazes by Paul, crosses-over Jeff, dribbles between Stephen's legs, and jumps from the free-throw line.

An unsuspecting Henry stands in the paint. He turns around and sees Jimmy in the air, but it's too late.

JIMMY

Comin' down!

Jimmy executes a monstrous two-handed jam that sends Henry flying into the wall.

The Red Team runs over and praises Jimmy with chest-bumps and high-fives.

Larry helps Henry up.

Jeff calls for a timeout.

JEFF

Parks. Come on.

Larry helps Henry onto the bench.

HENRY

I think I need to go to the hospital.

LARRY
Really? You need the wahbulance?

HENRY
My whole body's a contusion.

Larry sees something under the bench. He bends down.

LARRY
Cheer up.

Larry rises, holding an iPod.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Look what I found.

Larry tosses it up. Henry barely catches it.

HENRY
This isn't mine.

Larry jogs back onto the court. Henry observes the iPod.

LARRY
Alright, lucky shot guys. Lucky
shot.

Jeff takes the ball up the court. Before he can cross midcourt, he passes to Parks.

Parks pumps-fakes, but it's stolen and the Red Team scores with ease on a fast break.

JEFF
I don't think the fake's gonna work
back here, dude.

Parks passes it in to Jeff. Red Team traps him.

JEFF (CONT'D)
Ball help!

Stephen rushes back court. Jeff lobs it to him.

Stephen dribbles once and stops, travels, then double-dribbles. The whistle blows, and the Red Team can't control their laughter.

LARRY
Stephen, that's traveling.

STEPHEN
But I bounced the ball.

The ball's inbounded to Jimmy in the paint and posts up Paul.

PAUL

Can't come in here. This is my house, son. My house.

Jimmy fakes left and Paul bites. He gets an elbow to his chest. He gasps for air.

PAUL (CONT'D)

Oh, so we're droppin'...droppin' 'bows now, huh?

Jimmy finishes toying with Paul with a spin-move and a thunderous dunk.

LARRY

Paul, switch. I got 'em.

PAUL

No take-backs.

Jimmy gets the ball down in the post. Larry tries to guard him as he sweats and pants. Jimmy keeps backing in. Now Larry leans into Jimmy, holding onto him for support.

LARRY

Dude, come on...Just...slow down.

Jimmy hooks the ball in, drawing the foul as Larry collapses to the ground.

Jeff walks over to help Larry up.

JEFF

Larry.

LARRY

Is it over?

JEFF

Dude, we're only like two minutes into the game.

REFEREE

Yeah, so get your swamp-ass off my paint. We're shootin' free-throws here.

INT. ROSEVILLE LOCKER ROOM - LATER

The Blue Team sits around in pain, nursing injuries.

Larry finishes a cigarette.

LARRY

So what could we do differently?
Maybe some minor tweaks for next
time.

Henry vomits into a trash can.

PAUL

Getting the ball across half-court
sounds reasonable.

Henry lies down and closes his eyes.

LARRY

I think we let that one get away
from us.

PAUL

I think we need, like, plays and
stuff. A little organization. I
think the key is to feed me the
rock, unless I'm like triple
teamed, maybe.

STEPHEN

Doesn't look like they've got
plays.

JEFF

They don't need 'em.

PARKS

Hey, Larry, your dad was good,
right?

LARRY

You mean he hasn't told you?

JEFF

The man was a highlight reel. My
dad told me he was like white
Scottie Pippen.

PAUL

Fade and all?

PARKS

Think you could ask him to coach
us? I suggest we adopt Duke's style
of play so when I walk on-

LARRY

I, uh, I thought Jeff was player coach. Y'know, like Bill Russell.

STEPHEN

No. I don't.

LARRY

Jeff, come on, man. You don't want a coach coming in here. Shit, you quit St. James because of Cooper.

JEFF

Dude, I'm a teenager. I fuckin' hate authority. I can't help it. But your dad's more of like a role model. Positive shit. Words of advice and what not. Coach Cooper should just be tarred and feathered.

LARRY

Holy shit. I'll ask already...So other than that, what's the plan?

Larry lights a cigarette.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Now, regarding practice, I've got a pretty full plate right now, and we're gonna have to work around that because I think sacrifice is necessary if we really want to grow as a team, right?

JEFF

Just chuck this up as a loss and roll with it. Get back at it next game.

LARRY

Whaddya think, H? Henry? Henry?

Parks looks at a passed-out Henry.

PARKS

Probably dehydrated.

PAUL

Quick, gimme your water.

Paul takes some big gulps of water before handing Henry the bottle.

INT. BOWLING ALLEY - NIGHT

A bowling ball rolls down the gutter. Larry stands at the lane, watching it until it drops.

Larry walks back to sit next to Cate.

CATE

Wait. Did it? Nope still zero.

LARRY

I'm just gonna throw you down there next time. See how that works out...So what's been goin' on with you?

CATE

Oh, not much...I, um, found out I'm sick. It's just like a little, uh, don't know why I'm telling you this, it's malignant so-

LARRY

Jesus. What is it?

CATE

A tumor...I'm ok, really. Surgery's in a couple of days so it'll be fine.

LARRY

I, um, where is the uh-hospital-

CATE

Alright. I can't do it. I was lying. There. I was trying to see how concerned you'd be.

LARRY

I don't think so. You were tryin' to see if I'd ease up on ya. Let you win.

Cate shoves Larry. She gets up and grabs a bowling ball.

LARRY (CONT'D)

That's so fucked up. You are out of control.

CATE

Was I convincing?

LARRY

Was I?

Cate rolls her eyes and walks over to the lane. She winds up.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Miss!

Cate stumbles and falls as she drops the ball down in the gutter. Larry scrambles over to help her.

EXT. PIER - NIGHT

Larry and Cate lie beside each other on the pier.

CATE

There's another one.

LARRY

What kind of person lies about shooting stars?

CATE

Not me.

LARRY

Cate...this is a date, right?
It's just that I remembered I asked if you wanted to hangout and then I wasn't sure if that meant a date or-

CATE

You don't have too many notches, do you?

Larry tries to play cool. He's not very convincing.

CATE (CONT'D)

What do you think this is, Larry?

LARRY

...A date?

CATE

OK.

She inches a little bit toward Larry. Larry goes to place his arm under her neck, but puts it back.

EXT. CATE'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Larry helps Cate out the car.

LARRY

Can I uh, walk you?

CATE

Oooh. See, I'm not sure if this is
a date or not.

LARRY

It's still funny?

Larry walks Cate up her driveway.

CATE

You're so tall.

LARRY

Yeah...Makes it hard to do this.

Larry pulls Cate in and kisses her. He misses high and gets
her forehead, but quickly finds her mouth. They both stop and
look into each other's eyes.

They makeout.

They stop. Faces close, smiling.

LARRY (CONT'D)

So, you wanna do this again,
sometime?

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - LATER

Larry drives and smokes a cigarette as he sings along with
the loud music in his car.

EXT. LARRY'S DRIVEWAY - NIGHT

Dennis practices in the driveway as Larry pulls up in his
car. Larry, in street clothes, gets out of the car and
watches his dad shoot.

DENNIS

Got the new net up there for ya.

LARRY

Thanks.

DENNIS

Where you been?

LARRY

Just a-a scimmage. Little pickup
game.

DENNIS
Really? That's great. Fantastic!
Let's see how the shot's doing.

Dennis passes Larry the ball. Larry starts shooting. Dennis rebound.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
Not bad, not bad. Move around some.

Larry shoots from different spots.

LARRY
So the guys on my te-

DENNIS
Backboard.

LARRY
What?

DENNIS
Gotta use the backboard when you're
at that angle.

Larry gets back to shooting.

LARRY
Guys at my scrimmage were wondering
if-

DENNIS
Don't forget the backboard.

Dennis and Larry switch roles.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
It's higher percentage shot.

Dennis shoots and banks the ball in.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
Still got it.

Dennis shoots again.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
See. You just gotta think
sometimes, son...You were saying
something?

LARRY
Oh, um...I forgot.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Larry and his friends sit at their table and eat lunch.

LARRY

We'll get 'em next time, gentlemen.

HENRY

Dude, I'm rocking three icy hot patches right now.

JEFF

Are there patches that'll stop USS Paul from cramming all those preservatives down his throat?

PAUL

Hey, we can't all look like Harry Hamlin. That's reality.

STEPHEN

And I'm still confused about this whole traveling, dribbling deal.

PARKS

Don't give up, guys. We just gotta try hard and things'll work out.

Paul swipes Parks' sandwich, takes a bite, and heaves it as hard as he can.

HENRY

What did the ole man say?

LARRY

He, um...he can't do it.

PARKS

Can't do it?

LARRY

Can't do it.

JEFF

Besides Parks, do we have any other ideas?

The St. James starters approach Larry and his friends.

SHAWN

Heard someone got annihilated in a shitty public league game the other night.

Russell gets a low-five from Shawn.

PAUL

Why are you givin' him five? He didn't insult us. That's exactly what happened.

HENRY

Yeah, give it back to him, Russell or I'll sick Blake Dawkins on you.

RUSSELL

I can give my come back to you if you want me to...because recently I was at a party and I had a one-night stand with your unattractive ex-girlfriend.

HENRY

As poorly crafted as that was, somehow it still hurts.

LARRY

(to PAT, TAYLOR, DEVON)

And so what do you three do all day? You just shadow them, take notes?

SHAWN

Can't wait to play you fuckin' weirdos. You thought you sucked before?

LARRY

Hey! We do not suck.

Paul gives Larry a low-five.

St. James stomps off.

LARRY (CONT'D)

I forgot how tall they all were.

STEPHEN

Not a runt in the litter.

Henry gets up.

PAUL

Where ya goin'?

HENRY

I'm ending this.

INT. SCHOOL BUILDING - LATER

Henry knocks on the principal's door.

Larry, Jeff, Paul, Stephen, and Parks watch.

LARRY

Dude, why are you trying to get the principal?

HENRY

Oh, this? I'm tattling.

PAUL

How old are you?

HENRY

Every guy's got his limits. I can't keep up with this. They're all pricks, and now they're fucking my slutty, psychotic ex? I say no more!

PARKS

I don't know how the principal would regulate that.

HENRY

And I'm takin' Cooper down, too. Guy's dirty and that team just takes after him. Take out the top guy. Just like how the mob does it.

JEFF

Sure, except their just a tiny bit more mature about it.

LARRY

Leave this alone, man. As long as he keeps winning people are gonna let him be.

HENRY

Not if I get something on him. There's no way he didn't buy those players, and he's either gonna have a trail or I'm gonna catch him. The man's dumber than a second coat of paint.

The principal's door opens. It's Coach Cooper.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Coach, hi. We were just looking for-

COACH COOPER

The father's not in right now.

HENRY

Look I don't think you heard us correctly. The acoustics in this-

COACH COOPER

Oh, I might've heard some things.

HENRY

So...why are you in his office? One might think you were snooping around. Maybe trying to get something that wouldn't be in your office, hmm?

COACH COOPER

Yeah.

(holds up slips)

Detention slips.

EXT. COURTYARD - DAY

Larry, Henry, Paul, Jeff and Stephen walk around aimlessly while Parks puts litter in a garbage bag. Coach Cooper keeps an eye on them from afar.

PAUL

Well done, Henry, seriously. I was happy being deemed worthless by Cooper, but now we're all on his shit list.

HENRY

It was a moment of weakness.

STEPHEN

Where'd all this trash come from, anyway?

JEFF

I'd say coach dumped it all. I think he's trying to establish dominance.

PARKS

Guys, think you could at least hold the bag?

PAUL

You lost the bet. Own it.

LARRY

It's not my fault you thought the NBA on NBC song was called Heart of a Champion. I shouldn't be punished for that.

PARKS

But that's what the Nelly song is called.

LARRY

That awful song sampled the original Roundball Rock, ok? It's by John Tesh and it's a fucking masterpiece.

PARKS

But that's not fair.

PAUL

You could get Henry to tell on us.

HENRY

What if we make the game fair?

PAUL

Like bring 'em way, way down to our level?

HENRY

Impossible. But what if we got close?

STEPHEN

I'm not killing anyone.

HENRY

Let's try to make someone ineligible.

PAUL

Great. No more Shawn. Fantastic.

LARRY

No...Russell.

JEFF

Because he fucked Crystal.

LARRY

Wrong. If you get rid of Russell they lose that anchor in the middle, their real enforcer.

(MORE)

LARRY (CONT'D)

And then Shawn's not flexin' nuts
as much...Fucking Crystal probably
didn't help out either.

HENRY

So what do we do?

EXT. ST. JAMES PARKING LOT - DAY

Larry, Henry, Jeff, Paul, Stephen and Parks relax in their
lawn chairs and observe Russell hand over his bookbag to two
cops. The cops discover a substantial amount of weed. Russell
is dumbfounded.

LARRY

Kwame Brown.

PAUL

How'd you manage that?

Larry lights a cigarette.

LARRY

Since he's in PE most of the day
his bookbag's just out in the open.

A crowd of curious students grows and watches Russell get
escorted by the two cops.

STEPHEN

Nah-nah-nah-nah...Nah-nah-nah-
nah...Hey-hey-hey. Goodbye...Nah-
nah-nah-nah...

The guys start to join in.

INT. ROSEVILLE GYM - NIGHT

'90s dance music plays while both Blue and Red teams warm up.
The few people in attendance dance along.

HENRY

Told ya I'd win the crowd over.

LARRY

I think they're just tweaking.

Paul repeatedly blocks Parks' shot.

HENRY

Hey, this music's bad-the-fuck-ass.
Wanna know something else?

(MORE)

HENRY (CONT'D)

Not my iPod. It's Crystal's. It's the one you found.

Stephen's shot sails backwards. He runs after it.

LARRY

(looks at the stands)
So is she...watching you?

HENRY

Most definitely. I kinda dig it. Not knowin' when she'll pounce.

LARRY

So you just walk around all day rocking a fear halvesie? What the hell is that?

HENRY

It's pretty goddamn romantic is what it is.

LARRY

You two remind me of that cute little couple um, wait, who did Sid Vicious kill?

Stephen tries to drive in for a layup, but Jeff swipes the ball from him.

HENRY

I don't need critique from a rookie, Just sayin'.

LARRY

Rookie? I'll have you know it's been a rich courtship. Flawless.

HENRY

Did she halfheartedly accept your full advances?

LARRY

A gentleman nev-

HENRY

So no. Listen, you need to get in and out with Cate asap. I don't mean rape the young lady, but the longer this drags out-

LARRY

For your information, we've made some serious progress.

HENRY

Like what? Wait. How am I trapped
in this asshole dialogue?

LARRY

She stopped calling me "dude."

HENRY

I think that's the title of a
romance novel, actually.

LARRY

I think, I dunno. Cate, she's
special.

HENRY

I get it, buddy, I really do. It's
just that I'd rather run suicides
than take this little chat any
further.

BUZZER RINGS.

Paul kicks Parks' ball. It thumps the head of a Red Team
player. Paul points at Parks with both fingers.

REFEREE

Alright babies, let's hurry this
up. Silver Spoons isn't gonna watch
itself.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

Henry steals the ball from a guard. He breaks and stops at
the three point line and shoots, but the guard leaps from
behind Henry and snatches the ball from his hands.

Parks air balls a mid-range jumper. The Red Team breaks and
misses. Jeff gets the rebound and flings it down court to
Paul, all alone. He lays the ball in narrowly escaping a
block.

Jeff, in isolation, crosses-over a guard and drives through
the crowded paint and finishes with a graceful layup.

Larry gets an open look and nails a three.

Jimmy sets a monster pick on Parks, rolls, and lays the ball
in.

Stephen gets an offensive rebound. He tries the put back, but
gets blocked. It's clearly an up & down call, but he tries
again.

Jimmy posts up on Larry. He passes the ball in between Larry's legs, gets the pass back and makes a nice fade-away.

BUZZER RINGS.

END SERIES

INT. ROSEVILLE GYM - NIGHT

Both Red and Blue teams are huddled up.

JEFF

Look, guys, it's been a defensive struggle, but we're still in this.

Larry looks over and sees the point guard for the Red Team has incredibly red eyes. He's stoned out of his mind; they all are.

JEFF (CONT'D)

They're up and clock's on their side, so it's pretty cut and dry. Quick foul and try to win the free throw battle.

LARRY

Or...you two are gonna trap, ok, but do not foul him.

HENRY

That makes zero fucking sense.

PAUL

Yeah, we could actually win this.

LARRY

The guy's been turning the ball over all night, correct? We trap him, but don't foul. We'll get the ball back....trust me.

Buzzer rings.

JEFF

Let's get it.

Players take their positions.

The point guard gets the ball. Henry and Jeff trap him.

Larry runs over and shows his opens hands at the trapped guard, signaling he's open.

The guard passes to Larry. Larry passes to Jeff.

Clock's winding down.

Jeff pulls up and shoots.

Jimmy tips the ball, and it sails high.

The ball bounces onto the court and back up into the basket.

BUZZER RINGS.

The Red Team looks at one another confused.

The Blue Team celebrates like they've won the final four.

Paul jumps onto the first row flaunting the front of his jersey to the few people who stayed for the whole game.

INT. LARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Larry sleeps. His phone rings. He answers.

LARRY

Cate?

EXT. HOUSE PARTY - CONTINUOUS

Cate, on speaker phone, stands drunk outside of a party that's got death metal on full blast.

CATE

You know it, bitch.

INTERCUT LARRY AND CATE

LARRY

What's up?

CATE

Ugh. I'm at this stupid party. So lame! What're you doin'? What're you gettin' into tonight?

LARRY

Sleep. I had a game, that you weren't at I might add.

CATE

Come hang out with me.

LARRY
So are you like bored or-

CATE
Anywhere else. I'm game for
whatever. I just can't...I don't
want to be here. So whaddya
say?...Larry?

Larry dozes off.

CATE (CONT'D)
Larry! It'll be really fun.

LARRY
Are you drunk?

END INTERCUT

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Larry drives and Cate rides shotgun, drinking.

CATE
There's three things you need to
know about me, Larry.

LARRY
That's it? Just three?

CATE
Uh-huh. Becky Hendrix is a slut, I
hate drama, and I look damn good
right now.

LARRY
Is she a cheerleader at Roseville?

CATE
Real talk: I'll go to your next
game. Want me to bring some people?

LARRY
Please don't. Not really trying to
advertise how horrible we are.

CATE
Umm, that's ruined. Word is
officially out on you dudes.
Someone even said your team's gonna
play the varsity.

LARRY
Damn right we are.

Cate laughs while drinking and some gets in her nose.

LARRY (CONT'D)
What?

CATE
This drink hurts my nose.

Cate tries to stop laughing.

LARRY
Little support would be nice.

CATE
Why would you want to play them?

LARRY
Why not?

Cate shakes her head smiling.

CATE
I'm impressed. Not wet, but
impressed...Sometimes you can be
real silly, Larry...think I'm gonna
keep you around.

She looks over Larry.

LARRY
Oh. Um, then...I don't really know
what to add to that or if I should
change the subject, and now my
minds stalled so-

CATE
What do you want do tonight?

LARRY
A-ha, an assist. Let's see. You
said fun...Maybe you could start by
clearing up some of that tab of
yours? We are in a car, so might as
well, right?...I'm sorry. That's
was in very inappropriate and immat-

Cate unbuckles and leans in. She and Larry hold a long kiss.

Larry stops the car in the middle of an empty road, and they
make out.

LARRY (CONT'D)
So...uh...I was thinkin'...

CATE
Just park the car somewhere else,
Larry.

INT. LARRY'S CAR - NIGHT

Cate climbs into the back seat.

Larry gawks.

Cate looks at him.

CATE
What?

LARRY
I don't know if I can even fit back
there comfortably, for sex at
least.

Cate undresses.

LARRY (CONT'D)
I can always scoot the seats up.

Larry squeezes into the back seat. He undresses.

Larry lies on top of her and they fool around. Larry stops.

CATE
What's wrong?

LARRY
I'm putting some music on. Any
preferences?

Cate shakes her head no.

Larry gets up and reaches over and turns on his iPod.

He sits back down in the back and tries to put a condom on.

He tries again.

Cate does it for him and leans back.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Hey, do you mind, um bein' on top.
I got like a phobia of crushing
you.

CATE
That's bullshit. You just want me
to do all the work.

LARRY
I promise I'll help fuck.

Cate climbs on top of Larry, and helps him adjust.

Larry starts off too hard.

Cate slows him down and they struggle to find a rhythm.

Larry stops.

Cate slaps him.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Ow!

CATE
Hey!

Cate slaps him again.

CATE (CONT'D)
Don't come yet. What's wrong with
you?

LARRY
Alright, alright. I'm sorry.

They both start back up, thrusting at different paces.

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Larry drives while Cate sleeps and snores.

He puts a cigarette in his mouth backwards and lights it. He
tastes his mistake and tosses it out the window.

INT. KITCHEN - NIGHT

Larry opens the fridge. He pulls out a water and shuts the
door.

The lights come on in the dining room, revealing Dennis and
Amanda seated at the table.

Larry jumps back in fright.

LARRY

Jesus!

AMANDA

Lawrence.

LARRY

The hell are you two doing sitting around with the lights off?

DENNIS

We wanted to talk to you.

LARRY

You have a cell phone. How long have you've been...y'know what, I don't wanna know. Won't make it less creepy.

AMANDA

Son, why didn't you tell us?

LARRY

What? I told you I was going out. I know it's late. I'm sorry.

DENNIS

The basketball. Your mom ran into Adam Parks's mom and she couldn't stop talking about it.

AMANDA

And further more, we think it's rude and irresponsible to not participate in a carpool, especially during these trying economic times.

LARRY

Basketball? Basketball and carpool?

AMANDA

Why didn't you tell us, honey? You don't want us to come see you?

LARRY

It's just...

DENNIS

Whaddya play? The three? Four?

AMANDA

Do you have enough socks?

DENNIS
You running a zone or man?

LARRY
Didn't want you guys...

AMANDA
Are you wearing those protective shorts?

DENNIS
Remember to use the backboard.

LARRY
This! This right here is why, alright. Holy shit. Sometimes I can't breathe around here.

AMANDA
I'm gonna buy him some protective shorts.

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Larry drives and Cate rides shotgun. Larry reaches for a cigarette. He puts it back in the box.

CATE
No, you can smoke. I don't mind.

Larry lights up his cigarette.

Larry scrolls his iPod up and down until he finds the right song.

LARRY
So, the other night, that was pretty fun.

CATE
What was?

LARRY
The...sex. It was...sexy, right?

CATE
Oh yeah, yeah. It was good.

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Larry pulls up to Cate's school and puts it in park.

LARRY

Cate.

Cate casually turns to look out her window.

CATE

What's up?

She closes her eyes.

LARRY

You wanna...you wanna come to my
game tonight?

Eyes open. She turns back to him, playing it cool.

CATE

OK. Just give me a call later.

LARRY

You got it.

Larry slowly leans in for a kiss. Cate kisses him on the
cheek.

CATE

The smoke.

LARRY

Woops. Sorry.

Cate opens the door.

LARRY (CONT'D)

I can give you a ride. Maybe we can
work out your tab.

Cate looks back.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Y'know the...never mind.

INT. ST. JAMES WEIGHT ROOM - DAY

Larry sits at a calf workout machine. He gets his reps in
with the minimum weight. Henry stands under a pull-up bar.

HENRY

Gimme some deets, you glowing
bastard, you.

LARRY

She's been scooped like ice cream.

HENRY

Spill it, come on. This is like the highlight of my day. Well, I did have chocolate milk this morning, but I'm sure this'll be decent.

LARRY

OK. So we're in my car...

HENRY

You get roadhead?

LARRY

No.

HENRY

You give her roadhead?

LARRY

So we park and...

HENRY

Whatcha do? Cowgirl? Doggystyle? Gas pump?

LARRY

The hell's a gas pump?

HENRY

Y'know, like when you got it in her ass and...you go pee...You get it? You understand it, right?

LARRY

Thanks. That's locked in my brain forever. I probably lost one of my few decent childhood memories for that.

Larry stops working out.

HENRY

Did you do the wheelbarrow?

LARRY

We were in my car! Where do you get all this shit?

Henry does a pull-up.

HENRY

Internet.

Henry tries to do a second pull-up.

LARRY

I'm surprised your computer hasn't gotten up and raped you in the middle of the night. That's all that thing probably knows.

Henry gives up and drops.

INT. ST. JAMES GYM - DAY

The entire school is in assembly.

Coach Cooper and the varsity squad stand at half-court.

Larry, Henry, Jeff, Paul, Stephen and Parks sit up high in the last row.

PAUL

I fuckin' love me some wall seats.

JEFF

Larry. Practice later today?

LARRY

Ooo. It's tempting. I love suicides, but I think I'm gonna be making fuck with Cate, so...

HENRY

Not like we have to crank it up anyway. They aren't what they used to be.

COACH COOPER

And so let's welcome our newest player, uh student, to St. James...Blake Dawkins.

Applause fills the gym as Blake enters and joins his new teammates on the court.

HENRY

God-fucking-damnit!

Everyone turns their heads.

COACH COOPER

I'm glad to see we're all so, so enthused about next season.

Coach Cooper focuses in on Henry.

COACH COOPER (CONT'D)

And I look forward to every season
after. Thanks, guys. Alright, let's
hit the books. Have a blessed day.

The student body clears out.

Henry stays, still staring down Coach Cooper.

Coach Cooper makes an "eyes on you" gesture.

Henry makes a "binoculars" gesture.

Coach Cooper makes a "telescope" gesture, and walks away the
victor.

INT. LARRY'S ROOM - NIGHT

Larry dials Cate. Answering machine.

LARRY

(into phone)

Hey, it's me, I mean Larry. Don't
think we're at "it's me" yet. I'm
not saying I don't want, I
mean...ok. I'm gonna leave in like
five minutes. Gimme a call if you
still need a lift....On second
thought, I can wait hang around like
ten or twenty minutes. OK, so-
uh...yeah, just drop me a line.

Larry hangs up his phone.

He sits down in his chair and waits.

INT. MISS PARKS' CAR (MOVING) - NIGHT

Henry sits in back seat. MISS PARKS (40s), a very single,
very supportive mother, drives while her son rides shotgun.

MISS PARKS

Are you boys ready for tonight?

HENRY

I was born ready, ma'am.

PARKS

We're on a winning streak.

HENRY

It's one game.

MISS PARKS

Just remember winning isn't the most important thing. It's doing your best with a smile in your heart.

PARKS

Boy are you right about that, but I would like to have a winning record under my belt when I apply for Duke. It can only help.

HENRY

You really do think you're gonna play at Duke.

PARKS

Why not?

HENRY

I may be reaching here, but hear me out, what about all the cuts? Don't you think that's kind of a red flag? I'll save the grades for later discussion.

PARKS

Michael Jordan didn't make the cut the first time he tried out. Isn't that right, mom?

MISS PARKS

That's right, sweetie. You can do anything you put your mind to.

HENRY

Pretty sure he made the next cut.

INT. ROSEVILLE GYM - NIGHT

Attendance has expanded with some Blue Team fans, and the St. James varsity squad.

Blue and Red Teams go through warm-ups.

Jimmy and Larry stretch at half-court.

SHAWN

La-ry! La-ry! Get that ass in gear! Back in the drills, and show some hustle!

JIMMY

Hey, man. What's this nigga's deal?
Your boy needs to chill, count to
ten, somethin'.

LARRY

He's not my boy...We've got a game
coming up against them.

JIMMY

So he's fuckin' with y'all? That
Bobby Hurley lookin' muthafucka's
been fuckin' with y'all?

SHAWN

Nerd!

LARRY

Yep.

JIMMY

Dawg, I don't think a game's gonna
fix that. Personally, I would've
knocked his ass out, long before
dude started commentin' on ma ass
and shit. Guy can't be walkin'
around doin' shit like that. A
nigga gotta be civil and what not.

SHAWN

Nerd!

LARRY

He might be your problem after we
beat you tonight. I'm just warning
you.

JIMMY

Oh, that's what's up?

LARRY

That's what's up.

Jimmy jogs back to warm-ups.

HENRY

Dude. We're you just talkin' to
Jimmy Banks? You've got like
neutral street cred now.

Larry sees Cate walk in and find a seat.

BUZZER RINGS.

SERIES OF SHOTS:

A Red Team forward goes up for a dunk. Henry clings onto him while he finishes.

Jeff steals the ball and leads the fast break. He goes up and drops a flashy behind-the-back dime to a trailing Paul who lays it in.

Parks gets burned bad by a killer crossover. The shooting guard drains a pretty mid-range jumper.

The Red Team point guard drives the paint and lobs the ball up for Jimmy, who throws down a monster two-handed jam.

Jeff pulls off another smooth no-look pass to Larry from downtown. He shoots. Brick.

Paul boxes out and gets the offensive board. He fakes, and draws the shooting foul. Larry sees Cate cheering on Paul.

The Blue Team swings the rock from Parks, to Henry, to Larry. Paul's got a clear mismatch, but Larry chucks it up and misses.

A Red Team forward takes Larry in the paint. Larry gets burned, and the forward tries a hook, but Paul blocks him.

Jeff dribbles around the perimeter. He passes to Larry, claps for the ball back, but Larry posts up and shoots an awkward fade-away. The ball gets rejected into the stands.

Jimmy gets the ball in the post, Henry sneaks from behind and tips the ball out. He and Jimmy dive to the floor and cling to the ball. Whistle blows. Referee calls for a jump-ball.

INT. ROSEVILLE LOCKER ROOM - NIGHT

Jeff stands facing the Blue Team. He looks at Larry.

Larry lights up a cigarette.

LARRY

What?

JEFF

I-uh...I think I gotta bench you.

LARRY

You're joking.

JEFF

You've got tunnel vision out there,
man.

LARRY

I'm streaky, that's all.

HENRY

No, no, no. Ray Allen is streaky,
and awesome. You just miss.

LARRY

What, you're gonna put in Parks?
Why not a headless chicken?

JEFF

I'm sorry, man, but you're not
feeding it down low.

LARRY

Is dead calories over here really
carrying our team? That's the
strategy?

STEPHEN

Hey! Stop bein' a dick.

LARRY

Look, I need my stats, just for
tonight. Please?

HENRY

So five, three and one. He's right,
guys. We can't win without those
numbers.

LARRY

Oh, everybody's an all-star now.

INT. ROSEVILLE PUBLIC GYM - NIGHT

Jimmy scores a three pointer with Stephen fouling him. Jeff
calls timeout.

The Blue Team huddles up, Larry remains seated.

LARRY

Told ya it wouldn't work.

PARKS

But we're only down by three.

Larry looks at the scoreboard. Twelve seconds left.

LARRY
Thanks, Parks.

Jeff looks over at Larry.

JEFF
Dude. You're in.

LARRY
Looks like someone needs me after
all.

HENRY
Stephen fouled out.

BUZZER RINGS.

Teams lineup for Jimmy's free-throw.

The ball rims out and both Larry and Paul go up for the rebound.

They both come down with the ball and fight over it, tugging back and forth until they take it to the ground

PARKS
Same team! Same team!

BUZZER RINGS.

Larry hears Cate let out one big laugh.

EXT. ROSEVILLE GYM - NIGHT

Larry smokes weed with Jimmy.

JIMMY
I'm. So. Nice with it. This pretty
motherfucker got shit done tonight.

Larry watches Cate chatting it up with Paul.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
This is the same shit my boy got
from you, huh?

LARRY
Huh? Oh, yeah, but it's not mine. I
got it from Henry.

JIMMY
Moustache?

LARRY

Bingo.

Jimmy sees Cate.

JIMMY

Damn. So is this the line?

LARRY

For what?

JIMMY

Damn. If I wasn't such a monogamous nigga, I'd be on top of that.

Cate walks up to Larry and Jimmy.

CATE

Nice job out there, kid.

LARRY

Wasn't my night. You know Paul?

CATE

Oh, no. I was just wondering if he could fist me since he's so much better than you.

Jimmy laughs.

LARRY

Umm, no he's not.

CATE

Well, whosever hand's jammed up my sliz's gonna have the final say.

JIMMY

Baby girl!

LARRY

Cate, this is Jimmy.

They shake hands.

JIMMY

Oh, you comin' to my place. We all partyin' tonight...Was you a cheerleader at Roseville ever?

CATE

No, but I'm friends with some.

JIMMY
Yeah...I think I've seen you
'round.

Larry's jaw drops.

JIMMY (CONT'D)
Whatever, whatever. See y'all in a
minute.

Jimmy walks away.

CATE
Can you take me?

LARRY
Yeah, yeah.

They start walking.

LARRY (CONT'D)
So-uh. How'd you get here? I-uh
didn't get a response from you.

CATE
A friend dropped me off.

INT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

The Blue Team and Red Team get crazy with other partygoers. There's drinking games, card games, dice, dirty dancing, and plenty of weed goes around.

Everybody's having an awesome time, except Larry. He's too busy keeping an eye on Cate from the back porch.

Jimmy, with a honey for each arm, sits down with the rest of the Blue Team, who've gained the company of some BBW's, as blunts are passed around. Sitting room is at capacity in the cloudy living room.

JIMMY
Look y'all ain't all that good. But
what y'all gotta start doin' is let
yo nuts hang, ya feel me? So what
you do-

STEPHEN
You're telling us to free-ball it
out there?

Jeff passes out onto one of the big girl's lap while she socializes. She uncrosses her legs and his mug plops right onto her crotch. She doesn't skip a beat.

HANS

Real mature, Stephen.

JIMMY

Fab Five said that shit before every game. They'd get in the huddle and rally cry, gettin' hype as fuck. That's just the attitude y'all gotta have, man. Give the people that swagga so delicious.

Parks takes a big hit from a blunt.

PARKS

That's what's up.

The whole room cracks up, except Jeff, who's still lights out on a strange woman's crotch.

EXT. JIMMY'S HOUSE - NIGHT

Larry and Henry drink together on the back porch. Larry keeps peeking around for Cate.

HENRY

Dude, what's your deal? You've been off all night.

Larry watches Cate drink and socialize with the Red Team inside.

LARRY

That guy. Now who the fuck is that guy?

Henry tries to slap Larry, but misses.

LARRY (CONT'D)

The hell's that for?

HENRY

I thought maybe I could get your mind right by striking you in the face.

Larry tries to slap Henry and misses.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Hey, hey, hey. You fucked her, right? That was fun, remember? You keep this shit up no girl's gonna want to fuck you.

LARRY

You know what? I'm not gonna take relationship advice from some deviant.

HENRY

Deviant?

LARRY

You heard me.

HENRY

Where?

Larry lights a cigarette.

LARRY

The bottom line is Cate's my girlfriend now, and I don't want to mess this up.

HENRY

You sure about that?

LARRY

I...I think so.

HENRY

And that you're not a spare?

LARRY

A spare? Is that like a rebound?

HENRY

Nope. This just flat out sucks. She's avoiding labels because that would confine her to a sexual living space. This way, she can have you around for the rest of her life, just in case she's ever in a crisis. Like, when you buy new clothes, you're like those extra buttons no one gives a shit about.

Larry blows smoke in Henry's face, then stomps off.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Where ya going?

LARRY

Home.

HENRY

And Cate?

LARRY

She knows how to get a ride.

INT. ST. JAMES GYM - DAY

Larry and Henry practice shooting.

HENRY

You wanna ride with me and Parks to
the big game? Carpool?

Henry bounce passes to Larry.

Larry drains a shot.

HENRY (CONT'D)

His mom's kinda sexy. Not much of a
mug on her, but I could get past
that.

Shawn picks up the ball and chest passes it to Larry.

SHAWN

How 'bout you quit playing pretend
and make it with a hand in your
face.

Shawn and Blake step up to Larry.

LARRY

That's OK, friend. Thanks for
passin' the ball back though.

HENRY

Gold star for you, dude.

SHAWN

Tell ya what, you make it, we'll
forfeit. Spare your loser friends
from humiliation.

HENRY

Don't you have someone else to
embarrass? It's a big school I
don't think you've made the rounds
yet.

Larry checks the ball to Shawn. Shawn checks back.

Shawn gets low and slaps the court with both hands, then assumes the Duke defensive stance: one hand in Larry's face, the other extended to block the drive.

Larry pivots left, right, then left again.

Larry stares down Shawn.

SHAWN

Blake, check it out. See. I told ya
he'd be scared shitless.

Larry pump-fakes. Shawn doesn't bite.

Larry goes to dribble, but Shawn rakes Larry's face, poking him in the eye.

Larry trips and falls. Shawn steals the ball.

Shawn nails a jump shot.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Get beat! Boom, bitch!

BLAKE

Daaaamn! Shawn, show me that move.
You know, that move you just did to
beat this dork with.

Shawn and Blake jog off laughing.

Larry sits up holding his eye and they watch Shawn pick on other classmates.

HENRY

You alright?

LARRY

It's not that bad, is it?

Larry shows Henry. It's that bad.

HENRY

Is that blood?

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Larry drives and Cate rides shotgun.

Larry scrolls his iPod. Up and down, quicker and quicker.

CATE

You should get an eye patch.

Larry gives up and shuts off the volume.

CATE (CONT'D)

I still don't know why you want to play them.

LARRY

It's a respect thing.

CATE

It's a sandbox thing is what it is. You really think that moron's capable of respecting you? Would you even want it?

LARRY

I'm fine. Don't worry 'bout it.

CATE

Alright, but don't go changing on me after all this pissing contest has washed over. That's all.

LARRY

Oh, so you like me just like this, huh?

CATE

Um, yeah, well, not at the moment. You're acting like a cyclops who didn't get his coffee.

Larry shakes his head.

CATE (CONT'D)

Why'd you split so soon the other night?

LARRY

I was ready to go.

CATE

Could've told me.

LARRY

For a lift?

CATE

Yeah, I got stuck talking with two lamesters. It got boring real quick.

INT. LARRY'S CAR - DAY

Larry parks the car outside of Cate's house.

CATE
I'll see ya later.

Cate kisses Larry on the cheek and reaches for the door.

CATE (CONT'D)
Thanks.

LARRY
Am I spare?

Cate looks back at Larry.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Cate, what are we?

CATE
Excuse me?

LARRY
What are we, me and you?

Cate sinks back down onto her seat.

LARRY (CONT'D)
I'm sorry, but this has been
fucking with me and-

CATE
God, Larry, I don't know.

LARRY
I don't either and I just need
something. Anything.

Cate considers her words.

CATE
I think we're really good friends.

LARRY
Aw no. No, no, no. You broke up
with Kyle and we've known each
other for a long time.

CATE
Uh-huh.

LARRY

And things have been pretty good.
We've got a real connection here.
You know we do.

CATE

Actually, I-um...I don't, I don't
believe we do.

LARRY

How could you think that? I
mean...we, we've had sex. That's
gotta count for something, right?

CATE

I hate to break it to ya, Larry,
but I've fucked a lot of my
friends.

LARRY

Didn't need to hear that.

CATE

And I didn't want to have sex with
you, at first, because it would
just makes things weird.

LARRY

Thanks.

CATE

But I was drunk, very drunk, and
horny.

LARRY

Oh, don't be too eloquent about it.

CATE

What the fuck am I supposed to say
then?

LARRY

I dunno, anything else would've
worked.

CATE

Dude, just-

LARRY

Dude?

CATE

Just stop. Just shut up right now,
and we can just forget about this.

LARRY
Can't do it.

CATE
Please.

LARRY
Look, what I'm getting at is I think we've always been ahead of the whole dating thing and...I love you, Cate. I've loved you for a long time...since the f-first time I saw you.

Cate cringes.

Silence.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Say something, Cate. I'm on an island here.

CATE
Oh, Larry...

Cate tries to find the right words, but chooses the leave.

She tries to open the door, but it's stuck. She jiggles the hand, then starts yanking. She looks over at Larry, but she's to afraid to ask.

Larry unlocks the door without looking at her.

Cate gets out of the car.

Larry wipes his eyes, hurting his bad one.

He watches Cate leave.

EXT. ROSEVILLE GYM - DAY

Larry sits in his lawn chair smoking a cigarette and drinking from a mixed drink in a water bottle.

Henry parks his truck and takes a seat next to Larry.

HENRY
Are you day-drinking?

LARRY
Relax. Practice isn't until...what time is it?

HENRY

Larry, why do you look as cheerful
as cervical cancer?

LARRY

Cate dumped me. No, I asked her if
she wanted to be with me and
she...she said "no", alright.

HENRY

Could've been worse.

LARRY

I told her I loved her.

HENRY

At least it didn't rain...To be
honest with you, dude, I was
shocked you got that far with her.

Larry offers him the bottle.

Henry smells it.

HENRY (CONT'D)

What's in this?

LARRY

I don't remember.

Henry dumps it out.

HENRY

It's cool if you want to sit out of
practice, dude. Probably be good
for-

Larry stands up and stretches.

LARRY

Practice? Practice? Man, we talkin'
about-

Larry vomits.

INT. ROSEVILLE GYM - DAY

With the gym all to themselves, the Blue Team practices three-
on-three.

A hungover Larry gets the ball in the corner. He fakes a pass
to Jeff and shoots a jumper that sails way off.

JEFF

Hey, drunk, pass it back or try to get it to Paul down low.

LARRY

You think he's got a better chance? It's gonna be a block party down there with Blake.

PAUL

Dude, you have one fucking eyeball.

LARRY

It doesn't matter, guys. We suck.

PARKS

But we won a game.

LARRY

Parks, you've got to be the most pathetic moron I've seen in quite some time. And that includes me lately.

JEFF

Hey! Give it a rest, pal.

LARRY

Okay, coach! Look, I was dumb to think we could change anything. Just chodes, guys. That's all we are.

The guys look around at each other.

HENRY

And what's wrong with a chode, huh? It doesn't function any differently, it ain't botherin' nobody, and if anything I'd say a chode is special, goddamnit.

Larry punts the ball then walks away.

LARRY

OK, well, I'm gonna go vomit again, and then maybe line up a shrink.

JEFF

You walkin' out on us?

LARRY

Very observant, Jeffrey.

HENRY

See you at the game, buddy. We'll
be the ones in the shitty uniforms,
y'know, you're friends.

Larry flicks off Henry.

EXT. LARRY'S DRIVEWAY - DAY

Larry shoots in the driveway.

Dennis walks into the garage holding the framed scholarships.

He stops and watches Larry.

DENNIS

You just love lifting off the wrong
foot.

LARRY

And don't forget the backboard. You
leaving that in the garage?

Dennis puts the frame aside.

DENNIS

Yep. It didn't really fit anywhere
in there.

Dennis walks out to the driveway.

He gets Larry's rebounds.

DENNIS (CONT'D)

So, uh, how's the team been doing?

LARRY

Next game's not gonna be pretty.

Larry switches with Dennis and gets his rebounds.

DENNIS

But you'll be shooting again
tomorrow, right?

LARRY

Probably. Yeah. Why?

DENNIS

I guess it can't be all that bad
then.

Dennis passes the ball to Larry.

Larry banks the shot in.

DENNIS (CONT'D)
Hey, hold up for a sec. I think
I've got something for ya.

INT. POOL - DAY

Cate's "on duty" again at an empty pool. Larry walks up to her smoking a cigarette.

LARRY
Hi.

CATE
Hey. How's the eye...or eyes?

Larry sits down next to her.

LARRY
Still there.

CATE
Still gross.

LARRY
That's true.

They both wait for the other to talk first.

LARRY (CONT'D)
So, yeah. I don't really know what to say. I guess I'm just waiting for the part where you say you still want to be friends.

CATE
That's all we were, Larry. And I'm sorry you got hurt, but I just don't feel, y'know, that way about you.

LARRY
Yeah, but Kyle? You felt that way about Kyle, that cheesedick?

CATE
Dude. I did not love Kyle. Come to think of it, I don't think I even liked him. We would just fuck. I've always liked you better than him....feel any better?

LARRY

No! Not at all! You used me. You kept me on a line for years, and you knew how I felt about you. You used me. Just say it. Gimme that at least.

Cate avoids eye contact.

CATE

Everybody's loved someone, Larry.

Larry hears a car rumbling through the parking lot.

LARRY

Who's the scholar?

CATE

That's um...

LARRY

Someone?

Larry grins and leans back in the chair.

CATE

It's one of Kyle's friends. He's my ride.

He shakes his head.

Cate gets up to leave.

CATE (CONT'D)

I'll see ya around?

Larry shrugs and keeps that grin shining.

Cate walks away.

LARRY

Really wished you had a car.

INT. MISS PARKS' CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Larry, donning sports goggles above his brow, and Henry sit in the back. Parks rides shotgun next to his mom.

Henry straps on a sparing helmet.

LARRY

Where'd you score that?

HENRY

Oh, um Mrs. Parks thought it was a good idea considering my heroic style of play.

MISS PARKS

He's so active out there. And that's Miss Parks, young man.

Henry wiggles his eye brows at Larry and wags his tongue between his v-shaped hand.

Parks looks back holding the iPod.

PARKS

This one?

Larry nudges Henry to stop. Henry looks at the iPod and gives the thumbs up.

Parks plugs it in and turns the volume to the max.

'90s GANGSTA RAP plays.

Henry goes nuts and raps along.

Larry joins in.

Parks bobs his head to the beat.

Parks's mom knows all the words.

INT. ST. JAMES GYM - DAY

The gym is PACKED with rowdy St. James students. The Red Team is also in attendance.

St. James and the Blue Team go through warm-ups.

Larry, Henry and Parks walk tall onto the court.

Henry waves his arms up and down to amp up the crowd even more.

Larry straps on his goggles.

HENRY

Could chodes do this?

Stephen jumps up in the paint and dunks.

He hangs on the rim for dear life.

The Blue Team rushes over to Stephen.

PAUL
I guess you can dunk.

LARRY
The hell, dude. You could dunk this whole time?

STEPHEN
It sure as shit looks like it.

HENRY
You never tried?

Stephen shakes his head "no".

LARRY
But everyone who likes basketball has tried!

STEPHEN
But I don't really like basketball.

JEFF
Alright show off, come back down to earth.

STEPHEN
Right away, coach.

Stephen falls down and lands awkwardly on his foot. It's a gruesome twist. He falls to the court in pain.

St. James and some of the student body laugh.

PAUL
He used to be able to dunk.

JEFF
Come on let's help him over to the bench.

LARRY
Right. Parks!

Parks helps Jeff move Stephen.

LARRY (CONT'D)
Stephen. Ball help?

Stephen nudges the ball towards Larry with his one good foot.

LARRY (CONT'D)
(to HENRY)
What? I gotta warm up. He doesn't.

Larry takes practice shots.

HENRY
So guess what I did last night.

Larry ignores him. Keeps shooting.

Larry pays him no mind.

HENRY (CONT'D)
Alright, alright I'll tell ya. We
ang-banged all over the place.
There was a struggle in the dark,
but eventually she got the upper-
hand and took over. It was
euphoric.

LARRY
Where is she?

HENRY
(pointing)
Over there.

Henry looks around.

HENRY (CONT'D)
She was...here. Let me double check
that sext she sent me.

Henry checks his phone and looks around the stands. He sees
the Red Team, but no Jimmy.

LARRY
Yeah, I don't see her either.

Henry sprints to the locker room.

INT. ST. JAMES LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Henry tip-toes through the locker room, following the sounds
of lust.

He stops when he's close.

He takes a deep breath and turns the corner.

HENRY
You little fucking...

It's Crystal, naked, sitting on Coach Cooper's face, who's also very much naked.

HENRY (CONT'D)

Chode?

Henry glances at the phone in his hand.

BUZZER RINGS.

INT. ST. JAMES GYM - LATER

Blue Team huddles up.

Henry proudly joins the huddle.

LARRY

H, what's wrong?

HENRY

Dude, Coach Cooper picked the wrong year to miss the playoffs.

JEFF

Let's just stick to the game plan, plain and simple. And Parks, you're gettin' some minutes.

PARKS

You can count on me, coach.

HENRY

Dude, don't call him coach. It's Jeff.

The gym quiets down. Everyone listens.

JEFF

But you guys named me coach.

PAUL

Yeah, but that was just more of a title than an actual job.

JEFF

Why can't he call me coach?

HENRY

Because he's your fucking peer.

LARRY

Henry, do the Fab Five thing.

HENRY

Right...Let yo nuts hang!

The Blue Team performs a complicated, choreographed clapping and dancing routine.

Blue Team breaks huddle and gets in position for the tip.

The drunken, disheveled Referee stands holding the ball. Larry and Blake wait for the tip.

BLAKE

I guess this is my first game here.
You're welcome.

The Referee takes a quick swig.

REFEREE

All your shoes tied? Y'all know the
stupid rules? Good. Here's the
shitty ball.

Ball is tossed and St. James wins the tip.

Shawn has his way on both offense and defense. There's no stopping him when he's in isolation or running through screens.

Jeff gets clocked running into Blake and Shawn waits holding the ball, looks at Jeff, and swishes a three.

SHAWN

I'm not even tryin' yet.

Blue Team tries it's best to slow the game down with set plays to Paul down low or Jeff in isolation.

Jeff sneaks a pass between the defender's legs to Paul who misses and puts his own shot back in.

PAUL

Get off me!

St. James defends with authority, jumping passing lanes and blocking shots.

BLAKE

Block party!

Their speed proves to be just too much, especially on fast breaks. Shawn leads a break and passes the ball of the backboard and Blake throws down a one hand slam.

Jeff takes the ball up. Larry calls for it. Jeff lobs it to Larry, who posts-up Shawn. Shawn plays aggressive defense, trying to swipe the ball away.

Larry dribbles, pivots, then pulls off a fade-away. Swish.

LARRY

Don't let me get in my zone.

SHAWN

Oh, alright. I've been lucky before, too.

LARRY

Don't let me get into my zone.

SHAWN

You ain't your daddy, though. Don't walk around thinkin' that.

LARRY

What did you say?

SHAWN

You heard me.

Forty seconds left in the first half. Henry knocks the ball loose and Parks recovers it. A deer in head lights. He hurries the ball down court.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Three! Two!

Parks hesitates at half court. He stumbles, carrying the ball, and lobs a shot high.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

One!

Parks falls to the floor. The ball flies out of bound with plenty of time left on the clock. St. James and the students in attendance laugh.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Nerd! Nerd!

Larry squats down in frustration, but stops when he sees Henry try to help Parks up. Parks waves him off and brushes himself up.

St. James inbound the ball and Shawn makes a three at the buzzer.

INT. ST. JAMES LOCKER ROOM - LATER

Blue Team sits around in silence, no one wants to speak first.

LARRY

Look, guys. I'm sorry I've put you through this. This was...this was just a dumb move, and and I don't know what I was thinking.

HENRY

I stole the ball from Shawn Jeffries.

JEFF

I scored on him.

PAUL

I made state champs eat my 'bows.

STEPHEN

I can dunk.

PARKS

I-uh...I started?

Larry looks around, pleased, proud.

INT. ST. JAMES GYM - DAY

The Blue Team plays very aggressive defense. Henry and Jeff guard close, scrapping for the ball every time it comes in reach.

Shawn is constantly double-teamed. He forces shots on the perimeter, and when the ball's passed down low, St. James players are met with hard fouls by Paul and Larry.

Shawn drives in and lifts off for a layup. Larry and Paul go up and both get their arms on the ball. They SLAM Shawn, holding the ball, down to the ground.

Paul wags his finger Mutombo-style at Shawn, who's seeing stars. The crowd goes CRAZY.

The Referee blows his whistle.

REFEREE

Foul!

Referee points at Paul.

LARRY

What?

REFEREE

That's your fifth fuckin' foul. Get 'em outta here.

PAUL

All ball! That was all ball!

The crowd BOOS.

Shawn calls for a TIMEOUT. Both teams gather at their benches.

JEFF

OK. What've we got here? We've got four people. Game's a blowout...Parks, you want the rock?

Players lineup for the free throws.

LARRY

Ball don't lie, Shawn. You know that ball ain't gonna lie to all these innocent people.

Shawn shoots and misses.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Ball don't lie! Ball don't fuckin' lie!

The crowd ROARS.

SHAWN

Shut up.

Shawn shoots again and misses. Larry rebounds. He hands the ball to Henry.

Shawn sees Parks laughing at him.

Shawn guards Parks.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Somethin' funny, 'tard?

PARKS

No, no, no.

SHAWN

Fuckin' bitch.

Parks runs through a screen, Shawn chases him, and Parks shoots.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Nerd!

Parks misses the shot.

Shawn snickers and St. James scores a fast break.

Jeff takes the ball back up.

LARRY

(to SHAWN)

Give it a rest, pal.

SHAWN

Just playin' some D.

Shawn covers Parks again.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Get the fuck outta my gym.

Parks, shaking, waits for his window and runs through screens. Shawn chases him, but misses a step. Parks gets a clear shot.

Shawn runs and pushes Parks down to the ground hard next to Larry.

Referee blows his whistle.

The shot goes in and the crowd CHEERS.

SHAWN (CONT'D)

Stay down, you fuckin'-

Larry PUNCHES Shawn in the face. It connects hard, knocking Shawn to the ground.

Shawn looks up in disbelief at Larry.

Shawn and the rest of St. James jumps in and starts attacking an outnumbered Blue Team.

The Referee tries to break it up, but it's too many people.

Students and the Red Team take the court and help fight St. James off.

The court is divided between St. James and everyone else in the gym behind The Blue Team.

INT. LARRY'S CAR (MOVING) - DAY

Larry, bruised up, smoking, drives through his neighborhood, and sees Cate walking down the road.

He slows down to hear Cate singing a sad song.

She stops when she notices the car pull up next to her.

LARRY

Where ya goin', Murphy? Goin' home,
goin' back to heaven?

CATE

What happened to your face?

LARRY

Oh, you like it?

CATE

Someone didn't.

LARRY

Yeah, I guess that's true...Um...So
I guess I'll see ya 'round?

CATE

Oh, OK. Yeah. Later.

Larry drives ahead.

He stops at a stop sign.

He takes a good long look back at Cate through his rearview.

EXT. NEIGHBORHOOD STREET- CONTINUOUS

Larry reverses the car back to Cate.

He over shoots her a bit and drives back towards her.

LARRY

So...you, uh, need a ride? Eh? It's
on the way.

Larry stops the car.

LARRY (CONT'D)

Come on.

CATE

Thanks.

Larry opens the door.

Cate walks over to get in.

Larry slowly rolls the car forward.

CATE (CONT'D)

Hey!

Rolls forward again.

CATE (CONT'D)

Larry!

Cate runs after the car and finally jumps in.

LARRY

Now was that you I heard singing
earlier or was that some other
angel?

CATE

I have no idea what you're talking
about.

LARRY

So when are you gonna sing for me?

CATE

...Never.

FADE OUT

VITA

Oscar Koehnemann Gorney was born in New Orleans, Louisiana on a Tuesday. He obtained a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from Louisiana State University in 2010. He also minored in Film and Italian. His Italian is a little rusty.