TOASTED CORN FLAKES

Written by

Michael McCurdy

A thesis/dissertation/research paper presented to the Faculty of
the Department of
[The School of Film and Television]
Loyola Marymount University

In partial fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree
[Master of Arts/Science/Doctorate] in Writing For the Screen

[May 4, 2022]
Student Name: Michael McCurdy

Thesis Logline: Against biblical odds, the baseball version of a stage mom and her grifting ex road trip their kids' baseball team across the midwest in the name of life, liberty, and the little league world series.
Toasted Corn Flakes

Title

A teleplay written and produced and presented to the faculty of the Writing for the Screen MFA Program in the School of Film & Television at Loyola Marymount University of Los Angeles, California

In partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

Master of Fine Arts
Writing for the Screen

By

Michael McCurdy

Student Name

Michael McCurdy

Student Signature
The following student has met all the criteria to advance to candidacy for an M.F.A. in Fine Arts with an emphasis in Writing for the Screen:

**Michael McCurdy**

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**May 3, 2022**

_Date_

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ii.
INT. BATHROOM - STALL - DAY

A disheveled middle-aged woman sits on the closed lid of a toilet seat. Her hair greased up. Clothes dirt-infested. She holds a flyer that advertises the KELLOG’S SPONSORED LITTLE LEAGUE WORLD SERIES.

This woman is MEGAN MCCLELLAN, late 30s, White, frequent watcher of tv’s The View. She crumples up the flyer and stands up.

Megan kicks open the toilet lead and GASPS.

Inside the lid, she watches two fish flop in the water. They fight for their lives... Megan drops the flyer to the ground and continues to stare. She begins to cry...

FADE TO BLACK.

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the LORD your God,” Exodus 20:8-11

DAY 1

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

Off a highway road, surrounded by fields of endless corn, the heavy midwestern sun shines down on a baseball diamond.

OUTFIELD

Three tall and athletic players sporting expensive dry fit blue jerseys bend their knees and punch their gloves. They play for the Blue Chips: Iowa’s premier little league baseball team.

The centerfielder turns around and glances at the scoreboard.

SCOREBOARD

A digital scoreboard reads BLUE CHIPS (6), SKEETERS (4).

Seated underneath the scoreboard in a folded out chair and guzzling down a juice box is DYLAN MCCLELLAN, early 40s, White, fake Oakley shades, buzz cut with faint signs of facial hair.

Leaning up against the outfield fence, blocking most of Dylan’s sight, is the HAMMER, 40s, White, ZZ-Top beard, the local youth sport guru. He inhales hot dogs and studies a notebook.
DYLAN
Do you mind? Fran’s on deck to hit.

HAMMER
You can pencil it in for a
strikeout... At best she’ll make
contact.

DYLAN
You’re an awful fan of the sport.

HAMMER
Cause I’m not a fan.

Hammer turns around and flashes his notebook.

HAMMER (CONT'D)
I’m a business man.

Dylan sighs and joins the Hammer on the fence. He squints out
at the action.

DYLAN
How much money you got on this one?

INFIELD

In a fainted yellow mustard jersey is starting Skeeter JACHAI
PERKINS, 11, Black, mouth full of old-age wisdom and braces.
He claps his hands and awaits the pitch on second base...

The Blue Chip’s pitcher, HAROLD INGERSOL, 11, tall rebel with
a mean fastball, kicks some dirt and takes a deep breath. He
turns around to his teammates and gives an assuring nod.

HOME PLATE

This Skeeter, SHERMAN REBBE, 11, one diagnosis away from a
full-time subscription of Ritalin, creeps away from home
plate.

The chain smokin’ middle aged Umpire spits out a loogie and
steps up behind the Blue Chip catcher. Mask now on.

UMPIRE
Step up to the plate, sonny-boy.
It’ll all be over soon. You won’t
feel a thing.

A thunderous roar of cheers rattle the backstop fence behind
Sherman and home plate. The Blue Chip fanbase, in their Nike
sponsored fan wear, collectively hoot and holler...

SKEETER BENCH
FATHER PAT, 30s, White, local Daddy - youth priest - Skeeter Coach, wears his jersey over his clerical coat and leans up against the metal fence of the Skeeter bench.

FATHER PAT
(cadence of a sermon)
Hang in there, Sherman. Remember, give it your all. That’s all the Lord expects of us...

Inside the dugout, SETH GARCIA, 11, Hispanic, long and lanky like an uncoordinated spider, spits a mouth full of sunflower seeds out that blanket the dugout floor.

Beside him, with her helmet on, is FRAN MCCLELLAN, White, 11, the always prepared alpha of the wolf pack.

SETH
You’re gonna wanna put that helmet back. The war’s over before it even started.

FRAN
We only need two more runs to tie. Three to win. Don’t you know how math works? We’re eleven years old for Christ Sakes...
(shakes her head)
Einstein was conversant in physics before ten.

FATHER PAT
(smiles, laughs)
I can see the apple doesn’t fall too far from the tree.

FRAN
Wrong scientist. UGH.

They watch as the Blue Chip pitcher starts his wind-up. Fran hops back to the team bench, where her brother BOBBY, 11, White, plump like a pear, sits arms crossed.

FRAN (CONT'D)
Don’t you know it’s a bad omen to sit on the bench in the heat of a game?

She yanks him up to the fence.

SETH
Don’t make us call you Robert like mama does.
HOME PLATE

The pitcher hurls the ball to home plate. Sherman sneezes, and in doing so, his body jerks closer to home plate.

POW! The ball pierces Sherman in the shoulder. Sherman falls with style to the dirt.

BLUE CHIP BENCH

The Blue Chips’ coach, NICK EASLEY, late 30s, White, Man-Child squeezing into his uniform, shows off the Blue Chips’ team bat to a group of local blonde women on the bench.

COACH EASLEY
Yeah, it’s mint condition. State of the art machinery... Like I said, you’re all welcome on the team bus next week to the World Series to further inspect this here....staff.

The women gasp and look out at the field.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
What? I’m not kidding. This is Major League certified.

Coach Easley too stands up and stares out as Sherman hobbles to first base. He watches the Skeeter bench cheer. He huffs...and puffs... And escorts the women out of the dugout.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Business before pleasure.

Coach Easley steps out of the dugout onto the edge of the field.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Wrap it up fellas we don’t want to be late to our own celebration party.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - PARKING LOT - DAY

Lines of spotless mini SUV’s cover the gravel lot. Up near the front and parked at the edge is a tiny corolla.

INT. CAR - DAY

A low hanging tree branch covers most of the windshield’s view. POP, 70s, Korean war vet with memory loss, simultaneously warm and stubborn, munches on a sandwich.
POP
Dang-nabbit.

In the backseat, Megan pokes her head out from underneath a heavy quilt.

MEGAN
What happened? Is it finally over?

Pop spits out a piece of his sandwich into a napkin. He hands it back to Megan.

POP
(shakes his head)
Bone in the fish.

Megan gags at the sight of the napkin. She tosses it out of the window and climbs into the front seat.

MEGAN
Pop, no offense, but this isn’t an ideal viewing experience.

MEGAN
(sighs)
I really thought the Skeeters had a chance.

Pop takes another bite.

POP
No you didn’t.

Megan angrily rolls down her window and sticks her head outside. She squints her eyes and looks onward at the field.

MEGAN
That’s Franny up to hit.

She bolts out of the car and hurries across the parking lot to the Skeeter bleachers...

SKEETER BLEACHERS

Smoking a cigarette behind the Skeeter bleachers is Seth’s mom LORA, 40s, attention neither here nor there.
MEGAN (CONT'D)
Lora! Lora, what’s the stinkin’ score?

Lora exhales a cloud in Megan’s face.

LORA
Not looking good.

MEGAN
That’s it?

LORA
That’s it.

MEGAN
You’re not even watching.

Megan rushes through the grass, past a set of EMPTY BLEACHERS, up to the BACKSTOP FENCE. Now, right behind Fran and home plate...

MEGAN (CONT'D)
FRANNY. It’s ME, YOUR MOM. If you swing and miss, the season is over. The summer is over. We, Skeeter Nation, believe in you.

HOME PLATE

Fran backs away from home plate and looks at her Mom through the fence.

FRAN
(for all to hear)
Shut up.

Megan sinks back to the bleachers. She slowly sits down, alone.

Fran steps up to the batter’s box. She digs her feet into the dirt until the umpire whips off his mask.

UMPIRE
Time.

Father Pat speed walks to home plate. Fran sighs, and joins him. Behind them, the Blue Chip fans cackle collectively at the dysfunction.

BLUE CHIP BENCH

Coach Easley throws his hat against the dugout bench. He turns to the field.
COACH EASLEY
It’s now past six o’ clock...
(screams)
We just missed Jimmy Buffet power
hour specials.

HOME PLATE
Away from the batter’s box, Fran kicks dirt on Father Pat’s shoe.

FRAN
Did she pay you to say that?

FATHER PAT
All she asks is that you don’t talk
back to her.

FRAN
You don’t know my Mom, Father Pat, so go buy a one-way ticket out of
our lives.

FATHER PAT
(offended)
I know her quite well, thank you
very much.
(back-tracking)
As is my duty, as a messenger of
the lord...

Fran stares at him blankly.

FATHER PAT (CONT’D)
Just go hit the ball.

FRAN
Do you get paid for that advice?

Fran steps back up to the batter’s box. She clenches the bat
with all her might. The umpire slides his mask on.

UMPIRE
Play ball.

Before the pitcher starts his windup, he turns around and
nods at his fellow players. They nod back.

BLUE CHIP BENCH

COACH EASLEY
Cut the patty-cake bullshit and end
these other-side-of-the-track scum
once and for all!
HOME PLATE

Fran’s gaze moves beyond the pitcher to the outfield fence, where she eyes Dylan: her Dad.

IN SLOW MOTION... the pitch is lofted into the air and flies toward Fran.

SKEETER BENCH

Father Pat’s eyes are closed. Bobby sits on the bench, arms still crossed. Seth’s mouth is agape, as he chokes on sunflower seeds.

INFIELD

Jachai takes off in a dead sprint to third base. Sherman remains at first. He picks a deep wedge.

SKEETER BLEACHERS

Megan sits in the fetal position. Eyes cautiously watching the field. Sucking on her thumb.

INSIDE CAR

Pop’s eyes have drifted to a sleep. He snores.

HOME PLATE

Fran sticks her tongue out in true athletic fashion and screams as she swings the bat. POW! She makes contact. The baseball soars high into the air.

She hustles to first base.

The Skeeters collectively cheer, until... SLOW MOTION STOPS.

INFIELD

The ball stops midair and falls, it never left the infield... The Blue Chip second baseman moves underneath the ball and raises his glove.

HOME PLATE

Jachai crosses home plate and scores. He looks up at the ball in terror.

INFIELD

Sherman rounds second base, Fran close behind him. She smacks his ass like a jockey slapping a horse.
FRAN
Pedal to the medal, Sherm.

BLUE CHIP BENCH
Coach Easley steps away from the dugout, laughing to himself, as he packs up his bag.

COACH EASLEY
(singing Jimmy Buffet)
Not to particular, not to precise,
I’m just a Toasted Corn Flake in paradise.

HUH! The baseball diamond collectively gasps... Easley turns around.

INFIELD
The ball sits on the dirt beside second base. The Blue Chip players toss their gloves down and walk off the field.

Sherman and Fran round third base, headed for home.

FRAN
Don’t look back, Sherm.

HOME PLATE
Jachai waves Sherman and Fran home as they score! Silence ensues... The Blue Chips continue to walk off the field.

Everyone else stands still, until, the umpire takes off his mask. He STARES DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA.

UMPIRE
By divine intervention, or complete and utter chaos, with these three runs scored, the Skeeters win and move on to the Little League World Series in Battle Creek Michigan in seven days time.

The Skeeter players make a dog pile at home plate. Megan drags Bobby out from the dugout and shoves him into the pile of Skeeters.

Coach Easley berates his players as they walk off the field. They don’t listen and continue to walk. He hurls equipment from the dugout at his players. Finally, he grabs the team bat and, like the Shining’s Jack Torrance, hunts his team.
COACH EASLEY
YOU CAN’T TAKE THIS FROM ME. THIS
WAS MY CHANCE. AND YOU SOILED IT.
SOILED IT. SOILED IT...

Even the Blue Chip parents gasp and stare in shock at
Easley’s behavior. Easley’s pace slows down. Out of breath
from relentless screaming, he collapses to the grass,
sobbing, in a pit of his own misery.

COACH EASLEY (CONT’D)
(whispers)
I will have my vengeance.

OUTFIELD

Dylan packs up his cooler of juice boxes. He pulls off his
sunglasses and smiles at the Skeeters.

Hammer kicks the outfield fence.

HAMMER
This just cost me a Sunday buffet
worth of cold hard cash...

HOME PLATE

Father Pat and Megan stand beside one another and watch the
Skeeters celebrate. Their fingers wrap around each other’s
hands.

FADE TO:

INT. TAVERN – EARLY EVENING

A storm cloud of cigarette smoke rains down on this tavern’s
interior of wood paneled walls and folding tables.

A dusty trophy sits at the center of the Skeeter’s table.
The Skeeter players sit in folding chairs and dig into their
food like wild, rabid animals.

Fran and Bobby share a seat at the head of table. They fight
for position.

At the opposite end, Father Pat sits beside Megan. Under the
table, their knees touch.

Father Pat swallows a bite of chili and stands up. He coughs.
Megan looks up, eyes beaming.
FATHER PAT
Skeeters, the Lord has spoken. Let
us offer our thanks in a moment of
silence.

The Skeeters continue to devour their food.

FATHER PAT (CONT'D)
Beautiful, amen... Now, before the
season started, I was living far
away in what we call a seminary. It
was Eden’s Garden, or what the
locals like to call... South
Dakota.

Megan forces an obnoxious chuckle.

FATHER PAT (CONT'D)
I was there so long that I... I had
forgotten what it was like to be
inside...
   (cough)
The heart of...
   (burp)
You all.

Father Pat glances down at Megan. Sweat drips from his
forehead.

FATHER PAT (CONT'D)
I guess, what I’m trying to say
is...

Father Pat turns to his chili. His stomach grumbles mightily.
The Skeeters continue to not pay any attention to him.

FATHER PAT (CONT'D)
I’m horny, I mean hungry for a
championship in Battle Creek.

Father Pat sits down, almost out of breath. Megan grabs a
napkin and dabs his forehead.

MEGAN
You’re roasting like a frozen pizza
preheated oven, Father.

FATHER PAT
Just call me Patrick, please.

MEGAN
Maybe I should go get some more
water for the table.
FATHER PAT
The chili.

MEGAN
Yes, Patrick?

FATHER PAT
The chili has a kick to it.

MEGAN
Just wait till you see the dessert options.

Megan grabs Father Pat’s hand.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Homemade cuisine.

Father Pat hyperventilates and reaches for his glass of water, but it’s empty.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I’ll get some water to cool things down.

Megan gets up and heads for the bar in the back of the tavern. Father Pat closes his eyes.

Fran now has the chair to herself. Bobby pouts, and quietly gnaws at a chicken wing.

FRAN
You can have the seat when I’m done eating.
   (smiling, mouth full)
Mom says it’s good if we can find time to practice sharing.

The Skeeters continue to clean up their plates.

JACHAI
That took some balls by the Blue Chips. Talk about organization. Mobilization. The forefathers would be proud.

SETH
Man, fuck them.

JACHAI
The Blue Chips?
SHERMAN
Pop says George Washington was part of some religious cult.

JACHAI
Well, Pop’s wrong, George Washington was an atheist.

SETH
The fuck does that mean?

FRAN
Dr. Phil said it’s thing people say when they put themselves at the center of the world.

SHERMAN
Coach Easley’s definitely an atheist.

SETH
I wanna be an atheist. Where’s the sign up sheet?

Bobby throws his chicken wing at Seth. The bone nails him right in the face. The Skeeters snicker.

BOBBY
Father Pat can hear.

The Skeeters collectively stare at Father Pat, who’s eyes remain shut.

JACHAI
Whose taking the trophy home?

The Skeeters turn to the trophy.

Meanwhile, across the table, Father Pat collapses face first into his bowl of chili.

The Skeeters remain fixated on the trophy. Bobby sees Father Pat and screams!

Megan hurries back with a fresh pitcher of water. She gasps and hurls the water onto Father Pat’s head.

Father Pat remains motionless. Face consumed by the chili.

MEGAN
(for all to hear)
Check please?
INT. HOSPITAL - HALLWAY - NIGHT

Fluorescent ceiling lights flicker an aroma of sterility. A Nurse calmly pushes a gurney down the cold tile passed the Skeeters, who all cram together on a wooden bench outside a room.

The Skeeters are in the midst of an I-Spy game.

SETH
Big Dick.

JACHAI
What’s with the specificity?

FRAN
Again, no.

SHERMAN
Uh, oh, the devil.

FRAN
No, but close. That’s Bobby. Don’t his ears look like horns?

The Skeeters snicker.

JACHAI
Have we guessed door?

SETH
There’s like a zillion doors in this hallway, Sherlock. The question is which one?

SHERMAN
How did I not think of that?

FRAN
You skipped Bobby’s turn. And no, it’s not something as elementary as door. This isn’t a Sunday stroll.

Bobby hops off the bench and steps up to the door. He rises, on his tip-toes, and looks inside through the door’s boxed window.

BOBBY
Death.

FRAN
Bingo... And without Father Pat... We need to strategize a new game plan.
SHERMAN
Is he really gone?

FRAN
We can mourn after the tournament.
Battle stations everyone. I call
for assembly tonight at the
treehouse.

Silence. The kids stare at the floor. Fran stands up and
barks at her teammates like she’s on a podium.

FRAN (CONT’D)
This is a once and lifetime
opportunity. C’mon. A quest to
victory. A road trip across
country... To Michigan.

Suddenly, Megan pokes her head out of the hospital door. She
takes a deep breath.

MEGAN
Alright, Skeeters, I bear news.

JACHAI
What’s the latest?

BOBBY
Is Father Pat going to be okay?

MEGAN
It’s all fine.

FRAN
So, he’s going to be able to coach?

SETH
Has the shit croaked or not, just
spit it out...

MEGAN
Everything’s going to work out.
Bottom line is... You all won’t
miss out on the Little League World
Series. Now, I phoned in Seth’s
Mom. She’s in the lobby to give you
all rides home.

BOBBY
Can I stay too?

Suddenly, machines BUZZ from inside the hospital room. The
BUZZING continues... Out of nowhere, nurses rush into the
scene.
The Skeeters are ushered away and exit the hallway through a series of double doors. Megan tries to fight her way back into the room.

NURSE
Are you family?

MEGAN
We’re part of the same team. The Skeeters. Twelve and under youth baseball champs for the state of Iowa.

The door shuts. Megan stands alone in the hallway. She peers through the door’s window, but with a limited sight, slips back to the bench...

She grabs a BASS PRO SHOP magazine from the nearby complimentary bin of entertainment and stares at the cover: a middle aged woman in khakis that’s caught two fish.

EXT. DYLAN’S HOUSE – NIGHT

A one story shack that sits on the outskirts of this rural Iowa town. A FOR SALE sign planted in the front yard’s grass. Parked in the driveway is a shiny, yellow as the sun, BUS.

INT. BUS – NIGHT

Dylan lays on the grimy floor, underneath a seat. Screwdriver in hand, he fixes a loose bolt. The Hammer sits comfortably in the driver’s seat. He combs through a series of pictures: Megan and Dylan, in early twenties, driving the bus together.

DYLAN
Mind handing me the flat-top?

HAMMER
Still holding onto these?

DYLAN
At this point they’re decoration. Part of the vessel’s D.N.A. like this new screw.

HAMMER
Your hair used to be something to behold. Like a Thanksgiving turkey.

He flips to another photo and sees a younger version of himself. The laughter stops.
The Hammer grows queasy staring at himself from the past, before the vast weight gain. He closes the book.

DYLAM
Turns out your real estate advice came up short.

HAMMER
Did you pitch the land as ripe for hunting ground?

DYLAM
Yeah, I did, and well... These hunters can sniff bullshit as if it were skunk’s spray.

HAMMER
Did you pitch the albino deer on the property?

DYLAM
That hasn’t been spotted in over twenty years.

HAMMER
Did you mention it?

DYLAM
The flat-top, please.

Dylan sits up. Hammer sighs and hands Dylan the screwdriver.

DYLAM (CONT'D)
I still think I’m gonna go. That house could sit on the market till Kingdom come... I gotta get out. You know?

HAMMER
Makes sense. I wouldn’t expect you to go support your own kin next week.

DYLAM
I’ll wish them luck before they take off.

HAMMER
What about Megan?

Dylan gets back to the screw. He wiggles the flat-top against the metal.
HAMMER (CONT'D)
Listen, if money’s the issue... I know our house plan didn’t pan, but, hear me out, the kettle is hot...

Hammer leans in.

HAMMER (CONT'D)
Time is of the essence. I’ve got word through contacts that money is being tossed into the pot as we speak. I’m talkin sweet, savory, sensual dough, amigo.

DYLAN
I don’t play those cards anymore.

HAMMER
You do when your ass is broke.

DYLAN
What’s the event?

HAMMER
Well about that...

DYLAN
I especially don’t do big casinos -

HAMMER
The Little League World Series.

AH! Dylan drops the screwdriver on his face...

EXT. TOWN - NIGHT - LATER

A full moon looms above the small town. The streets sleep. Gas station lights twitch. The lone stoplight sways to a breeze that gains speed.

Suddenly, a bike zooms across the street down a gravel alley. It continues forward to the edge of town.

EXT. RIVER - TREEHOUSE - NIGHT

Near the river’s shoreline, a wood splintered treehouse remains concealed by the lush tree line.

Bikes are parked at the base of the treehouse. A kid climbs up the steep ladder.
Something splashes in the river close by...

**INT. TREEHOUSE – NIGHT**

A pile of blankets and sleeping bags lay across the rough floor. A single flashlight rests on a milk crate in the space’s center.

**SHERMAN**
I told you, enough with the ghost chit-chat.

**FRAN**
BAM! The current ripped Kevin and Casey both down.

Fran stomps on the floor. She whips the flashlight around creating a strobe light effect. A noise trickles into the space...

**JACHAI**
You can’t stop a ghost story in the middle! I want to know how it ends.

Seth tosses a bunch of magazines into the air.

**SETH**
Guys, where are the pornos?

**FRAN**
Jachai had em last.

**JACHAI**
I passed them to Bobby.

**SETH**
I can’t survive another night on my mom’s copy of Reader’s Digest.

Sherman closes his ears with his hands. Suddenly, Bobby crawls into the tree house. They shine the flashlight into his face.

**SETH (CONT'D)**
Well, dip-shit, what’s the news?

**BOBBY**
The Easleys are in the nest.

**SETH**
No, the pornos. Where are they?

Fran hits Seth in the head with a magazine.
FRAN
Focus up. Bobby, continue.

BOBBY
The BAT is kept inside the home. Point of entry will have to be in the backyard. They’ve got a doggy door.

Everyone pauses for a moment and then collectively turns to Sherman.

SHERMAN
Rats...

SETH
It’s all about perspective. You’ll be like one of those guys from Saving Private Ryan that stormed the beach.

JACHAI
And died instantly.

SETH
Got a movie made out of it though, I’m just sayin.

FRAN
Then it’s settled. With Father Pat out of the picture, we need a new secret weapon. We take the mighty hammer of THOR from the Blue Chips.

JACHAI
I read from an online source that it’s the most reputable bat in the country.

SETH
Translation: Shit hits dingers.

BOBBY
(to Fran)
Why are you so quick to rule out Father Pat’s recovery? He can talk to God.

SETH
You still believe that crap?

BOBBY
It’s not Santa Clause. It’s real.
SHERMAN
(sad)
Santa’s not real?

Silence. All eyes on Sherman.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT - LATER

Bits of streetlight seep inside the hospital room. Megan rests her head on her hand. Eyes half closed. Seated on a thin wooden chair.

Suddenly, from outside, bright truck lights blind the room.

Father Pat lays asleep on the short and thin hospital bed. His feet even poke over the bed’s edge.

Megan caresses his hand. She begins to cry.

MEGAN
You son of a bitch. What we had was good, you know? We had a team. A working team. I told you to get that indigestion problem checked. Lord knows what all that bottled up gas does to the body...

Megan lets go of the hand. She stands up.

MEGAN (CONT’D)
Now, I’ve been doing some thinking. And, even if you do wake up soon, I think for your health, it’s best if you remain here. I can lead the journey to the Little League World Series. I can coach the Skeeters to victory. You even told me, forgive us father, after wild sex, that I’d make a great coach. That wasn’t just post coital bliss talking, was it?

Suddenly, after a moment of silence, the hospital door bursts open... In struts COACH EASLEY... Megan, startled, jumps back.

COACH EASLEY
Something smells rotten in here.

MEGAN
It’s a fresh scent.
COACH EASLEY
How’s the Father doing?

MEGAN
It’s going to be a difficult recovery, but he’ll make it.

COACH EASLEY
Every blind squirrel occasionally finds a nut... Has he woken up?

Megan pauses. She sits back down and holds Father Pat’s hand.

MEGAN
Just briefly. I was the only one in the room.

COACH EASLEY
He able to stomach any words?

MEGAN
In fact, yes... He had one wish. He wanted me to continue as coach of the Skeeters. Such a class, guy. Always has the team on the mind.

COACH EASLEY
Well, funny you say that...

Coach Easley pulls out a slip of paper and hands it to Megan.

MEGAN
What’s this?

COACH EASLEY
St. Peter’s Church has spoken. And because of my skillset, and perhaps my recent donations to the faith, I’ve been appointed new coach of the Skeeters and will lead the team to Michigan for the Little League World Series.

Megan rips open the certification letter. She reads the text.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
I’ll be contacting all parents and players to get our traveling itinerary squared away before next week.

Easley taps Megan’s shoulder.
COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
The kids get to keep playing. With a real chance to win. Isn’t it great?

Coach Easley struts out of the room. Megan’s mouth is agape. She rips up the certificate and yells into Father Pat’s pillow...

DAY 2

EXT. MEGAN’S HOUSE - DAY

A one story shack in town nestled near the railroad tracks. Wild grass roams the front yard. A car sits parked along the street curb.

INT. MEGAN'S HOUSE - DAY

A traffic jam of worn tennis shoes beside the front door. Like an easter egg hunt, food wrappers are scattered about.

LIVING ROOM

The TV is on. The News. Fox News. An anchor reports on the ongoing war efforts in Iraq and Afghanistan.

TV ANCHOR

If tensions continue to escalate, with no end in sight, military leaders are encouraging politicians in Washington to think about another citizen’s draft.

Behind the couch, Megan sits in the computer chair and fixates her attention on the computer screen: a travel map from Iowa to Battle Creek, Michigan.

Megan takes notes in a notepad. WE SEE the notepad’s delicate arrangement of categories: FOOD, SIGHTSEEING, ICE BREAKERS FOR TODAY’S YOUTH, IDEAS TO CONNECT BETTER WITH SON AND DAUGHTER.

Megan clicks on another internet tab. This one reads: TAKE THE SPORTS OUT OF SPORTS. WHY CHARACTER IS THE MOST USEFUL SKILLSET TO ACHIEVE VICTORY.

Unfortunately for Megan, the internet is slow... The page won’t load. She sighs...
MEGAN
(yells)
FRAN. BOBBY. Come here. We need to talk.

Nothing but the news in the background... Megan grabs the corded telephone from the wall. She dials a number and waits...RING.RING.RING...

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Hello, Saint Peters? Yes, hello
Sister Patricia this is Megan
McClellan again. Is Father Tom there?

INT. ST. PETER’S CHURCH - OFFICE - DAY

SISTER PATRICIA, 80s, back permanently hunched, sits at a tiny wooden desk. Behind her, in a gigantic desk, sits the wrinkled goof, FATHER TOM, 80s.

SPLIT SCREEN MEGAN AND FATHER TOM

SISTER PATRICIA
She wants to know if you’re here?

Father Tom waves his hands and shakes his head.

MEGAN
(gasps)
Excuse me? I drove by not too long ago and saw his vehicle parked in the church’s parking lot. Can I at least leave a message?

Father Tom sits at his desk. He closes his eyes and pretends to fall hard on his desk. He sits there. Frozen and in silence.

SISTER PATRICIA
He’s here.

MEGAN
Great. I’ll be there in a jiffy.

SISTER PATRICIA
He’s unavailable. Dead.

MEGAN
DEAD?

Father Tom sits up and shakes his head. He mouths “hang up you fool”
SISTER PATRICIA
He’s sick, Megan. Another time.

Father Tom reaches across the desk and grabs the phone.

FATHER TOM
The decision is final, Megan. The baseball team runs through a Catholic youth service program. We have the final say.

MEGAN
What if I finally come in for confession?

FATHER TOM
Let’s do it right now, over the phone. Anything you want to say about your marriage? About Dylan?

Megan hesitates. She slams the phone back against the wall.

END SPLIT SCREEN

Megan spins around in her seat as the news cuts to commercial. Face buried in her palms, she stares at an ad for real estate: A happy nuclear family of four walk into a glorious mansion. Together.

TV COMMERCIAL
It’s never too late to buy that dream house.

Megan grabs her car keys from the kitchen counter and bursts out of the front door.

EXT. COACH EASLEY’S HOUSE – ALLEY – DAY

The Skeeters’ bikes lean up against a towering picket fence. The Skeeters huddle up.

JACHAI
Just whatever you do, don’t startle the dog.

SETH
Fuck that, man, you just bark right back at it. Shit’s all territorial. In fact, give us a bark.

SHERMAN
I’m not -
SETH
Bark at me bitch.

The Skeeters wait for Sherman to produce a bark.

FRAN
Come on, help me for Christ’s sake.

The Skeeters collectively lift Sherman off of the ground and
hoist him up to the top of the fence.

SHERMAN
WAIT. WAIT. WAIT... How do I get
back over?

A pause.

FRAN
Don’t overthink it. For now... One,
two, three.

The Skeeters drop Sherman on top of the fence. He falls into
the backyard’s grass.

EXT. COACH EASLEY’S HOUSE - BACKYARD - DAY

Sherman stands up, alert. He scans his surroundings. Fresh
cut grass. A brand new swing set. A pristine, stone fire pit.

But, dog shit everywhere... Sherman lifts up his shoe and
sighs... He lays low and hustles to the doggy door. He gets
down, takes a deep breath, and crawls inside.

INT. COACH EASLEY’S HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - DAY

Marble countertops and marble floors. One massive open
concept of space that combines the living room with the
kitchen.

Sherman crawls across the floor. He eyes the German Shepherd,
RUFUS, asleep on a doggy bed up near a door. Suddenly,
Sherman hears voices coming from behind that door...

WOMAN (O.S.)
Knock it out of the park, coach.
Send me HOME.

COACH EASLEY (O.S.)
You want me to swing for contact or
for power?
WOMAN (O.S.)
You tell me, Nicholas Gerald
Easley: Coach of the Little League
World Series Champion Skeeters.

SHERMAN
(under breath)
Skeeters?

Sherman crawls closer to the bedroom door.

COACH EASLEY (O.S.)
Hey, easy-watch it. This shit’s in
mint-condition. Indiana Jones would
fight for his life to make sure the
Nazis didn’t get a weapon like
this.

Suddenly, the doorbell rings. Again. And again. Sherman
freezes. Rufus gallops to the door like a maniac.

The bedroom door opens. Nick Easley struts out in a large
robe. Underneath, glimpses of an athletic jock strap. He
holds a fifth of vodka in one hand and carries the BLUE CHIPS
BAT in the other.

He runs into a crawling Sherman. He kicks Sherman, thinking
Sherman is the dog...

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Jesus, pipe down, Rufus.

Sherman rolls along the floor in pain. He stands up. Easley
sees its actually Sherman. The two share a stand-off. A bit
of pee dribbles out of Sherman’s shorts onto the floor...

DING-DOLL the doorbell rings...

Easley, eyes bloodshot, slurring his words, takes another
swig of his vodka.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
You’re the boy who lives with his
grandparents.

SHERMAN
Yes, sir.

COACH EASLEY
You must know who I am.

SHERMAN
Yes, sir.
COACH EASLEY
The fuck are you doing in my house?

SHERMAN
Well, sir... Us Skeeters wanted to
borrow that bat of yours for the
upcoming World Series.

COACH EASLEY
Why didn’t you say so? Of course.
Let me go wash it off.

Silence. Rufus barks like a rabid dog at the door. Coach
Easley takes a swing at Rufus but purposefully misses. Rufus
quiets down...

Easly laughs and turns back to Sherman.

COACH EASLEY (CONT’D)
Take a seat. Turn the telly on.
Make yourself at home...

Sherman remains frozen.

COACH EASLEY (CONT’D)
Don’t you get it? With Father Pat
out of the picture... I’m the new
Sherif in town.

Sherman settles into the sofa. Rufus hops up on the couch
cushion beside him and stares. Teeth out. Slobber drips down
onto Sherman’s face.

EXT. DYLAN'S HOUSE - DAY

Megan’s car eases to a stop behind the bus. She hops out of
the car and approaches the front yard’s for-sale sign. Her
face turns in confusion.

She steps toward the house, until...

DYLAN
(from bus)
In here.

INT. BUS - DAY

Dylan stands on a seat, screwdriver in hand, fixin’ away at a
light on the ceiling. Megan stands at the bus’s entrance,
barely inside.
DYLAN
Go ahead and take a seat.

Megan doesn’t move. Her eyes refuse to immerse themselves into the space, the memories.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Tuned her up pretty nice if I must say so myself.

Suddenly, a screw falls from the ceiling light. A bulb slips and crashes onto the floor... Megan sighs, and grabs the trash bin to help scoop up the glass. Dylan bends down.

The two, on their knees, are close in the bus’s aisle.

MEGAN
What’s with the for-sale sign out front? And this remodel? Dyl?...

The question lingers...

DYLAN
Heard Father Pat will end up bein’ alright.

MEGAN
Yeah. He’s a fighter.

DYLAN (with edge)
He’s also a priest.

MEGAN
Fran asked specifically if you were coming to Michigan for the tournament.

DYLAN
What did you tell her?

MEGAN
I really can’t lie for you anymore.

They finish mopping up the glass. Both stand up. Dylan nods.

DYLAN
Thanks.

Megan brings the trash bin back to the bus’s entrance. She stops and turns back.
MEGAN
What are your plans for the
tournament?

DYLAN
I, uh... Would you want me to come?

MEGAN
Not really.

DYLAN
Oh.

MEGAN
I need a favor. You heard Easley’s
the coach now, right?

DYLAN
Think it’s for the best. He knows
his x’s and o’s better than anyone
in the state.

Megan cuts him off.

MEGAN
He needs to be out of the picture.

DYLAN
What? Like completely?

Dylan takes the screwdriver and pretends to stab himself in
the neck.

MEGAN
What? God, no!...

DYLAN
It was a joke.

MEGAN
Father Pat wanted me to be the
coach.

DYLAN
He said that? I thought he was
still in the coma.

MEGAN
It was a brief moment, but he was
definitely awake. Are you going to
help me or not?

Dylan ponders... He stands back up on the seat cushion and
takes another stab at the light.
DYLAN
If I help, I get to come with and we take this bus for the trip. And I drive. Look, I want to be there. This could be a breakthrough for all of us.

MEGAN
This has nothing to do with the for-sale sign out front?... Are you out of money again?...

That question lingers in the air for some time, again.

DYLAN
Meet me back here tonight at eight to take care of the Easley situation.

EXT. COACH EASLEY’S HOUSE – FRONT YARD – DAY

Bobby, Jachai, and Seth sit on the street curb. Fran paces around the three in circles.

SETH
I’m tellin ya he’s dead. Easley chopped him up. Gonna cook him in a stew.

BOBBY
Don’t say that.

JACHAI
If I had to eat Sherman... With his figure -

SETH
Lot of meat on the bone -

JACHAI
Hummus.

SETH
Are you cereal?

Fran stops.

FRAN
He’s right. Sherman’s got smooth skin. Puree him and we’d get some creamy delight.

Bobby stands up.
BOBBY
We’re not eating, Sherman.
Alright!? Jesus.

Suddenly, the front door opens. Sherman walks out. Eyes wide. Bat in hand. The door closes behind him. The Skeeters run up to him like a pack of giddy, slobbering dogs.

JACHAI
Give him the medal of honor!

Fran inspects his body.

FRAN
Not a scratch!

The team tosses the bat back and forth. Sherman clears his throat. Seth wraps his arms around him.

SETH
Toughest one on the team, right here.

SHERMAN
Easley’s our coach now...

The team stops their celebration.

SHERMAN (CONT‘D)
He let me take the bat. I didn’t fight off anyone, even Rufus the dog.

Seth eyes Sherman’s soaked shorts.

SETH
Jesus Christ, the boy pissed himself.

SHERMAN
Like I said... Easley’s taking over for Father Pat.

JACHAI
Just like that?

SHERMAN
Just like that.

Fran takes a swing with the bat in the direction of the house.

FRAN
We must stick together.
EXT. COACH EASLEY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

The full moon is out tonight. Streetlights flicker. Megan’s
car sits parked out in front of the Easley house. Its lights
off.

INT. MEGAN’S CAR - NIGHT

Megan in the driver seat and Dylan in the passenger seat.
They lean to the HAMMER in the backseat. Visibly sweating, he
squeezes a pack of ketchup into his mouth like downing a
tequila shot.

The Hammer starts to wheeze...

MEGAN
Is he alright? I asked you to take
care of this, not, not him...

HAMMER
Sorry. Got to stifle the nerves
before commencing mission. WHEW...
Starting to see the light a bit.
Hear Grandpa’s voice in my head.

Dylan turns back.

DYLAN
This isn’t life or death, just
rough house like we talked about.

Megan rolls her eyes. The Hammer pulls out a picture from his
wallet. A 3X4 of his cat. He kisses the photo and hands it to
Megan.

HAMMER
Take care of her if I fall in the
line of duty... Dyl, unlock the
door.

MEGAN
What’s her name?

HAMMER
Surf’N’Turf... Dyl, unlock the
door, please.

Hammer loads a pistol. He slides out of the car and waddles
to the Easley residence. Megan and Dylan watch through the
windshield. The air is oh, so quiet.
DYLAN
He carries a gun everywhere.
no difference, Mags.

Megan is silent. Her hands dig into the steering wheel. She
clenches her teeth together. They watch the door open and
Hammer disappear into the Easley house.

Silence...

MEGAN
It’s a cute cat.

DYLAN
I always wanted one.

MEGAN
We were dealing with two kids.

Silence...

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I think your hair’s officially
fallen out as they say.

DYLAN
I know.

MEGAN
We’re getting old.

DYLAN
I’ve been thinkin...

MEGAN
I’m going to stop you right there.

DYLAN
This might be a second chance for
me with the kids.

MEGAN
Forewarning... Fran and Bobby
aren’t the sweet, innocent babies
of before.

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - NIGHT

Father Pat lies in bed, asleep, body still engulfed by a
series of tubes. Bobby sits beside Father Pat. He holds a
bouquet of colorful flowers.
Fran sits on the floor, back leaning up against the room’s door.

FRAN
Mom said she’d be back like a hour ago to pick us up.

Bobby swipes a few hairs out of Father Pat’s eyes.

FRAN (CONT’D)
You know he could never be our real Dad, right? He’s married to God.

BOBBY
Maybe he’d leave the priesthood.

FRAN
Yeah, you think he’d ditch something he spent his entire life working toward for us. For MOM!?... Good one.

BOBBY
Do you want to pray with us?

FRAN
Gross.

Fran rises from the floor. She opens the door and exits.
Bobby grips Father Pat’s hand. He closes his eyes.

BOBBY
Father... I hope you can hear me. I know you’re asleep. And you almost died. The restaurant is being investigated for foul play. I hope you can hear me... Please wake up.
The team needs its coach back. And I, I could use having you around too. I brought you these flowers.
From the dollar store. They had the most colors. Father, I don’t feel like myself. I don’t know what’s happening...

INT. HOSPITAL - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Fran flushes the toilet and washes her hands in front of the mirror. She stares at her reflection closely.

BOBBY (V.O.)
Change is coming. And I’m scared.
Fran lifts up her shirt to the mid section. She sucks in her stomach and then pushes it out. She does this again and shakes her head in frustration...

She then feels her chest and the pubescent growth. Her eyes grow wide.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - NIGHT

Bobby squeezes Father Pat’s hand even harder. He’s now unaware A NURSE has stepped into the room.

BOBBY
I always watch the news with my mom.
Katie Couric’s her favorite anchor.
In the dream, Katie and I, well -

At this point, Fran steps back into the room.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
We ate a nice dinner, it was a fish fry... And later, in her words, we hit it out of the park. Sexually.
And I when I woke up my SpiderMan underpants were ruined and I had to throw them away.

The Nurse gasps. Fran laughs her ass off. Bobby opens his eyes and turns around in horror.

INT. CAR - NIGHT

Megan repeatedly checks her watch.

DYLAN
These things take a while.

MEGAN

DYLAN
That’s the nerves talking. Who knows? Maybe they reached some sort of peaceful arrangement.

MEGAN
That’d be nice...

Suddenly, POP! POP! POP! Gun shots echo into the street to the car.
DYLAN
Could be friendly fire?

MEGAN
You stupid piece of shit.

DYLAN
Me!? I’m not the one in the house -

MEGAN
You dragged that dumbass into our
situation -

DYLAN
You’re the one that came to me with
your problems...

Silence... Megan fires up the engine and floors the
accelerator. The car bolts away, until... A figure runs out
of the front door and into the road. THE HAMMER.

Megan stops the car. Dylan and Megan watch the Hammer sprint
away, out of sight. Windows rolled down, they hear screaming
from inside the Easley residence.

MEGAN
Oh fuck. Oh fuck.

DYLAN
Should we go inside?

MEGAN
And what? Finish the job?

DYLAN
I was gonna say help the guy.

A pause. Both do nothing as more screams from inside the
house echo outside...

EXT. COACH EASLEY’S HOUSE - FRONT YARD - NIGHT

Dylan hops out of the car. Megan chases after him.

INT. COACH EASLEY’S HOUSE - NIGHT

Easley sits in a recliner. He screams in pain. Dylan rushes
up to him.

COACH EASLEY
Oh, thank god... Call an ambulance.
I’ve been shot.
Megan inspects his body.

MEGAN
Dammit.

DYLAN
What? What happened?

MEGAN
It’s just his foot.

Bits of blood pour out of Easley’s foot.

DYLAN
Easley, what happened?

Megan picks up a gun from the ground.

COACH EASLEY
We were comparing guns. My pistol to his. Length, girth, you name it... And, accidental fire.

MEGAN
That’s it?

With all his might, Dylan picks up Easley. The Coach howls in pain.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
What are you doing?

DYLAN
We need to get him to the hospital.

MEGAN
Great. We’ll get him a bed right by Father Pat. Bunk buddies.

Megan and Dylan carry Easley out of the house... CAMERA STAYS IN THE HOUSE. We hear the struggle from inside...

MEGAN (CONT'D)
You’re going to owe us so big for this... Say, let’s make the deal now. We save your life and you retire that idea about being the Skeeter head coach.

DYLAN
MEGS.
MEGAN
It’s a great offer. Nothing beats life or death.
(voices fading)
I’ve seen it on cable a million times. A

FADE TO:

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

EXT. RIVER – DAY

Father Pat sits peacefully alone on a boat. He casts his fishing line out into the calm waters. Suddenly, hundreds of fish emerge from the depths of the water. All dead.

Father Pat stands up and leans over the boat’s edge. His face squirms at the sight... When he turns around, two human sized fish are seated in the boat.

Father Pat about falls off the boat he’s so startled. The fish sit in silence. More dead fish rise to the water’s surface.

FATHER PAT
What do you want? Who sent you?

Father Pat’s fishing rod is yanked out of his hand. Its ripped across the river’s surface. Father Pat watches the rod get lost below the waters... Though, out in the distance, something else catches his eye...

FATHER PAT (CONT’D)
Megan?

Father Pat sees Megan at the front of a boat that holds all of the Skeeters together. Dylan and Easley absent

FATHER PAT (CONT’D)
MEGAN! OVER HERE!

Father Pat watches Megan’s boat fly down the river with speed, not looking back to him. He turns around to the fish.

FATHER PAT (CONT’D)
We’ve lost em...

Suddenly, the boat shakes mightily. Father Pat looks overboard and sees the water spin in different directions.
A giant wave of water is imminent, picking up steam...

The fish’s mouths open. They speak in childlike screams that would shatter glass.

THE FISH  
(on repeat)  
We are living in perilous times.

Father Pat grabs an oar and paddles for his life...

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

SMASH CUT TO:

DAY 6

INT. HOSPITAL - ROOM - DAY

Father Pat wakes up soaked in sweat. He breathes heavily.

FATHER PAT  
(whispers, on repeat)  
We are living in perilous times.

He sits up. The machines in the room BUZZ and RING like a hell-storm. Doctors rush into the room. Father Pat looks to each nurse and doctor, and makes sure they know -

FATHER PAT (CONT'D)  
(yells)  
We are living in perilous times.

EXT. PARKING LOT - DAY

Beautiful rays of golden summer sunlight shine down on the Skeeters, as they decorate the TEAM BUS with paint and posters. Fran draws a #1, Bobby draws a W, Jachai draws a King’s Crown, Sherman paints his hand and leaves his mark on a bus window, and Seth draws penises.

Megan smells the morning air and exhales happily. She wears a visor and a generic baseball t-shirt with coach printed across the chest. She holds her itinerary and studies closely.

CLOSE UP ON ITINERARY: 8 A.M Decorate Bus. Collect Money -

Lora, Seth’s Mom, bumps into Megan. She takes out her cigarette. Megan shooos away the smoke with her hands.
LORA
Here’s the cash.

Megan takes the envelope. As she studies the cash, the Skeeter kids grab the NEW TEAM BAT and a grocery sack of goods and sneak away to the other side of the bus.

Megan, eyes wide, studies the money inside the envelope.

MEGAN
The benevolent Midwest comes through again.

LORA
Here, you’ll have to wear these.

Lora reaches inside her purse and hands Megan a collection of fresh baseball hats that advertise a Giant “Q”.

MEGAN
But, we’re the Skeeters. Not alphabet soup.

LORA
Quaker Oats wants Kellog’s to know what state is home to the breakfast of champions.

MEGAN
These kids will never support...oatmeal.

LORA
You’re the coach, you can convince them anything.

Megan ponders that sentiment for a moment, and smiles... She accepts the new hats and pats Lora on the shoulder.

LORA (CONT'D)
Good luck.

MEGAN
(to herself)
I am coach.

Lora exits. Megan returns to her itinerary...

CLOSE UP ON ITINERARY: 9 A.M. Check To See If People Have to Pee. Offer Bottle. 10:30 A.M. First Stop. Breakfast. Morale Lesson #1: Building Character Through Vulnerability

Megan nods her head with a wicked grin... And returns her gaze up to the Skeeters - nowhere to be found.
Dylan pokes his head out of the driver-side window.

DYLAN
Engine’s never purred this smooth.
Let’s boogie. I can’t bear another
Pop history lesson...

Pop jams his head out a different window.

POP
I’m just trying to spread some
wisdom. Man to man. The thicker –

MEGAN
Where’s the team?

POP
The thicker a woman’s –

SPLAT!

On the other side of the bus, Fran SMACKS an apple with the
team bat. The pieces of fruit soar through the air. Jachai
winds up another apple... And KA-POW!

The Skeeters marvel at the bat. Megan hustles over and
catches the next apple mid-air...

MEGAN
You’ve ruined the trip’s snacks.

SETH
We were promised fruit snacks.

BOBBY
We only picked the lumpy ones.

FRAN
Go ahead and eat it if you’re
hungry. It’s a free country, MOM.

Megan takes a massive bite. She chews... But before she can
talk, a worm crawls out of the apple... The Skeeters laugh.

MEGAN
(yells)
Everyone on the bus. You heard the
coach.

FRAN
Substitute coach.
MEGAN
The recipe for a successful team
does not include smart-ass remarks.

SETH
She’s got a point. She’s a chef in
the kitchen.

FRAN
I’m sorry... You’re right. It does
include putting another man in the
hospital though.

The Skeeters settle onto the bus. Megan, as the caboose,
climbs on board. Dylan stops her from firing off a verbal
comeback.

DYLAN
(whispers)
You think she was referring to
Easley?

MEGAN
Don’t be silly. We cleaned that
mess up...
    (turns to Skeeters)
Now, whose ready for the road trip
of a lifetime?

Suddenly, police sirens blare loudly and practically shake
the bus. Megan snaps at Dylan.

DYLAN
I don’t think it’s because of me.

MEGAN
Are you certain?

A long pause. Dylan crawls underneath the steering wheel, out
of dodge.

MEGAN (CONT’D)
Everyone remain calm. Probably just
here to give us a good luck
sendoff.

An expensive Police SUV that best embodies a military tank
parks in front of the bus. An officer gripping an assault
rifle rises out of the sun-roof. He smiles and waves at the
Skeeters.

Megan and the Skeeters exhale.
MEGAN (CONT'D)
Everyone smile and wave.

POP
Pigs.

The Skeeters collectively wave. Most strongly Megan tips her cap. Suddenly, the police side door opens... An authoritative boot hops out... CUE THE RECORD SCRATCH.

COACH EASLEY
Call to the bullpen!

Easley, decked out in a skin tight Skeeter uniform, right foot nursing a boot, hobbles up to the bus.

MEGAN
Close the door. Dyl... The cops aren’t here for you - GET UP.

Megan grabs onto the door latch but it doesn’t budge. Easley climbs onto the bus...

COACH EASLEY
The Skeeters need RELIEF.

Easley stops in front of Megan. Face to face.

MEGAN
Was that necessary?

COACH EASLEY
I was going to ask you the same question.

MEGAN
.whispers
I didn’t pull that trigger.

COACH EASLEY
We could leave that up to the judicial branch of the United States of America... I didn’t think so.

(turns back to officers)
Thank you, boys. Now, carry on.

The Skeeters remain frozen. Easley struts with confidence down the bus’s aisle.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
So... This is the Iowa twelve and under champions of baseball: The Skeeters.
Easley spits a loogie. The ball of saliva gets caught on his shirt.

**COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)**
If I didn’t know any better I think
I was still starin at the big shit
I took this morning.

**SETH**
Get bent.

Easley slowly hops up to Seth. He towers over the boy. Seth’s face, for a moment, winces.

**COACH EASLEY**
Empty your pockets you worthless booger.

Seth pulls out broken pieces of the previous baseball tattered apples.

**COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)**
Even better. Some nutritional value... Now shove it.

Seth hesitates, so Easley scoops up the apple bits and stuffs them in Seth’s mouth. Everyone gasps. Megan steps up.

**MEGAN**
That is ENOUGH. Skeeters, remember, in the name of FATHER PAT, our sexy— I mean savior... He handpicked me. I am your coach of reason, of empathy, of kindness, here to bring us together...

**COACH EASLEY**
Church is out of session. This is the real world. Now, everyone take a seat. We’ve got a long trip ahead. And on this journey I’m going to work your behinds off cause we stand no chance in this world series if none of ya don’t wanna work. No thanks to prior management. But, with me, we’ve got a sailor’s shot.

**MEGAN**
This is MY team. I’ve been with these kids since they were in diapers. I’ve even wiped a few asses to be exact.

(MORE)
MEGAN (CONT’D)
You think you can just waltz in and
demand control. Sports. Teamwork.
It doesn’t happen overnight.

Easley snatches the itinerary clipboard and breaks it over
his knee. Megan falls down and scoops up what’s left of the
pages.

FRONT OF BUS

Dylan and Pop hide in the seats; both keep their heads down.

POP
(whispers)
I knew it was going to be a
disaster. Eighty years doesn’t
exactly set nifty expectations.

Dylan eyes an envelope of cash roll down the aisle after the
Easley/Megan altercation. Megan crawls and retakes the money.

DYLAN
That’s gotta be what?... Over
hundred in cash right? Hundred to
one odds... That’s enough to start
over? Don’t you think?

POP
I wouldn’t mind one last
gentleman’s club stop.

DYLAN
We’re not wasting well earned money
on a pair of tits...

POP
You got somethin better in mind?

Megan slides up against Dylan at the front. Dylan pats her
shoulder. Megan fights back tears. Easley takes a deep breath
as all eyes are on him.

COACH EASLEY
I tell you what. Skeeters, if you
don’t want me as your coach by the
time we cross Michigan’s state
line... Then fine... Kick me off
the bus. Team Mom can retake the
reigns. But, go with me, and I
promise a victory so...

Easley’s eyes closed. In a euphoric trance of competition,
Easley grabs the seat and thrusts his hips into it -
COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
A victory so sweet. So... DEEP. And
most of all, you’ll leave the
battlefield of competition as men.
True and true... Now, who’s ready
to work?

EXT. INTERSTATE 80 - MIDDLE OF IOWA - DAY

Fields of corn stretch for eternity. Traffic whips along the
interstate road. A dusty yellow bus bounces along, forward.

INT. BUS - DAY

Dylan operates the wheel with one hand and nervously chews
into an apple with the other. Megan kneels down beside him,
hand over mouth.

DYLAN
He’s at the end of the bus, we can
cut the hushed whispers.

MEGAN
He’s bluffing. No way that ass-wipe
truly thinks the Skeeters, Fran and
Bobby, would choose him over us.

DYLAN
We are a divorced family.

MEGAN
We’re still family.

DYLAN
You actually mean that?

Megan ignores the question and buries her eyes in the
remaining pages of her itinerary.

MEGAN
Go ahead and burn some rubber. We
need to reach the Quaker Oats
conglomerate by ten. The John Deere
compound by eleven. Then the
Caterpillar construction and mining
company by one to learn about our
country’s dependency on fossil
fuels... I’m trying to establish a
team identity to latch onto:
America: Business.
Dylan fumbles around through the glove compartment. He unearths a dusty mixtape (CD).

DYLAN
No way. This must be the Hootie live mix from ’94. Right before the kids...

MEGAN
Could you ever be present for a conversation?

DYLAN
I take offense to that... You know the doctor diagnosed me with adhd.

MEGAN
What doctor? You’ve been out of health insurance since you dipped.

DYLAN
...I took an online test.

Megan points to the itinerary. She shoves it in Dylan’s face, practically cutting off his vision of the road.

MEGAN
Just make sure we hit at these points. And only stop the bus when I say so.

DYLAN
WHEW. It’s getting hot in here.

MEGAN
Turn up the A/C then.

DYLAN
I mean you. Gets me all hot and bothered when we scheme like this...

Megan punches Dylan in the shoulder...

MEGAN
You think I... Still got it?

DYLAN
(leans in, quiet)
Don’t think I’ve forgotten all these years. There’s still a few seats on this pup that need a good fuck.
Megan *shoooooshes* Dylan. She turns around and glares at Easley standing up in the back of the bus. Dylan sticks the CD in the bus’s player.

**DYLAN (CONT’D)**

(sings)
You can call me a fool... I only wanna be with you...

Megan marches down the bus’s aisle.

**BACK OF BUS**

Easley towers over the Skeeters. Fran sits alone tightly holding onto the team bat like a newborn. Bobby and Sherman bunk up, eyes glued to Easley. While Jachai and Seth hide their faces and flip off Easley.

**COACH EASLEY**

Oh, hail to the victors... I was in your shoes one time. Ah yes. Tournaments on the weekends. Late nights at Lake Springfield. Babes galore.

**SHERMAN**

Did you wear a boot on your foot then too?

**COACH EASLEY**

What? No. I was one hundred percent - one hundred and ten percent agile. On the field and off...

**JACHAI**

What happened to your foot?

**COACH EASLEY**

I told you all it’s just an accessory. All of the best coaches stand out in some manner. Before the boot it was a massive cup. Triple X size. Had to outsource the pup from a sweatshop across the pond to produce a gem of such magnitude.

Fran pokes Easley’s groin with the bat. He grimaces in pain.

**FRAN**

Cup-check.

The Skeeters freeze, awaiting Easley’s reaction. He leans forward. Face to face with Fran.
COACH EASLEY
I like this one... You're a mean son of a bitch, aren't ya?

Megan bumps into Easley from behind and, in a stealth manner, kicks his boot. Easley howls even louder in pain and frustration.

MEGAN
Stay away from my daughter.

FRAN
Shut it, Mom.

BOBBY
Give her a break.

A pause.

COACH EASLEY
Well, seems as if I just stumbled upon the set of the fun loving Brady Bunch.

MEGAN
I don't like to repeat myself... But wise cracks are forbidden in the recipe of success...

Megan reads from her itinerary.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
We're almost to our first stop of team building fun.

Easley snatches the pages and reads...

MEGAN (CONT'D)
It's all highly recommended from reputable coaches and more importantly, pediatricians from across the country.

COACH EASLEY
And so are energy efficient cars...

Easley tosses the papers in Megan's face.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
AND I LIKE MY TRUCK TO RUN ON NOTHIN BUT DIESEL... Now, where was I?... Ah, yes, to be a champion...
Easley stares out the bus window and identifies a hog farm conglomerate...

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
  Time for lesson number one.

EXT. HIGHWAY - HOG FARM - DAY
OUTSIDE FENCE
Dylan sucks down juice boxes and counts the stack of cash from inside the team envelope.

INT. BUS - DAY - LATER
Pop, alone on the bus, reads the Skeeter’s thought to be lost porno magazine.

EXT. HIGHWAY - HOG FARM - DAY
INSIDE FENCE
Through a field of mud and shit, Megan chases after the Skeeters, who led by Easley, run for cover against an angry herd of hungry hogs.

COACH EASLEY
  You must run with the freedom of a wild gazelle. Never looking back.
  Appetite bigger than the opponent chasing you trying to slice open your neck.

Easley leads the sprint across the farm. Closely followed by Fran who catches him. Easley smiles at her and extends his hand for a high five. Fran smacks back.

Megan snarls at this sight, as she and the rest of the Skeeters trail far behind. The hogs are on their tails.

KA-BOOM!

Suddenly, from the farmhouse’s front porch, an overalls wearin’, sawed off shotgun wieldin’ man, stands firm. Smoke billows from the shotgun.
EXT. WOODS - DAY

The bus sits parked off the highway road. Easley, Megan, and Dylan stand at the edge of the woods: the tree-line. Pop pisses into a bush close by.

POP
It was winter, 1957. No, ’68.
Summer of Love. What a bunch of chuckwagon. Thing about getting old is you forget. You know the thing that stays alive in the mind from ’68? An ass-fuck...

Megan, Dylan, and Easley ignore Pop and talk amongst themselves...

MEGAN
I could call Child Services.

POP
I’m a big donor.

DYLAN
Isn’t this how every horror movie starts? Alone in the woods. Of course toss in some sex... At least on basic cable past midnight.

MEGAN
We’re an hour behind my schedule!

POP
An entire decade... Only thing I can put to memory is the doctor’s face who shoved that tube up my ass. Prick.

MEGAN
(yells to Pop)
It helped to keep you alive.
Detected the colon cancer.

COACH EASLEY
Hey, bring it in...

Coach Easley wraps his arms around Dylan and Megan.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
We need each other. I can’t coach without a healthy set of parents by my side to wipe these kids asses. 
(MORE)
COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
And without me, the competition in
Battle Creek will wipe the Skeeters
off the face of this Earth.

Pop zips up his pants.

POP
And for what? I’m neutered.

DYLAN
He’s got a point.

Megan rips herself away from the circle. Fran returns from
the woods. Megan hurry through the wild grass and meets
Fran for a hug. Fran does not return the heartfelt sentiment.

MEGAN
We were so worried about you.

Fran steps up to Easley. She opens her hands and empties a
set of wild blackberries. Easley chews on the fruit. The rest
of the Skeeters return. Arms and legs cut up. Foreheads mud-
soaked. Heavy breathing.

BOBBY
What does any of this have to do
with baseball?

COACH EASLEY
GREAT QUESTION: Champions are kings
of the jungle. Together they feast
on prey, but also must be able to
exist outside the pack as
individuals. Listen up ball-
players, this goes all the way back
to the Declaration of Independence.

Easley swallows the fruit and smiles.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
It’s the gift of this great land to
survive on your own without any
outside help but some nourishment
from Mother Nature’s bosom.

SETH
Does bosom mean tit?

JACHAI
From the farmer’s point of view,
it’s pronounced teet.

SHERMAN
I would love a glass of milk.
SETH
Go milk yourself.

MEGAN
HEY: if we’re going to come
together, we can’t pick on one
another. Sure, Sherman’s carrying
some extra freight upstairs in the
A-cup -

POP
B-cup.

MEGAN
B-cup range. But so what. He’s
Sherman. And more importantly, he’s
a Skeeter and Seth, you will
respect him.

A pause. Seth shoves Sherman. Sherman shoves back. Megan
breaks up the tussle.

COACH EASLEY
(To Fran)
As you can see, your Mom’s tactics
can’t help but to bring us together
as one happy family.

INT. BUS - DAY

Megan now operates the steering wheel with both hands. Her
body leaned over so far that her face almost touches the
windshield.

She smacks the horn.

MEGAN
Jesus-Mary-N’Joseph... These antics
have cost us two stops on the
itinerary!
(whispers to herself)
Out. You’re steering the ship now.
Just get back on course.

Dylan sits a few seats behind her. He’s still toying with the
cash.

MEGAN (CONT’D)
You need to stand up for me more.
All morning, not a peep out of you
against Easley.
DYLAN
Sorry I forgot my pitchfork.

MEGAN
You used to, I don’t know, have a spine.

DYLAN
Had it surgically removed years ago.

MEGAN
I buy that more than your typical bologna.

DYLAN
Megs... What are we planning on using all of this cash for?

MEGAN
Get your dirty paws off of it.

Megan reaches back and snatches the envelope.

DYLAN
I was just curious. It’s like the end of the rainbow in there.

Megan stuffs the money inside the glove compartment.

MEGAN
Alright, come here.

DYLAN
What? Is this another plan to stop the big, bad wolf?

MEGAN
Remember that hotel near the Lake we stayed at?

DYLAN
How could I forget?

Dylan bends down along the bus’s floor and scoops up the old photo-album. He flips to a specific page and points to a picture of a young Megan with the CHICAGO SKYLINE in the background.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
That was the night you learned you were gonna have Franny. You fainted.
Megan turns away from the road and glances at the picture.

MEGAN
I look awful. My eyes are closed.

DYLAN
Duh, I snapped it right after you woke back up. Remember - You were crying so hard you couldn’t even open your eyes... Tears of joy are potent.

MEGAN
They were definitely tears.

DYLAN
Are we staying at that hotel?

MEGAN
I thought it might be worthwhile to let the kids have a night with the Chicago skyline. But, I don’t know. We’ll see. It’s expensive if I remember.

DYLAN
Right...

Dylan eyeballs the cash.

DYLAN (CONT’D)
It might be better to save. We could always stay with Grandma. How about that? I bet she’s dying to see you and Franny and Bobby. We’ll pass right by her. C’mom.

MEGAN
I can’t think. Gotta keep my eyes on the road.

MIDDLE OF BUS

Pop snores soundly asleep. Easley sits opposite of him next to a standing Fran. She grips the baseball bat. They speak in hushed whispers.

BACK OF BUS

Jachai snacks on the blackberries. Seth grabs Sherman’s hand and repeatedly punches Sherman in the shoulder.

SETH
Stop hitting yourself.
Bobby sits alone and sulks, staring out the window.

JACHAI
These berries would go great in a cobbler.

SETH
Stop before you turn into Betty Crocker.

SHERMAN
What do you think Fran and Easley are talking about?

JACHAI
Whatever it is... She’s been up there a while.

SHERMAN
I thought she didn’t like him. Aren’t we supposed to hate Easley? I’m confused.

SETH
The asshole’s a prick, but no offense, Bobby, he’s better than the team’s actual Betty Crocker.

BOBBY
We didn’t even give my mom a chance... You heard her, Father Pat chose her to be the coach.

SETH
He was probably all hopped up on the hospital fun-dip.

JACHAI
Fran is our best player... And in an attempt to either isolate Fran, or have her convince us he’s the right man for the job... Easley’s making that known to her.

SHERMAN
What are you saying, Jachai? Someone just tell me what to think I don’t like this teetering back and forth. Gets my bowels all out of sorts...
BOBBY
She’s not distributing the wealth of the secret weapon. Something’s fishy with her...

Fran returns to her seat with the baseball bat. Silence ensues...

FRAN
Barry Bonds. Roger Clemens. Roberto Clemente. Sammy Sosa. Even Mark Mcgwire. Easley said the ghosts of these legends live within this bat.

SETH
Is this just another one of your bullshit ghost stories?

FRAN
No. And those weren’t bullshit. They were historical record. Read a book.

SHERMAN
Like that movie Space Jam with the basketballs! That’s so crazy. Wait that was aliens though, not ghosts. I’m confused...

FRAN
Easley said the Blue Chips we played against were nothin but pig shit left to rot in the stable, like us... This bat helped transform them into champions.

JACHAI
It is possible... These ghosts. Time travel. The history channel goes into depths on stuff like this. Weekday’s at 4.

BOBBY
So you believe Easley? You’re with him?

FRAN
I’m with the Skeeters. The fudge are you getting snippy with me for?

BOBBY
Answer the question is he the coach? Or is Mom the coach?
EEEEEK! Suddenly, the bus’s tires screech to a halt.

FRONT OF BUS

Megan jams her foot against the gas pedal. She slaps the steering wheel. Dylan pretends to be asleep. He snores loud. Obviously fake.

MEGAN
Dyl? Why did the bus stop?

The engine cries out in pain. Easley hurries up to the front.

COACH EASLEY
I know that sound...

MEGAN
Enlighten us, please.

COACH EASLEY
Plucked a flower from the wrong bed.

Dylan snores even louder... Pop stumbles up to the front.

POP
I take it this is a diesel engine.
Some dumb-ass must’ve forgot on that last fill-up.

Megan grabs blackberries from the fruit bowl and fires them at a sleeping Dylan.

EXT. HIGHWAY – DAY

In the middle of bum-fuck eastern Iowa, where tumbleweeds roam and the wind always blows, a rusted tow truck pulls the Skeeter Bus along a two-lane road.

EXT. GAS STATION – DAY

A shack of a gas station stands as the only sign of civilization for miles. An empty parking lot, except for the Skeeter bus.

Megan stands at the diesel pump and fills the bus up. Pop aides her.

POP
Don’t be afraid to really jam that nozzle deep in there.
MEGAN
I know how to get gas, Pop. Thanks.

POP
Just thought it had to be said
after the recent debacle... But,
you’re right. I’m just an old,
crusty bastard with no wisdom left
to impart.

MEGAN
Took the words right out of my
mouth.

POP
God, you’re great.

MEGAN
Excuse me?

POP
You give it to me straight.
Everyone else sees what an old fuck
I’ve become. You’re mean. Through
and through. And I respect that.

MEGAN
Get back on the bus, Pop.

INSIDE GAS STATION PHONE BOOTH

Dylan presses the phone tightly to his ear. The phone rings.
He counts the cash and stuffs the money inside his pocket.

Outside the booth window, he watches Fran and Bobby play
catch in front of the bus. He gives a thumbs up.

Bobby can’t catch the ball. Fran grows tired and agitated and
throws the balls even harder.

DYLAN
Ham-ball, what’s cookin on the
stove-top? It’s hot? Steaming?
Good. Listen. I think... I think
I’m ready. Will you serve me a
bowl? I got over two hundred bucks
here in cold hard cash... That’s
it? Is there any bet that if won
will sustain my newfound life on
the road?

Dylan kicks the phone booth wall.
Dylan smiles and waves. Bobby hurries away.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Enough with the food code talk.
Just give it to me straight you grease-ball.

INT. DINER – DAY

The Hammer sits alone inside an Al Capone, prohibition themed diner. The Chicago skyline can be seen through the booth’s window. Hammer pounds the end of a ketchup bottle to squeeze out what’s left of the red sauce.

An extended payphone is held up to his ear, resting on his shoulder.

INTERCUT PHONE BOOTH AND HAMMER

HAMMER
If you want a bite of the big enchilada. Well, Dylan, my boy...
Bettin’ against the Skeeters is the only choice you got. I’m near the nest and word’s spread that Easley’s coaching the team. Skeeters are the favorite... If you can take him out we stand a good chance to reel in some serious dough. I’m talkin Gatsby. Kardashian. Porterhouse rich, you dig?

DYLAN
We’re not firing anymore gunshots...

A server trips on the phone line in the restaurant. Glass shatters as food topples onto the floor.
HAMMER (V.O.)
You don’t got to make a mess in the kitchen this time... Does Megan still want to be coach?

DYLAn
Yeah. But the kids will get absolutely destroyed if she takes over...

HAMMER (V.O.)
See to it she does...

A long pause... Dylan looks out and watches Fran and Bobby.

HAMMER (V.O.)
I kinda look like this Capone guy, don’t you think?

PARKING LOT

Fran tosses Bobby the rest of the apples from the initial fruit bin. Bobby, holding the bat, smacks the shit out of the apple.

FRAN
See, told you.

BOBBY
You just can’t believe that I might actually be good.

FRAN
I’ll believe in ghosts before I buy such lunacy.

BOBBY
I’m done.

FRAN
Don’t be such a baby.

Fran throws an apple at Bobby. It hits him in the shoulder. He charges at her with the bat. The siblings wrestle on the pavement.

INSIDE PHONE BOOTH

DYLAn
UGH... Okay. I’ll do it. Where do I drop off the money?
HAMMER (V.O.)
How conversant are you in the constitution?

DYLAN
I know the second amendment.

HAMMER (V.O.)
That’ll do. 1776 Federation. Off Highway 123. Cross the Delaware River and meet me there before the Brits take over.

PARKING LOT

Easley struts out of the gas station with the rest of the Skeeters. He holds a tin of chewing tobacco. He scoops up some nicotine-bliss.

COACH EASLEY
All of the best ball-players suck on some big league chew. Some may argue it’s lacking in nutritional value, but you’ll be sure to notice a substantial upgrade in your play on the field. Here, each of you, take a scoop.

JACHAI
Beyond dip, I read one MLB player actually pisses on his hands before each game for good luck.

COACH EASLEY
That’s more advanced measures. We’re not there just yet.

Easley passes the tin to the rest of the Skeeters. They each toss in some dip. Chew. Swallow. Their eyes suddenly grow wide.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Remember, don’t swallow.

Coach Easley spots Fran and Bobby fighting. He runs over. As does Megan from the gas pump.

MEGAN
Franny! Bobby! You break yourselves apart this instance.
COACH EASLEY
(to Megan)
Let em figure it out. Builds
can not that what you want?

MEGAN
These are my children.

COACH EASLEY
They’re my ballplayers.

Fran elbows Bobby in the stomach. He winces away. Megan picks
up a crying Bobby. Easley helps Fran up from the ground. The
other Skeeters wander to the fight. They hold their aching
stomach.

COACH EASLEY (CONT’D)
Don’t make me call off my original
proposition...

MEGAN
Doesn’t matter... I can sniff out a
bluff better than -

Bobby interrupts.

BOBBY
Would the both of you stop it
already?... We need Father Pat.

Easley laughs his ass off. Fran steps up.

FRAN
Don’t bring your daddy issues into
this.

COACH EASLEY
The man was a fraud. He signed an
oath to the lord. And kids, he
didn’t just break it, he fucked it.
Quite literally.

Megan creeps away for a moment.

COACH EASLEY (CONT’D)
Now everyone on the bus before I
reconsider being coach.

BOBBY
Mom?

MEGAN
Hold up... Let’s hash this out. We
can learn a lot from this.

(MORE)
MEGAN (CONT'D)
Bobby, Fran, you both have the
to the open up. If we’re going to
come together, Skeeters, we have
to...

Megan pulls out a piece of her itinerary, she studies the
text.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
...We have to be vulnerable
together. Lesson number one.

FRAN
Give it a rest, Mom.

Fran trots to the bus. The rest of the Skeeters follow. Coach
Easley winks at Megan and hobbles behind. Dylan finally
approaches the scene.

MEGAN
Thanks for the support.

DYLAN
I phoned the hospital to check in
on Father Pat. He’s still asleep.

MEGAN
We’re gonna need another miracle.

Bobby wipes away tears. He huffs, and puffs... And grabs the
baseball bat from the ground. Like a javelin toss, he hurls
the bat in the air toward the bus.

As Easley steps up on the bus, the bat NAILS him in his boot.
He screams in pain, and falls off the bus’ steps onto the
hard asphalt.

COACH EASLEY
Oh Christ on a bike... My back...
My back...

Everyone crowds around Easley.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
I can’t move.

Megan grins.

MEGAN
(quiet)
Our lord is vengeful.
EXT. BRIDGE - DAY

The Skeeter bus travels across the Mississippi River, passed a sign that reads: WELCOME TO ILLINOIS: LAND OF LINCOLN.

INT. BUS - DAY

Megan operates the steering wheel. In her lap is the old photo-book. She glances back and forth from the road to the memories.

MIDDLE OF BUS

Bobby sits next to a sleeping Pop. The bus swerves and Bobby slides into Pop, which wakes the geezer up.

    POP
    (dazed)
    I’ll suck on them... Wait.
    (aware)
    What do you want?

    BOBBY
    I was sentenced to timeout.

    POP
    Well, try and sit still.

    BOBBY
    You sleep a lot.

    POP
    I’m a time traveler, boy-o.

    BOBBY
    Like that stuff on the history channel?

    POP
    No. When I sleep, I dream. In fact, we’re all time travelers. And don’t let anyone tell ya it’s nostalgia.

    BOBBY
    I don’t even know what that means.

    POP
    Good.

    BOBBY
    Where were you just at?
POP
This is a reoccurring one: I get the medal of honor when I return home from Korea. I’m celebrated across the country in the papers. And when I’m at the White House, I happen to meet a miss Marilyn Monroe. She wasn’t there to knock boots with JFK. This guy. Right here, sonny-boy.

BOBBY
Who is Marilyn Monroe?

Pop smacks Bobby.

POP
Your mother let you speak with that tongue? No wonder you’re in timeout.

BOBBY
What was she like?

POP
I don’t know. The dream always ends before we have the chance to meet. But I see her. Oh, I see her.

BOBBY
What if it’s not her? Could be someone else? Maybe they’re still out there for ya.

POP
There’s nothing left for me.

Pop stares out the window for a long beat. He then closes his eyes and slowly, but surely, begins to snore. Bobby shuts his eyes too.

BACK OF BUS

Easley lies out straight as an arrow across the aisle, taking up two seats. The Skeeters surround his body. They each press ice packs on his back. Seth sticks his pack up Easley’s butt. Easley wiggles like an angry worm.

A few rows back, in the very far rear of the bus, Dylan sits with Fran. They share a moment of silence and stare out the back window at the road they’re running from. They play the license plate game.
FRAN
Wisconsin.

DYLAN
We don’t talk about Wisconsin.

FRAN
Missouri.

DYLAN
Like your crazy Uncle AJ. What did we used to tell you about him?

FRAN
In one ear out the other... Oh, wow, California. Look at that!

DYLAN
Used to be able to take one road from these parts all the way to California. What a ride! Seven days if you make the necessary stops.

FRAN
You can fly there from Iowa in three hours time.

DYLAN
You’re missing the point...

FRAN
Mom says you and her used to drive this cross country before you had us.

DYLAN
Mom talks about those days?

FRAN
I overheard her one time in confession. The theme was regret.

DYLAN
Oh. Well, the Catholics put us all under a spell from time to time.

FRAN
Can I be honest, Dad?

DYLAN
Well, that depends.

FRAN
It’s about... Mom.
DYLAN
Hey, Wyoming. Bears are some crazy creatures.

FRAN
Dad!

Dylan sighs and inches closer to Fran.

DYLAN
I’m going to ask you to promise one thing. And I never ask for much...
Just please agree with your Mom.
For the sake of us all.

FRAN
What about what I want?

DYLAN
Oh. An Ohio. Mom was born in
Cleveland. She ever tell you that?

FRAN
I figured you both were born and
raised in the farm stables.

DYLAN
No. Just you... Keep your eyes
open, Franny. There’s a lot out there.

Dylan lovingly squeezes Fran’s cheek.

FRAN
There’s a lot for you at home too.

DYLAN
Hey... A Florida.

The bus jams to a stop. The Skeeters collectively ram their heads against the windows and soak in the outdoors: endless field of tractors. A giant JOHN DEERE sign.

FRONT OF BUS

Megan, with a big smile spread across her face, puts the bus in park. She unbuckles and hops up.

MEGAN
All aboard the Skeeter team-
building express?
(mimicking train horn)
WOOT. WOOT.
INT. JOHN DEERE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

A fenced in, concrete field overwhelmed by farm machinery.

In a single file line, Megan leads the Skeeters through the John Deere products. Dylan is the caboose. She scrambles through her itinerary notes, and eventually, wings it...

MEGAN
So, Skeeters, behold, the almighty power of hard, back-breaking labor. We can thank these machines for the delicious foods we eat. So beautiful, in fact, that people like you and me no longer have to till the fields. We get to sit back and reap those benefits...

FRAN
What benefits?

SETH
Don’t say corn. I hate corn.

JACHAI
Toss some butter on it.

SHERMAN
Pinch of salt too.

DYLAN
Doing great, Hun.

Suddenly, a John Deere worker stops the Skeeter herd.

WORKER
Are you here to protest our company’s stance against worker unionization?

MEGAN
No. We’re Iowa’s premier twelve and under youth baseball club. Eager to learn about America through the lens of big business.

EXT. JOHN DEERE HEADQUARTERS - DAY

Megan now leads the lesson along the fence, on the outside looking in. They continue in single-file formation. Sweat pours from Megan’s forehead.
MEGAN
It was John Deere himself. Like legends Davey Crocket and Daniel Boone, Mr. John Deere is an American pioneer. Travelers, across country like ourselves here today. Mr. Deere was abandoned as a child and left alone in the woods. From those humble beginnings, in fact raised by literal deer, he grew up with nothing less than an animal’s spirit. On all fours, like a deer, he tilled his own fields for years until he invented the most significant machine in human history: the tractor combine.

INT. BUS – DAY

Easley tries to sit up but screams in pain. He falls back onto the seat. Megan’s conversation echoes into the bus...

DYLAN
HE WAS A BLACKSMITH.

Pop approaches with a bucket of ice.

DYLAN (CONT’D)
This woman’s off the rocker. Which makes you two peas in a pod.

Pop dumps the ice bucket all over Easley’s body. Easley screams.

EXT. JOHN DEERE HEADQUARTERS – DAY

OUTSIDE FENCE

The Skeeter caravan stops along the fence and stares out at the field of tractor combines. Jachal, Seth, and Sherman each cough and hold their stomachs. They eventually gag.

MEGAN
We’re all farmers. We all got a little Deere in us.

BOBBY
Thanks, Coach. It’s nice to know our lives have such historical significance. Right guys? Guys?

The three tobacco suckin’ Skeeters dry heave.
FRAN
This all true, Dad?

Dylan turns to Megan who grins at him.

DYLAN
It sure is.

After a moment... Jachai, Seth, and Sherman vomit all over the fence...

EXT. INTERSTATE ROAD - DAY - LATER

The sun begins to set along the horizon. The gusts of wind whistle with an icy edge.

The Skeeter bus gradually slows as it approaches an exit sign up ahead. Even father in the distance: The Chicago Skyline.

INT. BUS - DAY

FRONT OF BUS

Dylan wipes sweat from his forehead. Bobby sits in the seat beside him. Looking at anything but his father.

DYLAN
Is it hot in here? You hot at all?

Bobby stares out the window and focuses in on the Chicago skyline. Dylan blasts the A/C.

BOBBY
Wow, Chicago looks so close.

DYLAN
Still got another hour to go.

BOBBY
Mom said she’s got a surprise for us tonight.

DYLAN
Listen... I know you weren’t too keen on me, well, no easy way to say this... Being here. But for your mother... Help her out, okay?

BOBBY
I still want her to be coach.
DYLAN

Good.

BOBBY

It’s what Father Pat wanted. He was such a great coach. The best.

DYLAN

Go run to mom. Tell her we’re making a pit stop.

Dylan rotates the steering wheel.

EXT. INTERSTATE ROAD – NIGHT

The Skeeter bus darts out of the interstate lane and exits onto a narrow road shrouded in darkness.

EXT. FIREWORK STAND – NIGHT

A giant, inflatable sign shakes with the wind and advertises this patriotic shack of a firework stand: a picture of a beef-caked George Washington lifting weights, not with dumbbells, but fireworks.

The Skeeter bus sits parked on the edge of the road. Megan and Dylan are outside. Megan’s hands wave in the air. She wags a finger close to Dylan’s face.

CLOSE IN ON MEGAN AND DYLAN

MEGAN

Shit, I’m out of breath.

DYLAN

Well, you just yelled for a solid five minutes straight.

MEGAN

You think the kids… the Skeeters heard?

Megan and Dylan glance up to the bus… The Skeeter faces press against the window.

DYLAN

It’ll be fine. Especially after they see what the big surprise is.
MEGAN
But I’m the one with the big
surprise. The hotel. We talked
about this.

DYLАН
Think of this as the appetizer to
the main course.

Silence... Megan paces around the gravel.

MEGAN
I guess it is nice you thought of
something. Even though I’m firmly
against the use of explosives.

DYLАН
They’re just fireworks.

MEGAN
You wait till someone’s finger pops
off... Alright, make it quick. We
need to make check in soon.

Easley hobbles off the bus as Dylan darts for the tent’s
front entrance.

COACH EASLEY
First good idea on this trip... If
we’re going to stand out we’re
gonna need an entrance that lights
the sky.

Dylan stands in front of the entrance. Body blocking Easley.

DYLАН
I’ve got it.

COACH EASLEY
I’m still coach.

Dylan raises his hand and presses it firmly into Easley’s
chest. Easley’s eyes light up.

DYLАН
I said I’ve got it.

As Megan climbs back onto the bus, she turns around.

MEGAN
Let him come with, Dyl.

Megan grabs Pop by the shoulders and helps him down from the
stairs. She playfully shoves him toward the tent.
MEGAN (CONT'D)
More the merrier.

Dylan sighs in frustration.

COACH EASLEY
(whispers)
Holster it cowboy...

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Megan hurries toward the Skeeters, who still sit with faces jammed up against the window glass.

MEGAN
Gather around, Skeeters. I’ve got an important announcement to make... SURPRISE.

Megan points her finger to the windshield. Silence ensues...

MEGAN (CONT'D)
If you look real close... Anyone?
Anything?

SHERMAN
Streetlights been flickering kinda aggressively.

SETH
We turning around?

FRAN
You already don’t want to play?
Huh?

SETH
I miss my sofa... What? My ass can’t hurt from sitting on this, no offense, piece of shit bus all day.

BOBBY
I saw the skyscrapers a little while ago when I was sitting with my Dad...

The Skeeters grow silent. Megan watches Bobby take the floor. Surprised. She almost trips on herself as she backs up.

BOBBY (CONT'D)
He told me more lights than people in our town. Fellas, we’re staying the night in Chicago.
A collective woah. Megan pats Bobby’s shoulder. She glances outside. Face beaming.

INT. FIREWORK STAND - DAY

A balding man, GENE, wears a shirt with a bald eagle holding a machine gun. He packs fireworks into a box.

Dylan paces with haste around the collection of colorful explosives. Easley stands and stares at a shelf of little poppers.

    COACH EASLEY
    I can get these penny pinchers at the Dollar Store...

Pop is still. Fixated on a giant poster of the U.S. Army fighting in a battle. Pop shakes his head.

    POP
    You in the service?

    GENE
    Who? Me?

Gene chuckles.

    GENE (CONT'D)
    I wish. Shoot me up a bunch of those sandstorm fuckers.

A shaking Pop steps over to Dylan.

    POP
    Let’s scram. I don’t like the cut of his jib.

Dylan ignores Pop and slithers to the room’s back curtain. He opens the red cloth slightly.

DYLAN’S POV - We see the Hammer seated at the tiny table of a children’s tea set. Mouth engulfed by a microwaved burrito.

Dylan closes the curtain and returns... He nods at Gene and pulls out from his pocket the ENVELOPE OF CASH.

    GENE
    Alright. One customer can go rogue in the restricted section at a time. You, sir, are first.
COACH EASLEY
I’m coach of the team. I hold executive power. Dylan, you can’t be serious?...

Easley struts over to the curtain.

COACH EASLEY (CONT’D)
In fact, Dylan why don’t you go get the bus warmed up. I won’t be long.

Easley reaches for the envelope. Dylan whips the cash away, out of reach. Meanwhile, Pop grows distraught from the U.S. Army poster: a case of P.T.S.D. He cries, and hobbles out of the tent.

Coach Easley catches the envelope and scoops up the cash.

GENE
Now, fellas, I’m sure we can work out some sort of deal.

COACH EASLEY
I could the smell the bullshit on your breath the moment I got on the bus this morning... Who are you selling us out to?

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Pop hustles back onto the bus and crashes into a seat. He’s out of breath, panting like an exhausted dog. Megan hops down the bus’s aisle and slides into his seat.

MEGAN
Pop? You alright? What’s the matter?

Pop breaks down in tears.

MEGAN (CONT’D)
I knew it wasn’t just me who hated those stupid-ass explosives.

The Skeeters all tiptoe up to the front of the bus. Pop cries in the fetal position.

BOBBY
Cheer up, Pop. We’re staying the night in Chicago. By the lake!

SETH
That’s just sad.
JACHAI
We’ll all be shells of ourselves at his age too. It’s science.

SHERMAN
I don’t want to grow old then.

MEGAN
I’ll get him a tissue.

Megan zooms to the glove compartment. She files through Dylan’s assortment of knick-knacks... Her eyes drop.

Fran slides in behind her Mom and snags the tissues.

FRAN
They’re right in front of you.

MEGAN
Where’s the money?

Fran wipes away Pop’s tears with the tissue.

SETH
Anyone skinny dipping at the lake?

Silence ensues...

SETH (CONT’D)
Fran?

Fran kicks Seth in the nuts. Megan hustles up and down the aisle.

MEGAN
WHERE’S THE MONEY?

INT. FIREWORK STAND - NIGHT

The red curtain opens. Enter the Hammer. He bites into a Chicago Dog and takes his time chewing as the tension rises...

HAMMER
We’ve got some business to do.

COACH EASLEY
If it isn’t the prized hog of Iowa himself.

HAMMER
We don’t have time for out of touch, offensive fat jokes...

(MORE)
HAMMER (CONT'D)
Time is money. And I’m looking to eat large.

Gene reaches behind the cashier counter and whips out a pistol.

GENE
Don’t want another episode like before.

COACH EASLEY
Who says I don’t want in on your little game? If the price is right.

Dylan takes back the money from Easley. A standoff ensues.

HAMMER
It’s pretty simple. Skeeters here lose. We win big.

Easley shoves Dylan. Gene raises the pistol.

HAMMER (CONT'D)
Easy, fellas. Easy.

COACH EASLEY
You sly fucking dog. That’s why you want your woman to coach.
(laughs, points to Dylan)
This GUY. If ever there was guy to completely ditch his own family in the name of money.

Hammer extends out his hand. Palm open.

HAMMER
What’s it gonna be Dyl? You want a piece of the pie?

COACH EASLEY
I want thirty-five percent.

GENE
There’s four of us. Each get a quarter.

HAMMER
Hey. I set the table. I cooked the food. I get a little thank you...extra fifteen percent for that.

DYLAN
ALRIGHT...
HAMMER
...Alright what?

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Dylan tightly grips the steering wheel. Bobby and Sherman sit up front and stare out through the windshield at the approaching Chicago skyline.

Megan gets on all fours. She slides across the bus floor.

MEGAN
EYES PEELED EVERYONE. Dyl, promise me we’ll find that money.

DYLAN
...It’s gotta be on here somewhere. If push comes to shove we can always crash at Grandma’s. She’s just up the road.

MEGAN
Dammit, Dyl. THE ITINERARY.

MIDDLE OF BUS

Jachai and Seth with bright eyes check out the fireworks.

BACK OF THE BUS

Fran stares out at the dark road. Easley sits with her.

COACH EASLEY
It’s going to get worse before it gets better. Trust me.

FRAN
What are you talking about?

COACH EASLEY
You’ll understand, here soon.

FRAN
What’s the biggest thing you’ve ever won?

COACH EASLEY
I was hoping it to be this little league world series here.

FRAN
We haven’t even played yet. It can still happen, stupid.
COACH EASLEY
Well, I figured you Skeeters would vote me out and promote Team Mom into management.

FRAN
Jury’s still out.

EXT. HOTEL - OUTSIDE OF CHICAGO - NIGHT

Thousands of lights spark up the night sky. The lake water glimmers. Near the shore, a quaint and classy hotel rests.

The Skeeter bus rolls into the parking lot. The Skeeters spill out with their luggage. Easley helps Pop off the bus.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Dylan remains seated at the wheel. Megan carries a suitcase up to the front.

MEGAN
The rooms are already booked. What? You think I planned this without putting in the reservation first?

Dylan lets out a smile. Hands still on the wheel.

DYLAN
Of course not.

MEGAN
You coming?

Dylan holds the envelope.

DYLAN
Found it.

Megan jumps with joy. She kisses Dylan on the cheek.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
I’ll meet y’all inside. Going to clean up a bit first.

MEGAN
Thank you, Dyl. This means a lot to me.

DYLAN
I’ll see you inside.
Megan hops off the bus.

EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT

MEGAN
Last one inside is out at home plate.

Megan races the Skeeters to the hotel’s front door.

INT. HOTEL - NIGHT

An overwhelming amount of sterile, stainless steel. The Skeeters try and squish together on the slim sofa. The lobby’s speakers blast nauseating club music.

MEGAN
What happened to the orange shag?

COACH EASLEY
When was the last time you two were here?

MEGAN
Over ten years ago...

Megan hustles over to the lobby’s front desk. She drops her luggage and waves her arms. The FRONT DESK CLERK, a beefed up DUDE, 30s, shoots down a can of red bull.

CLERK
Sup girl? Can I help you?

MEGAN
Yes, you can. Reservation for Skeeter!

CLERK
Sexy name. Sounds Icelandic.

MEGAN
It’s baseball. And it breeds champions. Now, the rooms should be floor four: 445, 446, and 447. All three with window views of the lake and the city.

CLERK
Cash or credit?

MEGAN
Cash...
Megan opens the envelope. **It’s empty.** She stares blankly. Dumfounded.

**MEGAN (CONT’D)**
A minor hiccup. Excuse me for one moment.


**EXT. PARKING LOT - NIGHT**

The team stands together on the asphalt. Under a twitching light. Megan drops to her knees. THE BUS IS GONE...

**EXT. ROAD - NIGHT**

The Skeeter bus drives alone along the road into the shadows of an underpass.

We hear a **phone ring.**

**MEGAN (V.O.)**

(into phone)
Yeah, Ma. The big van. You still got it? Great. Nope, everything’s fine. No trouble. I can’t call without a problem? I know, Ma, it’s been a while. I’m excited too. We’re all so excited... No, just me. Why is that always your first question? I’m not getting defensive... Yeah. Coffee’s great.

We hear a phone hang up as the surrounding Chicago city skyline engulfs the Skeeter bus...

**FADE TO:**

**EXT. HOUSE - NIGHT**

A two story rustic farmhouse with every light on. **POW!** Outside the now broken window comes a shattered glass lamp, followed by a baseball...

**INT. HOUSE - LIVING ROOM - NIGHT**

Bobby wraps himself up in a sleeping bag along the orange shag carpet. Jachai and Seth stand on top of the sofa with their gloves closed and mouths agape.
Fran’s head pokes out the window. She stares at the lamp’s pieces across the grass.

SNORE. SNORE. SNORE. Sherman pokes a sleeping Pop in the shoulder. Pop shuffles his position in the room’s recliner, but remains asleep.

SETH
Bobby did it.

JACHAI
But he’s sleeping.

SETH
He’s our fall guy. Don’t wanna mess with group dynamics this late in the game.

Bobby pulls the sleeping bag over his face, completely.

JACHAI
Pop would be the rational choice. PTSD.

SHERMAN
English please?

JACHAI
And don’t forget the cancer –

SHERMAN
Cancer? Pop don’t got no cancer... Who told you that?

SETH
He’s old, I don’t know. Ain’t that what happens?

Sherman turns to Pop.

SHERMAN
He’s as sharp as a whistle... I did it. Blame me. Bring on the guillotine.

Fran turns around.

FRAN
No one’s losing their head. Grandma’s a hoarder of old crap. We did her a favor.
Fran returns to her sleeping bag on the carpet. The rest of the team follows... They lay together as the grandfather clock on the wall plays tick-tick-tick-tick.

BOBBY
You’re a liar.

FRAN
I liked it better when you were asleep.

BOBBY
That lamp used to be your night-light when you were afraid of the dark.

Jachai and Seth snicker.

SETH
I always knew, deep down, you weren’t a ballplayer. Hello softball!

Fran pulls out her leg from the sleeping bag and gives each Skeeter a kick. Roundhouse style.

FRAN
I don’t want to hear another PEEP. We need a good night’s sleep if we want to win tomorrow morning.

BOBBY
Whatever you say, Mom.

Fran sits up. She shoves Bobby across the floor. Bobby slides out of the sleeping bag.

FRAN
You’re just a sore ass bitch because we’re a better team with Easley as the coach. There, I said it. We were all thinking it.

Silence ensues...

FRAN (CONT’D)
There’s still a vote to be had.

BOBBY
Are you really that selfish to think we’d all join you in Easley land? He’s been priming your pump the entire trip. Right guys?
More silence... A chorus of crickets echo into the room.

Fran and Bobby dive at each other. They roll on the floor. Fran elbows Bobby in the gut and pins him to the floor.

SHERMAN
I don’t like when Mom and Dad fight...

Pop continues to snore as the Skeeters sit back and let the siblings fight this out. The rumblings cause a Megan and Dylan wedding day picture from the wall to fall...

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Concrete flooring. Pink insulation pokes out from the walls. Boxes and boxes form a mound across the damp space. Megan squeezes into a rainbow colored kids chair from her youth. She sips coffee.

GRANDMA, 60s, perpetually wide eyed and always hunched over, rocking her favorite REAGEN BUSH 84 shirt, swims, knee deep, through the boxes.

MEGAN
Ma, it’s alright. I have my own clothes.

GRANDMA
But I still think they’d fit ya.

MEGAN
I’ve outgrown high school.

GRANDMA
At least try em on... Gotcha!

Grandma carries a box over to Megan and sits with her.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
You’ve lost weight.

MEGAN
You already mentioned that.

GRANDMA
What’s wrong? That’s typically worthy of celebration.

Grandma pulls out a yearbook from the box. She flips through the pages.
GRANDMA (CONT'D)

MEGAN
Of course you do...

Megan and Grandma study the yearbook photo: Megan and Dylan at high school prom.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
I still don’t like that dress.

GRANDMA
Me either.

MEGAN
You’re the one who made me wear it!...

GRANDMA
I don’t remember that.

MEGAN
You also... Forget it.

GRANDMA
Please, the floor is open.

MEGAN
You’re the one who encouraged me to date Dylan. You begged me to get out of the house.

GRANDMA
I remember you sneaking out.

MEGAN
Well, yeah, later, obviously out of spite...

A beat.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Raising Fran and Bobby I’ve tried real hard to let them follow their own paths.

GRANDMA
I’ll make sure to not get in the way then, this time.

A moment of silence. Bangs from upstairs echo down...
NAN
I laid out your favorite bath
towel. You know, the one with
rainbows and your name stitched on
it.

MEGAN
Thanks, Ma.

Megan rises and steps toward the mound of memory lane boxes.

INT. HOUSE - BATHROOM - NIGHT

Up a spiral staircase, the bathroom door creaks open. Inside
the oval bathtub, Coach Easley dips his bare foot in a pool
of ice water. He holds a flip phone to his ear. His face
grimaces in pain from the ice.

COACH EASLEY
Ah-ah-ah-ah... Yes. There it is...
What? Yeah I’m still with the
Skeeters. I’m in the tub. Yes, by
myself. It’s an ice bath, honey. My
foot, remember? Anyways... Go ahead
with the reservations. And make
sure it’s all inclusive. No. We’re
not wasting precious, well earned
dough to visit a national park.
Gulf Shores. Flor-Bama. If I get
the amount I want... We could be
looking at a condo!

Suddenly, the bathroom door opens all the way. Coach Easley,
startled, drops the cell phone into the tub. Bobby steps in
and plops down on the toilet, unfazed by Easley.

Easley stares, confused. Bobby unknowingly grabs the bath
towel left for his mother and wipes blood from his nose.

BOBBY
How’s your foot?

COACH EASLEY
Better, I think. Nose alright
there, champ?

BOBBY
You think we got a shot this
weekend? Don’t bullshit me. I’m not
in the mood.

Coach Easley snorts.
COACH EASLEY
You sound like your mother.

Bobby stops wiping the blood from his nose. He looks directly at Easley. Death glare.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Easy there, champ. That was a compliment. Your mom’s a cage fighter... But, not a coach.

BOBBY
She will tomorrow when we vote her in... You don’t seem upset about losing the throne?

COACH EASLEY
I’m gonna be honest... I never expected you rugrats to let me in the treehouse and take over. For what it’s worth, it’s been a, uh, profitable journey. Gained a lot of experience.

Bobby stands and hangs up the towel.

BOBBY
There’s more ice in the basement. Nana has a deep freezer down there.

Coach Easley nods. Bobby walks to the bathroom door.

COACH EASLEY
I’m sorry about your, Dad.

Bobby stops.

BOBBY
I said no bullshit. I was abundantly clear.

COACH EASLEY
You’re not the problem. Just know that.

Bobby soaks that in... He leaves and shuts the door behind him. Coach Easley jumps, again, as his cell phone vibrates from under the water. A light glows. He reaches down and opens the soap, soaked phone.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Fuckin-A will this day ever end?
EXT. ROAD - CHICAGO - NIGHT

A thick layer of fog looms from above, as a yellow bus speeds down the empty, narrow road.

INT. BUS - NIGHT

Seats cold and empty. Dylan operates the wheel with one hand, and gulps down cheap whiskey with the other. His eyes swollen from tears. He runs a red light. Megan’s itinerary binder slides up and down the bus’s aisle.

Dylan sticks a CD inside. We hear the heavy strums of an acoustic guitar.

DYLAN
(drunk, yells)
YOU AND ME. WE COME FROM DIFFERENT WORLDS.

SMASH CUT TO:

EXT. JUNKYARD - OUTSKIRTS OF CHICAGO - NIGHT

Hundreds of vehicles, all in some way destroyed. The Skeeter yellow bus parked in the back and blending in.

A one story trailer sits at the center of the junkyard. Lights on. An elderly, grey whiskered man, DON, counts a series of bills and hands them to Dylan. Dylan recounts them as Don spits a massive loogie into the dirt.

DYLAN
That’s it?... I told you it’s gone through many, many renovations. The model’s old, yes, but the parts are brand spankin’ new.

Don reaches inside the pocket of his overalls and hands Dylan a baggie of coins.

DON
Here’s somethin’ extra.

DYLAN
This is my name. My life. It’s all right there...

DON
It’ll find a home here. You can rest assured of that.
Dylan storms off, but turns back.

DYLAN
You got a number for a taxi service?

DON
I can give you a lift.

DYLAN
That’d be a huge help.

DON
It’ll cost ya, of course.

Dylan, eyes heavy and bloodshot, takes a swing at Don. He knocks the old geezer to the floor. Hard. Dylan retreats quickly and doesn’t look back.

INT. HOUSE - BASEMENT - NIGHT

Megan sits on the concrete floor. She strums a ukulele. Grandma remains seated in her chair. A pile of old clothes sit on her lap.

GRANDMA
You know your father talked to that Jimmy Chetworth from the northside back in the day. The record company. He wanted that for you.

MEGAN
Ma, you can’t keep changing the story. Pa never talked to Chetworth.

GRANDMA
Yeah, well, he thought about it... We both did, in fact. People still talk about that talent show performance.

MEGAN
That was fifth grade.

GRANDMA
Do you remember what you sang?

Megan smirks and gives her mother an assured glance.

MEGAN
Bad habits fucked up my voice. I can’t.
GRANDMA

Go ahead.

MEGAN

We should get some sleep. We gotta get up and hit the road early. Game one starts in the afternoon. There’s early morning check in. There’s -

Granda interrupts. She sheds a few tears.

GRANDMA

I miss that little girl... You used to fit in my palm, you know?

MEGAN

I came out thirteen pounds. Biggest babe on the block you used to say.

GRANDMA

That’s right. You almost killed me.

Grandma wipes away the tears with an old shirt. Megan stares at her mother and after a moment passes... She strums.

The wooden staircase creaks. Fran tiptoes down the steps. She pokes her head out and watches.

Megan shakes her head and continues to strum.. Until she stops.

MEGAN

I can’t do it.

Megan tries again... And again... She whispers the words to the distorted strumming. Voice raspy and out of tune.

MEGAN (CONT'D)

(sings)

Yeah I’m tangled up and blue. You can call me your fool. I only wanna be with you...

GRANDMA

Keep going. Oooooh. That was so good.

Megan continues to strum. A string snaps. She breathes heavily and grows nauseous. Grandma pauses for a moment and then claps her hands.

Megan stands up and finds her balance. She holds her chest and tries to catch her breath.
GRANDMA (CONT'D)
This has been fun -

Megan interrupts and smashes the ukulele against the floor. KA-POW! Fran hops back. The stairs creak.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Something wrong, Megs?

MEGAN
It’s all been a waste. Everything. And you know what the worst part of...looking back is?

Grandma shakes her head. Megan approaches her.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
It wasn’t all fine and dandy before I met Dylan. No, it’s never been gravy thanks to you and Dad -

GRANDMA
(stern)
Keep the dead out of this.

MEGAN
Fuck him.

GRANDMA
You don’t honestly mean that.

MEGAN
I’m so tired, Mom. This trip has been a disaster. If my kids were just above average little leaguers then it might mean something... But they’re not. They suck.

Megan looks away from Grandma, toward the stairs, and catches Fran’s eyes. They stare.

GRANDMA
Think it’s time for bed then. It’s been a long day.

Fran runs up the stairs. She opens the first door she can find and shuts herself in. She cries into her arms.

INT. GUEST BEDROOM - NIGHT

COACH EASLEY
Could you keep it down?
Fran opens her eyes and sees Easley on top of a tiny, single bed.

    COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
    Your Grandma ever heard of IKEA.
    Jesus, this thing’s from the stone age.

Fran can’t help but chuckle. She steps over to the bed.

    FRAN
    Will you coach us tomorrow?

Coach Easley sits up. He takes a deep breath and turns to Fran.

    COACH EASLEY
    You still want to win?

    FRAN
    More than anything. Though, it might take some convincing with the others.

Coach Easley thinks for a moment. He scans the room and finds a framed picture of a young Megan with her parents at a water park...

    COACH EASLEY
    Well, did you and the Skeeters know... Battle Creek’s home to a famous water park. The best in the country, in fact. We win. I take you Skeeters there. And best of all, no parental supervision...

Fran nods.

    COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
    Go, spread the gospel.

**DAY 7**

**INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY**

Morning sunshine seeps through the window blinds. Father Pat remains asleep on the bed. Sister Patricia sits beside him.

    SISTER PATRICIA
    It’s been seven days, Father. And they say you lost oxygen to the brain. Father, they say you may never wake... Word has traveled.
    (MORE)
SISTER PATRICIA (CONT'D)
The little Skeeters are set to play this morning.

Sister Patricia leans in and kisses Father Pat on the cheek.

SISTER PATRICIA (CONT'D)
(whispers)
Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor, and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God.

BEGIN DREAM SEQUENCE

INT. TRAIN - CHICAGO - DAY

Hints of sunshine creep inside this worn down public transportation unit. Locals sit in seats. Books. CD players.

Dylan sits alone in a window seat. Eyes closed. AN UNKNOWN POV watches.

The train shakes with heavy turbulence. The sun's beams intensify into blinding rays. Dylan opens his eyes. He stands up and notices the train is empty. BAM!

The train jerks to a stop. Dylan falls to the floor. The doors open. In walks Father Pat. Father Pat hoists Dylan up from the floor.

FATHER PAT
Follow me.

Father Pat hurries forward along the aisle. Dylan follows. Suddenly, the train's windows shatter and break open. Water pours inside.

FATHER PAT (CONT'D)
Keep up.

The water rises to Dylan's waist. He swims forward to Father Pat, into the next train cart. Father Pat seals the door shut.

EXT. LAKE SHORELINE - DAY

Dylan follows Father Pat through some tree brush out onto sand. They stand at the lake's shoreline, where a calm wave oscillates back and forth.
Father Pat points down at their feet. Dylan looks and sees two fish flopping for their lives.

Dylan picks up the fish and drops them back into the river water. He stands, knee deep, and watches as the fish morph into Fran and Bobby. Dylan swims out to them. But the river’s current is too strong.

MEGAN
HELP.

Dylan looks out even farther and sees Megan struggling to stay afloat.

Suddenly, a boat emerges into the scene. Coach Easley paddles through the tough waters and pulls Fran and Bobby up onboard.

Dylan swims back to the shore. Exhausted and out of breath. He watches Father Pat cast out a fishing line. The line’s bobber floats atop the water’s surface... Waiting.

The ground rumbles. Tree branches fall. The lake water sloshes together with intensity. A wave picks up steam.

FATHER PAT
Find something to hold onto. This one’s gonna be a doozy.

Dylan scoots away from the water as the wave approaches. He hops up and bear hugs a tree.

END OF DREAM SEQUENCE

SMASH CUT TO:

INT. HOUSE - BEDROOM - DAY

Megan rises from her childhood bed like cannon-fire. Her breaths are long and heavy. She glances up at a kitty themed clock. TICK-TOCK-TICK-TOCK. It’s 10:30 a.m. She double takes and gazes into the clock again...

MEGAN
WE’RE ALREADY SUPPOSED TO BE ON THE ROAD.

Megan shoves the rainbow colored comforter off and hops away from the bed.

MEGAN (CONT’D)
FIRST PITCH IS ONLY TWO HOURS AWAY.
INT. HOUSE - KITCHEN - MORNING

Grandma sits alone at the circular kitchen table. She holds a hot glue gun and does her best to piece the lamp back together. The house is quiet. Megan runs in, out of breath.

GRANDMA
You’re up. I’ve got hot coffee and chocolate chip pancakes ready to go.

Megan whips her head around. The house remains empty. She runs to the kitchen window and stares outside. Grandma’s van is gone.

GRANDMA (CONT’D)
Grab yourself a plate, Megs.

Megan grabs the corded landline phone. She dials 9-1-1.

MEGAN
That blowhard Harrison isn’t police chief still is he?

GRANDMA
Put the phone down, Megs, and eat your breakfast.

MEGAN
That pickle-dick stole my team. MY KIDS. YOUR GRANDKIDS. Where’s the urgency in your tone? Does this god-damn phone work?

GRANDMA
It’s an old one.

MEGAN
So why is it here?

GRANDMA
Decor.

Megan slams the phone back. She peeps into the living room.

MEGAN
He even took fucking Pop.

GRANDMA
Take a seat. I can explain.

Megan paces with a frantic beat. She stuffs pancakes into her mouth.
MEGAN
(mouth full)
How long ago did they leave? Do you have a phone that works? What about the one I called you on last night?

GRANDMA
Take a deep breath. I gave this a lot of thought...

MEGAN
Did you let this happen? That’s it. You don’t want me to find happiness.

Megan wags a piece of sausage at her mom.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
HOME SWEET HOME.

GRANDMA
I objected, but Megs, the Skeeters... Fran. Even Bobby. They wanted Easley to coach em.

Megan jams herself into a seat. Fists banged on the table.

MEGAN
You gotta know every word that man lives and breathes is bullshit, Ma. I mean, c’mon.

GRANDMA
Easley didn’t say anything. He was polite and encouraging. It was Fran who told me.

MEGAN
What about Bobby?

GRANDMA
He never opposed.

MEGAN
Well, I’m sure he did. He’s just shy, that’s all.

GRANDMA
All the kids could talk about was a water park. They were excited.

MEGAN
Water park? What water park?
A beat. Megan digs into the plate of breakfast. She takes a long gulp of coffee.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
Shit, Ma, these are some good pancakes...

GRANDMA
I think what’s best for you, speaking as your mother, is that you show up and support your kids as their parent. Win or lose.

MEGAN
That’ll be easy being here without a car.

GRANDMA
I took care of that.

Granda looks up at the clock. TICK-TOCK-TICK-TOCK.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Any minute now.

MEGAN
What? What did you do?

GRANDMA
Get your family back before it’s too late.

Grandma reaches out and squeezes Megan’s hand.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
I don’t want you to end up alone living in a place like this.

Megan stares back into her mother’s eyes. Unable to say anything.

GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Any minute now...

Megan and Grandma hear a car approach the house from outside. HONK-HONK-HONK. A car door opens and closes.

Footsteps emerge. The door opens... In steps, Dylan. Grandma turns, smiling.

Megan spits out pieces of pancake. Silence ensues.
GRANDMA (CONT'D)
Glad to have ya back. Ralphie all good with the car?

MEGAN
Cousin Ralphie?

GRANDMA
You’re taking his car.

DYLAN
He wanted to check the tire pressure one last time.

GRANDMA
That Ralphie and his cars.

Megan jolts up from the table.

MEGAN
What’s going on? It’s almost eleven. The games start in less than two hours and no one thought to fucking wake me up this morning!?...

GRANDMA
You were so tired last night.

DYLAN
I’m sorry -

Megan tosses a sausage link at Dylan.

MEGAN
DON’T START.

Silence, again, hangs in the air. The mountain dew breath of a cousin, RALPHIE, 20s, blonde bowl cut and American Flag tank top, steps in through the kitchen door.

RALPHIE
Car’s all lubed up and ready to fuck.

EXT. BATTLE CREEK - DAY

Off the highway road at the edge of town, a Kellog’s TOASTED CORN FLAKES sign welcomes drivers to Battle Creek, Michigan.

Vehicles bustle in all directions, surrounded by smokestacks of a fading rust belt city.
EXT. BASEBALL FIELD – PARKING LOT – DAY

An army of parked cars coats the burning hot asphalt. Upon entrance to the baseball complex, one will drive underneath a banner that reads: Kellog’s Sponsored 75th Annual Little League World Series.

Families tend to charcoal grills in the parking spaces. Kids play baseball catch. Grown men and women chug light beer. Shitty, hair bands of the late 80’s blast through speakers. It’s a party.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD – PAVILLION – DAY

Behind the field stands a state of the art concrete pavilion. Teams gather around their respective tables. These kids more resemble grown men: beards, muscle definition, can stomach chewing tobacco.

The Skeeters settle into a table in the corner of the pavilion. They stare, eyes wearing fear, at the competition.

SHERMAN
I want to see some birth certificates.

JACHAI
It’s called puberty. We’re just late bloomers.

SETH
Speak for yourself. I’ve got enough pubes to be certified deciduous.

BOBBY
Look at her. Miss team captain having the time of her life.

Coach Easley parades Fran around the pavilion. They shake hands and meet a handful of coaches and other players. All tower over Fran. All boys.

SHERMAN
I typically don’t speak up, or make my thoughts known to the group –

SETH
That’s why we love ya –

SHERMAN
But I can’t hold my tongue… Bobby, why can’t you be happy for Fran?
JACHAI
True. She’s the only one that loves baseball.

SETH
Once those tits pop she’ll be stuck in shitty softball where they underhand...

Fran hops back to the table. She grabs the team bucket of balls.

FRAN
We’re on in thirty. Coach wants us to warm up.

BOBBY
Do you even care about the Skeeters? Or has it always been about you?

Coach Easley saunters over with a pep in his step.

COACH EASLEY
Gather around Skeeters. C’mon, hustle it up.

Easley takes a knee out in the grass away from the pavilion and the spectators. The Skeeters circle around their coach.

COACH EASLEY (CONT’D)
We’re here. We fuckin’ made it. You all survived the trip from hell. Remember this: no one, not any of these coastal elite shit sticks here, nor the communities from back home, think any of you amount to squat. So let’s spoil the party.

BOBBY
Father Pat believed in us. My Mom believed in us. My Dad drove us here.

JACHAI
Technically not all the way.

FRAN
Bobby, let it go, lil bro.

COACH EASLEY
I didn’t want to tell you all this... But, I’m afraid, to unite our front... Skeeters.

(MORE)
COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Many parties, including former
coach, now team mom, Megan, and her
estranged, moronic husband, Dylan,
had money on these games.

SETH
You mean like poker?

FRAN
Our parents never cared about if we
won. It was always about the money.

JACHAI
Too bad they won’t even reap the
benefits. Look at these tree
trunks. We don’t stand a chance.

FRAN
That’s it... They bet on us to
lose.

The Skeeters stand in silence. Their breaths deep. Bodies
twitch. Rage is building... Easley smiles and twiddles his
thumbs like an evil mastermind.

COACH EASLEY
Hands in, Skeeters. Let’s prove em
all wrong. Let ME lead you to
victory. And remember, when that
comes... Where are we going?

The Skeeters’ eyes light up.

SKEETERS
THE WATER PARK.

One by one, the Skeeters toss their hands together. Bobby
hesitates, but his hand joins the rest...

COACH EASLEY
Excellent.

INT. CAR - DAY

Megan operates the wheel with both hands. No A/C. No radio.
Silence... Dylan can’t find anything for his eyes to settle
onto.

They pass the KELLOG’S TOASTED CORN FLAKES WELCOME SIGN.

MEGAN
Alright. First pitch is in fifteen.
We’re going to make it.
DYLAN
Can I finally talk?

MEGAN
You lost those rights after you
told me you used the money to bet
against the team.

DYLAN
That was over a hour ago...

MEGAN
Well, I’m not over it. And probably
won’t be until I can no longer
breathe this beautiful, industrious
rust belt air.

Megan coughs. She rolls up the windows.

DYLAN
What’s the plan for when we get
there?

MEGAN
I will be taking over as coach and
rescuing our kids. You, I don’t
care. Go crazy.

DYLAN
I wonder why Father Pat had the
heart attack right then and there.
You know? He’s a healthy dude. Nice
and all too.

Megan presses her foot harder on the accelerator.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
I know about you and him.

Megan jerks the steering wheel. The car swerves off the road.
Megan steers the ship back.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
Before you oppose, or call me a big
fat liar, he told me...

MEGAN
Shit.

DYLAN
I don’t care. And he didn’t come to
me. I went to him. I had
confession.
MEGAN
When?

DYLAN
A few months back. It was a revelation.

MEGAN
Glad you found some time to reflect. Too bad for all of us old habits don’t break.

DYLAN
Father Pat told me you and I aren’t so different. In fact, he said we’re all bullied by the same... what was the word? Destructive impulses.

MEGAN
You probably misinterpreted what he said.

DYLAN
We’re selfish, Megs.

MEGAN
Do you believe him?

DYLAN
I don’t know. I never thought you and me to be too much alike. Why I was attracted to ya in the first place... Do you believe him?

The car stops. Megan pulls out the keys.

MEGAN
We’re here.

DYLAN
Damn. It’s packed.

MEGAN
It’s the little league world series.

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - DAY

A thick line of clouds blanket the sun. Hundreds of spectators gather around the baseball field. Lawn chairs. Blankets. Bleachers packed to the brim.
News cameras are positioned in numerous angles around the field. TV personalities with microphones walk around the area. They interview fans and players.

Workers roll carts of merchandise around the field.

At the concession stand, fans slurp up buckets of beer and greasy cuisine.

Behind home plate seated on a wooden platform is STAN, the middle aged balding voice of Michigan youth baseball.

    STAN
    (into microphone)
    Hola, United States of America. We welcome you, from the great lake state: Viva La Michigan! We’re about to commence the 75th annual Little League World Series. Brought to you by the perfectly bland and consistently average Kellog’s Toasted Corn Flakes. Speaking of industrious, back-breaking labor under the hands of an authoritative hack, we welcome to the tournament competitor numero uno: The Iowa Skeeters led by Head Coach Nick Easley.

DUGOUT

The Skeeters shiver in anxiety on the wood splintered bench. Pop sleeps in the corner. Easley struts outside of the dugout and tips his cap. Fran hops up to the fence. Her eyes grow wide at the onlooking crowd. A thunderous applause rattles the dugout bats and helmets like an earthquake.

        STAN (O.C.) (CONT’D)
        This may be Easley’s first ever appearance in the tournament. But the man’s reputation speaks for itself. From such humbled beginnings as an orphan suffering under the...

ANNOUNCER DEN

Stan combs over a piece of paper. He holds it close to his face.
STAN (CONT'D)
Ah, yes. Suffering under the brutal conditions of a Spanish flu, followed by a, a, great depression and a dust storm that wiped out his entire family. From such tragedy can only inspire greatness, as Easley conquered the major league baseball world and rose to the top and even hit a home run with sex icon Marilyn Monroe. We have no way of verifying this, but hey, we don’t care. The resume speaks for itself. As for the rest of the Skeeters, well, they are 12 and fall under the age limit required to compete. As for their foe...

DUGOUT
Fran sulks back to the bench. Stan’s mic fades out...

SHERMAN
My bowels aren’t comfortable with all this pressure.

SETH
Put a cork in it then.

JACHAI
If we stay true to what’s important...

Silence ensues... The team turns to Fran.

FRAN
They didn’t even mention me. It was just. It was always about him.

Fran grabs a bat and points it out to Easley who remains on the field. Soaking in the applause.

BOBBY
Well, if we don’t try then our parents win.

SETH
At least you’d be going back home to a house with money.

FRAN
Like we’d see any of it.
Pop rises from his slumber at the edge of the dugout. He shakes his head violently and opens his eyes – awake.

SHERMAN
The indecision is killing me. I gotta poo.

SETH
Find a bucket, we’re about to start.

Pop stands up and hobbles up to the dugout fence. Fran and Bobby look to the other for an answer.

BOBBY
Fran, let’s face it, this is probably your last season playing baseball.

FRAN
You don’t know that.

Bobby grabs a bat.

BOBBY
We play.

JACHAI
For Fran here?

FRAN
No. We don’t need a reason. We never did. We play because we play.

SETH
But we fucking suck.

SHERMAN
If we win Easley could still take us to the water park!

FRAN
Knowing his punk ass there probably isn’t even one in this town...

Pop turns up to the darkened sky. A cold wind whisks up the dirt inside the dugout.

POP
Keep your eyes open. Something Wild is always just around the corner...

TICKET BOOTH LINE
Behind the outfield fence stands a long line of fans waiting to get inside the friendly confines. Megan and Dylan stand, bouncy and agitated, in the far back.

MEGAN
That stupid hack. Making the introduction all about him when it should be me in the spotlight.

A teenage worker sits in a lawn chair and slurps on a lemonade near Dylan and Megan. The worker holds a sign that reads: FROM HERE, ONE HOUR.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
One fucking hour... The game could be over by then. The hell do we do?

DYLAN
I guess... I guess we just try and watch from here.

MEGAN
And do what? Just watch? Have no part in it?

DYLAN
Yeah. I guess so.

Megan sighs in frustration. She shoves Dylan and marches forward...

MEGAN
(under breath)
Always have to do everything.

TICKET BOOTH ENTRANCE

Megan barges past fans in line. She shoulders her way up to the front. Fans behind her yell.

Standing inside the ticket booth structure is an elderly woman, EUNICE, with a shirt that reads: I LOVE BASEBALL. Her expression says otherwise.

MEGAN (CONT'D)
(out of breath)
Hi. Hello. Yes. You see there’s been a mistake. I’m part of the team. The Skeeters. They were just introduced. I’m sure you know all about them.

Eunice slowly pulls up a clipboard and takes her time reading it.
EUNICE
Name please.

MEGAN
Megan. Megan McClellan. Should be under coach.

EUNICE
I see a Nick Easley.

MEGAN
Well, that’s a mistake. You see he kidnapped the team this morning and drove them up here. The man’s a maniac. In fact, he forced his way on the team bus and threatened me for the coaching job.

Eunice turns around and whispers to a young worker behind her. This takes some time...

EUNICE
Did you ever phone the police?

MEGAN
Well, no. What does that matter? The man’s a criminal.

TICKET BOOTH LINE
Dylan remains in the same spot. All of a sudden a heavy arm tugs at the back of his shirt.

HAMMER
Table for two please.

Dylan turns around. The Hammer opens his arms wide and squeezes Dyl.

HAMMER (CONT'D)
My man you made it. Of course with a few bumps in the road but that’s to be expected.

A small crew of DADS hang out behind the Hammer.

DYLAN
It didn’t work, Ham-ball. I fucked up the situation even worse with my family and Easley is still the coach.
HAMMER
So what. There’s a variable that we underestimated... You see, the
other teams here compared to the Skeeters are men among... Not even
boys. More like unsalted finger
food. Easley could be the fucking
President of the United States and
it wouldn’t make a difference. Our
pockets will be filled.

DYLAN
Who are these guys?

HAMMER
Oh. Dyl, meet our business
partners. A batch of tournament
Dads I’ve been in contact with who
also pitched into the pot.

Dylan waves. The Dads wave back. Hammer waltzes forward.

HAMMER (CONT'D)
Follow me, Dyl. We’ve got a
tailgate set up in the lot. Keg.
Full spread of grub. You name it.
We’ve got it. Local tail too.
Prepare to live large, my friend.

The Dads follow Hammer away from the line to the parking lot.
Dylan hesitates. He looks onward at the ticket line but can’t
spot Megan. He squints out at the baseball diamond, but can’t
make out the players. He turns and follows the squadron of
Dads.

TICKET BOOTH ENTRANCE

Megan’s head is fully inside the ticket booth. Body still
outside. She scans the space for Eunice. The fans behind
Megan grow even more agitated.

MEGAN
(to the fans)
Don’t hate me, hate the system.

Eunice shuffles back...

EUNICE
Twenty-five dollars.

MEGAN
Excuse me?
EUNICE
That’s how much it costs for a
spectating adult with no
connections to a team.

MEGAN
What’s your name?

EUNICE
It’s Eunice.

MEGAN
Well, Eunice. I hate to break it to
you. But I will be marching through
this gate and there’s nothing you
can do to stop me.

Eunice pauses. Her face remains stern. She turns around,
again, and whispers to a young worker.

MEGAN (CONT’D)
EUNICE!

SNAP! CRACKLE! POP! Thunder erupts from the dark sky.

SMASH CUT TO:

PARKING LOT

Little League security drags Megan from the ticket booth line
out to the parking lot. She shakes and protests. The security
drop her at the asphalt.

STAN (O.S.)
(into microphone)
Now up to the plate for the
Skeeters, Fran McClellan.

Megan slowly rises from the ground. She trots to the nearby
bathroom. Head low. Defeated. She steps inside.

DUGOUT

Fran marches into the dugout. Her jersey wet from the
sprinkling rain outside. She tosses her helmet against the
fence.

The rest of the Skeeters sit on the bench, unfazed. Easley
storms in the dugout and tosses his ball-cap into the dirt.
COACH EASLEY
You call that competitive? Three up, three down... You’re making a mockery of me.

Seth sinks back into the bench. Legs sprawled out. Wide.

SETH
I ain’t going back out there.

COACH EASLEY
Oh, yes you are.

Easley grabs Seth by the jersey and throws him out of the dugout onto the field. The Skeeters stand frozen, shocked.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
We did not come all this way for nothing. There will be no sinking ship. Understood?

The rest of the Skeeters grab their gloves. Outside, the rain evolves from light to downpour. Eunice, the worker from the ticket booth, steps inside the dugout.

COACH EASLEY (CONT'D)
Team only. Please and thank you.

Eunice doesn’t move. She stares long and hard at Easley. An intimidating gaze.

EUNICE
We saw lightning. There’s a delay.

COACH EASLEY
Bush league... Skeeters did you see lightning? I didn’t see any lightning!

EUNICE
We’re under a delay.

COACH EASLEY
Well, how long?

EUNICE
Every lightning strike we push back thirty minutes.

KA-POW! A streak of lightning tears through the sky.
COACH EASLEY
I checked the weather reports. A zero percent chance, a zero percent chance I tell you!

Eunice steps aside and whispers to a younger worker.

SKY
The clouds twist and turn: a thunderous dance. The lightning evolves from occasional streaks to repetitive flashes. Each flash brighter than the last... FLASH.

INT. HOSPITAL ROOM - DAY
Sister Patricia sits beside Father Pat. The local Catholic diocese, dressed in thick black robes, surround the rest of the hospital bed.

PRIEST #1
Is it true, then? The Father here violated Mathew 19:9?

PRIEST #2
It’s not in our field to assume. But yes, he likely did. A many times.

PRIEST #3
Sister, has he not woken up since you’ve arrived?

SISTER PATRICIA
Negative, Fathers.

PRIEST #1
And what was it the nurses said he yelled in a rather possessed manner?

PRIEST #3
We live in perilous times, if I do recall.

PRIEST #1
Perhaps his guilt manifesting in apocalyptic visions?

PRIEST #2
Well, maybe this is the lord just doin his business. Quieting yet another false prophet of heresy.
The Priests start to shuffle out of the room.

SISTER PATRICIA
You’re just going to leave him? Not even say a prayer?

Suddenly, Father Pat’s eyes open. He RISES from the bed. The sun from the window serenades his body.

SISTER PATRICIA (CONT’D)
You’re awake. He’s awake.

PRIEST #1
My lord, the man’s risen.

PRIEST #2
Father Pat? Can you hear us?

Silence ensues... Father Pat turns his head to the priests. He smiles.

FATHER PAT
(quietly)
It was a good fuck.

Sister Patricia gasps.

PRIEST #2
I beg your pardon, Father, one more time.

PRIEST #1
Loud and clear.

PRIEST #3
For all to hear.

FATHER PAT
IT WAS A GOOD FUCK.

SISTER PATRICIA
He has spoken...

EXT. BASEBALL FIELD - PARKING LOT - DAY

Dylan bites into a rain soaked hot dog. The Hammer sprays the charcoal grill with an endless amount of lighter fluid. He strikes a match, but the rain casts out the flame...

Suddenly, red and blue police lights creep into the scene. Policemen hop out of their cars and approach the DADS tailgate.
Dylan pauses mid bite... The cops whip out the handcuffs. A spark finally catches the charcoal grill. A ball of fire soars in the air.

Dylan takes off in a dead sprint amidst the chaos. A cop chases after him and tackles him to the ground...

INT. BATHROOM - DAY

Pristine floors. Posters advertising Kellog’s Toasted Corn Flakes coat the walls. Three stalls. In the middle is...

INSIDE STALL

Megan stands. She looks down, facing the toilet. Lid open. Inside, two fish flounder in the water. Gasping for life. Megan hesitates...

MEGAN
Poor little guys...

She reaches down and scoops up the fish. She presses the slimy creatures up against her chest, as if she were cradling a baby. The fish flop and fall on the floor. SPLAT!

MEGAN (CONT’D)
AHHHH.

Megan crawls on the floor and retrieves the fish.

DUGOUT


Eunice shuffles into the dugout. Pop steps out into the rain. Everyone awaits Eunice’s reaction... She shakes her head.

Easley falls to the floor as if he’s just been shot...

POP
Come on in, Skeeters. The water’s just fine.

The Skeeters race out of the dugout and run along the now mud-soaked infield.

ANNOUNCER DEN

Stan grabs the microphone. He wears an industrial sized umbrella. His voice is somber. HE STARES DIRECTLY INTO THE CAMERA.
STAN
Well, folks... I'm afraid that's all she wrote. This unprecedented, out of nowhere, storm doesn't seem to be stopping anytime soon. Who knows what will still be standing once these thunderous clouds clear...

The surrounding fans all collectively boo.

The Skeeters tackle each other in the mud. It's a dog-pile.

Fran and Bobby both stand up, together. After a long moment... They fling mud at each other and smile that smile that beats the drum of the irrational, immature, loving youth.

PARKING LOT

Megan races out of the bathroom into the downpour. She screams upon being soaked. But she still keeps a grasp on the fish.

Nearby, floating in a parking lot puddle, she finds what was once a beer bucket. She drops the fish in the beer bucket where they swim in the rain water.

Megan looks down and smiles as the fish disappear under the water. She takes a deep breath and lets the rain wash over her face.

THE END