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Toasted Corn Flakes

Michael McCurdy

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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]

FINAL THESIS
FEATURE SCREENPLAY PROJECT DESCRIPTION

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

Michael McCurdy (May 3, 2022 15:58 PDT)

Student Signature

APPROVAL TO ADVANCE TO CANDIDACY

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

Student Name _____

May 3, 2022

Date _____



SCWR 690 Instructor Signature _____



SCWR 691 Instructor Signature _____

Patricia K. Meyer

[Patricia K. Meyer \(May 3, 2022 16:01 PDT\)](#)

Graduate Director Signature _____

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 lid 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 faded 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.

POP
Wanted to avoid the sun. That branch offers tremendous protection.

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 wedgie.

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.

DYLAN

Turns out your real estate advice came up short.

HAMMER

Did you pitch the land as ripe for hunting ground?

DYLAN

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?

DYLAN

That hasn't been spotted in over twenty years.

HAMMER

Did you mention it?

DYLAN

The flat-top, please.

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

DYLAN (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.

DYLAN

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...

Easley 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 Sheriff 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.
Church. Grocery Store. Bank. Makes
no difference, Megs.

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 had a dream the other night. 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

What if Easley killed him? Chopped
him up. Cooked him in a stew.

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 shoos 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 Kellogg'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 hurries 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)
It's alright. Deep breaths. In.
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'mon.

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?

EEEEEEK! 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 (CONT'D)
I can't do that you animal.

Bobby drops another catch. The baseball rolls up to the phone booth.

DYLAN (CONT'D)
I can't bet on my own kids to lose...

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
character isn't 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 stomachs.

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 floor to 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. Jachai, 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.

DYLAN

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.

DYLAN

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.

DYLAN

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.

DYLAN

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.

Megan runs outside. The Skeeters follow. Coach Easley shakes his head. Pop lays out on the sofa. Already asleep.

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-tock-tick-tock.

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)
Page fifteen. You and Dylan. See.
I've got it bookmarked.

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. Ooooooh. That was so good.

Megan continues to strum. A string snaps. She breathes heavily and grows nauseous. Grandpa 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 Kellogg'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: Kellogg'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 Kellogg'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 brutish 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 Kellogg'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

The Skeeters stand up against the dugout fence. Rain drips from their ball-caps and jerseys. Easley sits by himself on the bench. Face mute.

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